

DO NOT AVENGE YOURSELF

Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, "Do not take revenge, my friends . . . for it is written, 'It is Mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord (Romans 12:19). Non-Christians sometimes live by a system of 'pay back.' Paul said 'Don't pay back!' And he took God's command from the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:35). It was so easy for the people of Israel to follow the ways of the heathen peoples around them; God said, 'Don't do it!'

Does it puzzle you to see people do wrong to others and get away with it. They are not judged by God right away. This puzzled David, too! He wrote, "Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong . . . Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him . . ." (to bring them to justice, Psalm 37:1,7).

Jesus said, "If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins" (Matthew 6:14-15).

Has God forgiven you? Don't feel guilty any more. No one can condemn you before God, not even Satan! (Romans 8:1).

Has God forgiven you? Go and forgive your brother or sister. Tell them you are forgiving them because Jesus healed your broken heart and forgave you all your sins! If they accept Christ as their Saviour, you will be twice blessed.

TALK ABOUT

1. Why does God delay judgment on sinners (2 Peter 3:9)?
2. What was King David's advice (Psalm 37:1,7)?

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HEALING for a BROKEN HEART



Written in easy English
Fred Morris

TO THE READER . . .

Read Psalm 23 in your Bible, then read these notes. Bible verses quoted here are taken from the New International Version. They are shown as (7:6), chapter 7 verse 6.

Questions are for groups to discuss.

PRAISE HEALS THE HEART

Israel's King David loved to praise God. He was a great poet and wrote many songs that are in the Bible. They are called Psalms. David wrote these Psalms to help people praise and worship the true and living God. David found men to set his poems to music and to sing them in the great Temple. He had musicians and singers who led the people of Israel in their worship. They played horns and pipes, harps and flutes and clashing of cymbals made of brass. David also had choirs of singers. Some of his choir directors also wrote worship songs. Some of these are also in the Psalms.

David chose the choir leaders from the tribe of Levi, the third son of Jacob. Some Levites served God in the Temple.

HEALING BROKEN HEARTS

Read Psalm 46:1-3

Men and women today are overworked and hurried. They are sick with worry and stress, pressed down and broken.

So what do they do? They try to escape from their troubles by drinking, or gambling or by finding another mate. They hide their hurts, run from them or blame others. Or we say, 'So what, these troubles I'm having are no big deal!'

No one but Jesus can change our situation or bring healing to our hearts.

We all agree that we live in hard times. The world is a rough place and many get hurt. The hurt may not be in our bodies, but in our spirits. Is there healing for a hurting heart? Yes, there is! God can heal our hearts. We can find some of His healing words in the Psalms. They are like medicine for our souls.

"Praise Him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise Him with the harp and lyre, praise Him with tambourine . . . praise Him with the strings and flute, praise Him with the clash of cymbals . . ." (Psalm 150:3-5).

TALK ABOUT

1. Where can we go to find 'medicine' for a broken heart?
2. Have you read the Psalms to find healing for your heart?
3. Why did David write the Psalms?

It is okay to hurt. It is how we handle the hurts that matters. Remember, you can have a friend "that sticketh closer than a brother" to walk through the pain with you. From Him we receive comfort and strength to go on and to live for Him.

TALK ABOUT:

1. Why does God allow us so much trouble?
2. Does trouble make a Christian strong?

The Root of Bitterness

- Bitterness grows out of hurts.
- Bitterness spoils the whole life.
- Bitterness affects others.
- Bitterness builds walls.
- Bitterness breaks relationships.
- Bitterness threatens our health

SATAN WILL TORMENT YOU

Feelings of guilt, fear, anger or bitterness will torment you. If these 'tormentors' come from the wrong things you have done, you will never be free from them. Satan will use them as "footholds" to get a hold on your life. God will set you free!

Confess your sin and ask God to forgive you. Then ask Him to give you power over these tormentors.

Even ugly thoughts attack our minds. Under commander -Satan, they come flooding in for a surprise attack just when we want to think good thoughts. Grab them and dismiss them. Take them to the cross, before they get a foothold in your life.

A bitter spirit can cause big trouble in a family or group and it destroys the person who carries it in their heart. Don't fear to share your feeling of hurt with others who can pray for you.

