

Tutapona

The following document is a rough copy of Pastor Drost's devotional notes
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Eagar's presentation...

- # Sometimes we hear stories of terrible things that happen in other parts of the world... Congo, Uganda, the grinding poverty and violent crime in countries in Central America (Honduras, Guatemala), terrorism... as if these issues are out there and we live over here. **We forget that the issue of forgiveness affects us all!**

When Jesus taught us to pray... *"And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us"* that is us, on a daily basis! **US when someone does us wrong.**

- # Jesus goes on to say right after the Lord's Prayer:

"If you forgive others when they trespass (their wrongs) against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, your