Bitterness is like a root that grows and grows. The more we think about our hurts the bigger they grow in our minds. The root yields bitter fruits like anger, malice and hatred. Jesus spoke about these bitter things coming from within a person (Mark 8:22).

If we confess our bitter spirit, God will forgive us. And He will give us the power to forgive others. Then we can go to the person who offended us and ask them to forgive us.

If you do not forgive others, bitterness will destroy you! We must not to hold on to our grudges. They will only make our hearts bitter.

TALK ABOUT

1. Why must we repent before God before we forgive our brother?
2. What does 'a root of bitterness' mean?
3. If a we don't let God take away our bitter spirit it willus?

herself without the baby crying, or little hands pounding on the door. And the baby is expensive, very expensive to keep!

Remember, in all the stress and weariness of life, Jesus was there before you.

JESUS KNOWS ABOUT YOU

Jesus knows every step that we take. We tread where He trod. We follow the pathway He walked.

Because He knows our weaknesses, we can trust Him. He said, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

Do you think you are the only one who has troubles and adversity? You are not alone! Job was a man who had everything. He had a big farm and thousands of camels, goats and oxen. Then, suddenly, he lost everything. Job asked God, "Why me, Lord?" Because Job trusted God in all his troubles, God gave him back all he had lost.

God uses the hard times in our lives to make us strong. A strong wind blowing on a tree, makes its roots go down deeper. God wants to make us into whole persons.

In Bible times, the refiner heated metal in a furnace until it melted. When the impurities floated to the surface, he skimmed them off. So the metal was refined and made pure. God is looking for holiness and purity in our lives.

LEADERS WHO HAD TURNED AWAY

The leaders of Judah had turned their backs on God. He said He would take them and "bring them into the fire. I will refine them like silver and test them like gold" (Zechariah 13:9). Then, He said, "They will call on My name . . ."

Jesus often spoke of God as the

Master Gardener. God uses pruning shears. He "cuts off every branch that does not produce fruit" and prunes those branches that do bear fruit for even larger crops (John 15:2-3).

God needs fruit-bearers, not pretty leaves. When Jesus was hungry and went to the fig tree to get a fig, He found only leaves. This was a picture of the nation of Israel.

SIGNS OF A BITTER SPIRIT

- *a tight set jaw*
- *hard eyes*
- *no consideration for others*
- *selfish and not thankful*
- *easily offended*
- *quickly gets angry*
- *a lonely persons who withdraws from others*

HURT CHRISTIANS

Some Christians are like an apple that has been dropped. It has been hurt but you cannot see the bruise. There is no sign of damage for several days. Then dark spots begin to show. These turn to spoil and rotteness. (Hebrews 12:15)

WHO WAS DAVID?

David was a shepherd boy and cared for his father's sheep. He knew how easy it was for sheep to stray away and get lost. He said we are like sheep. We have strayed away from God and become lost.

Jesus wants to be our 'Good Shepherd.' He wants us to come back to Him and find rest for our souls.

"He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters . . ." David knew the answer for tired and broken hearts. Let God take over your life. "He restores my soul," David said (Psalm 23:3). David let the Good Shepherd bring him back to the safety of the fold.

Only God can restore our hearts. Men and women are sick because of bitterness, anger, grief and rejection, but God is the great doctor. We must go to our heavenly doctor and ask Him to forgive us and heal our broken hearts.

Because Jesus died for us, God has said, "I will forgive their wickedness . . ." (Hebrews 8:12). No 'prophet,' preacher or priest can forgive your sins. For all who believe, guilt and despair were taken away at Calvary when Jesus died on the cross.

TALK ABOUT:

When God forgives our sins, He gives us a peace in our hearts (Isaiah 44:22-23). Do you have that peace of God in your heart?

WHO WERE THE LEVITES?

At the time the people of Israel came out of Egypt, God chose the family of Aaron, Moses' brother, to be priests (Exodus 24:1). Later the Levites stood true to God when many in Israel were turning to idols. Because they were loyal in a time of national crisis. God made covenant or agreement with them: they would be His servants. They would be 'holy unto the Lord' and represent Him among the people. They were guardians of God's holy name and His truth. They began to serve the priests when they were 25 years of age they stopped serving the priests when they were fifty (Numbers 3:5-13). Sometimes the name 'Levites' means the whole tribe; sometimes only those members of the tribe who were not priests. Three clans or families of Levi received special duties: the sons of Kohath (Kohathites), Gershon (Gershonites) and Merari (Merarites).

When Israel went from Mt Sinai to Canaan, men from these clans helped pack and carry the Tabernacle. Each time the people of Israel moved camp, the Tabernacle had to be taken down and all the holy things covered and carried to the next place. In the time of the Judges, the Tabernacle was raided by Israel's enemies. The holy things were stolen and broken and the priestly families were scattered because they did not live for God's glory.

Over the years, the priests did not keep God's laws. The High Priest in Israel, let his sons do as they liked. They did not help the things of the Tabernacle holy and abused the worshippers who brought their sacrifices and gifts to the Lord (1 Samuel 2:21-25). Later God raised up Samuel to be a judge and take the priests' place.

One little song says:

"God has blotted them out
I'm happy and glad and free
God has blotted them out
I'll turn to Isaiah and see
Chapter 44, twenty two and three
He blotted them out
So now I can shout
For that means me!"

And another says:

Thank you for the cross,
The price You paid for us,
How You gave Yourself,
So completely,
Precious Lord (precious Lord).
Now our sins are gone,
All forgiven,
Covered by Your blood,
All forgotten,
Thank You, Lord

ARE YOU ANGRY OR AFRAID?

1. When we look at ourselves and our problems that is all we can see. They will fill our whole view (Psalm 42:3). The writer asked: "Why are you downcast. O my soul" (Psalms 42:5; 43:5)?
Stop looking at your place in life and look to God. Give your situation to Him.
2. Look forward. Moses told the people to remember the past, but only because of what God had done for them. We must not let past mistakes rob us of our joy. Look to God and His promise. The future is in His hands; trust Him for tomorrow. "Hope in God!"
3. The Bible is full of promises of God's help. Take His promise as your own and tell Him, "I am trusting in your promise, Lord." Stop asking "Why?" and start standing on God's promises.
Joshua told the people of Israel, "Not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed" (Joshua 23:14).
4. Stop making excuses. Others may fuss and fret and worry over things that happen to them, but you can be free and rest in God's love! True praise will make your worries flee.

WE ARE LIKE SHEEP

'We have all gone astray like sheep, each taking his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all' (Isaiah 53:6).

TALK ABOUT

1. When I am pressed down and broken in spirit, how can I look up to God?
2. How will God 'restore my soul'?

can put those things right. If we have hurt others, we say we are sorry. If others have harmed us, we forgive them for Christ's sake.

The Holy Spirit will show us the things we do that hurt others. If you have done wrong to a brother or sister in you fellowship and he has no peace, your brother's hurt spirit will spoil your worship. It will also spoil your service to God.

Stop praying, stop serving and put things right with your brother. Ask your brother or sister to forgive you. If you do not forgive others for the hurt they caused you, the offence (or bitter spirit) will:

- a) Come between you and God (1 John 1:7).
- b) Stop your prayers being answered (1 Peter 3:7).
- c) Grow into a bigger hurt (Hebrews 12:15).
- d) Spoil our fellowship with others (Philippians 2:1-3).
- e) Grieve the Holy Spirit so that He withdraws His presence from you (Ephesians 4:30).

TALK ABOUT

1. What gives us entrance to God's presence?
2. What stops us from coming near to God?
3. Is the Lord's table open to all? Under what conditions?

"O Lord, You have searched me and You know me. Before the word is on my tongue, You know it completely . . . You hem me in – behind and before . . . Where can I go from Your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your Presence?" (Psalm 139:1,4-5,7).

BITTERNESS WILL DESTROY YOUR SOUL

All Christians are one in Christ's Body on earth. And we all suffer stress, hard times, loss, loneliness, and want. None of us is free from the problems of life. A bitter spirit is not the answer!

A young man might think, 'If only I had a wife. That would take care of my loneliness!' But when he marries a wife he finds himself facing not just his problems, but her problems, too!

Another young man thinks a new truck will satisfy him, but will it? Very soon it eats up his money and takes all his time. He feels as if he is 'married' to his auto. Some are!

A young woman of a strong husband and with a beautiful home and baby. She thinks this will take away the empty feeling! But her baby cries a lot and keeps her 'on duty' most of the night! She finds that she cannot even bathe

"Sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvellous things . . . Shout for joy to the Lord . . . burst into jubilant song with music; make music to the Lord with the harp . . . and the sound of singing, with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn – shout for joy before the Lord, the King" (Psalm 98:1,4-6).

“MANY OF YOU ARE WEAK AND SICK . . . ”

Many in the church had not confessed their sins to God; they were not living holy lives, so Paul said to the Christians in Corinth: “Many of you are weak and sick . . . ” (1 Corinthians 11:30). And he gave the reason for their sicknesses . . . they had guilty consciences!

A number had fallen asleep. That meant some of them had died because of their sins. Their sins so troubled them that they got sick in their bodies and died. Yes, if we don’t confess our sins and be made clean, guilt can make us sick! The judgment of God came upon them! God was not pleased. They did not honour Him in the way they lived.

When they came together for a fellowship meal they separated into groups. They did not eat as one fellowship (1 Corinthians 11:21). Some got drunk, others acted as though they were the only ones there and would not share. They were not like a fellowship of believers, but acted like heathen. There was no caring for others and no sharing their food with the poor. Their worship time turned into a wild party. Everyone grabbed for himself. In all this they did not honour Christ’s death. ‘If you have to behave like this, you had better eat at home,’ Paul told them, “It is not the Lord’s supper that you eat.”

TALK ABOUT

1. Jesus ate with His disciples?
2. He used bread as a symbol of His body and as a symbol of His blood that would be shed for us on the cross?

WE ARE NOT WORTHY

We are not worthy to come to the Lord’s table, but we are made worthy as we confess our sin and put wrong things right. So “Let us draw near to God:

- a) With a sincere heart (1 Peter 2:1-3).
- b) In full assurance of faith (Hebrews 10:22).
- c) With heart (conscience) and body sprinkled by His blood . . . (Hebrews 9:13-14).
- d) Holding to the hope we profess (Hebrews 3:6).
- e) Considering how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds . . . (Hebrews 10:22-24).

PUT WRONG THINGS RIGHT

God gives us many chances to repent. When we are careless and don’t take Him at His word, “we are judged by the Lord” (1 Corinthians 11:32). God’s judgments come with His mercy. They are sent to change us and make us more like Jesus (Hebrews 12:5-11).

The Holy Spirit will show us what is wrong in our lives. By His grace, we

PUT YOUR HOPE IN GOD

The only answer to a broken heart is to “put your HOPE in God.” As we draw HOPE from Him, praise comes to our lips.

We will find that God does not answer all our prayers the way we want Him to. His greatness cannot be searched out (Psalm 145:2-3). But He does give peace to our hearts! Jesus said, “My peace I give you . . . Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (John 14:27).

“Casting all our care upon Him,” the Bible says, “because He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

The Bible says we can live secure and at peace. Put your hand in His; cast your troubles on the Lord!

TALK ABOUT

1. Can we find answers for our troubles in the Bible?
2. How should we ‘look to God’ in times of trouble?
3. Does the Bible answer all our questions? Why not?
4. How does trouble make our faith stronger?

GOD IS EVERYWHERE

God is everywhere! Where there is trouble, God is there! He has not promised us a life of no trouble, but He has promised to be with us in our troubles: “He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him,” David wrote (Psalm 91:15).

ARE YOU SICK?

A big crowd pressed around Jesus and a sick woman came close to Him. She had spent all her money on medicines, but she only got worse. Her faith said, ‘Touch Jesus,’ so she reached out from behind and touched the hem of His cloak. That moment, she knew she was healed.

The power to heal this woman’s sickness, was not in His clothes. The power was in Jesus, in His Person. It is God’s power that heals sick people.

Jesus turned and asked, “Who touched Me?” He knew that power had gone out of Him (5:30; Luke 8:45). God always answers our weak faith.

And when He blesses us, we must not hide (5:20).

JESUS READ . . .
“The Spirit of the . . . Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me . . . He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners . . . ”
(Isaiah 61:1).

“Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to Him with the ten-stringed lyre. Sing to Him a new song; play skilfully . . . Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the people of the world revere Him”
(Psalm 33:2-3,8).

The woman knew she was healed, so she came forward and fell at Jesus' feet. He adopted her into His family and called her 'daughter' (Ephesians 1:5).

"Your faith has healed you," He told her. "Go in peace" and be freed from your suffering (Luke 8:48). No one had ever spoken such words to this woman before.

Maybe you have a sickness, or someone hurt you. The hurt happened years ago. You have tried everything but the pain will not go away. Reach out to Jesus. He will stop everything to heal you. Right now, He is looking for you.

Someone said, "It is not important that I get out of my troubles, but it is important what I get out of them."

DO YOU GRIEVE?

We can weep and wring our hands, but that will not bring our loved ones back to us. What should we do? Let God restore your soul! If you are grieving today, God sorrows with you. He knows about your broken heart and He wants to comfort you. He cares for you more than you can ever know.

All your tears cannot change the past. Accept what you cannot change. Put the past into God's hands and ask Him to give you comfort and peace. He will give you the Holy Spirit - the Comforter— in special measure for this time of sorrow.

Think on what you have in Christ, not on what you have lost. You will feel the pain of loss, but let God finish His work in you. Trust Him for what is still to come. He will give 'beauty for ashes' and 'the oil of gladness for mourning . . . ' (Isaiah 61:3).

Strength and joy come from God's river of grace. That river flows into our lives by His Spirit and it comes to us all the time.

"I will praise You with the harp for Your faithfulness, O my God; I will sing praise to You with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel . . . ! whom You have redeemed" (Psalm 71:22-23).

TALK ABOUT

When we sorrow, does God send comfort to our hearts? How?

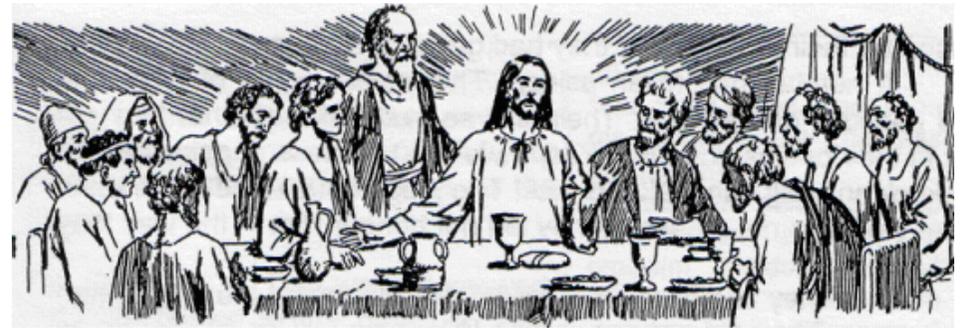


WE MUST HONOUR CHRIST

Christ told His disciples to eat a covenant meal to remember His death, 'until He come.' But our eyes must be on Him, not on eating, or on our own needs.

Paul told the Christians, "a man ought to examine himself before he eats the bread and drinks the cup . . ." If we are not ready to confess the sin in our

lives, we are not ready to eat the Lord's Supper. If you are living in sin and eat you will not honour Christ. And you will bring God's judgment upon yourself.



Jesus in the upper room eating the 'last supper' with His disciples

A FEAST TO REMEMBER CHRIST

"The Lord Jesus . . ." Christ was in an 'upper room' with His disciples - maybe a big room in Mary's house. It was "the night He was betrayed" by Judas Iscariot. Jesus He took the bread – the common loaf from the table and made the bread a symbol or picture of what would happen to Him.. It was not His real body because He stood there before them. The bread would represent His body to be broken on the cross. "When He had given thanks, He broke the bread and said, This is My body, which is (broken) for you. Do this in remembrance of Me." The verb means 'keep on doing this' (1 Corinthians 11:24).

In the same way He (Jesus) took the cup they had passed around. It was the common cup they used during the meal. "The cup is the New Covenant in My blood . . ." He told them (Luke 22:20).

Again, Jesus made the wine a symbol of His own blood. He was still with them. His blood had not yet been shed, but without the shedding of blood there could be no New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-33; Hebrews 9 and 10).

The apostles received this feast "from the Lord." They passed it on to others. Paul passed it on to the church at Corinth, but they had forgotten his instructions. He repeated what he had received (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

TALK ABOUT

1. What last command did Jesus give His disciples?
2. What must we do to honour Christ?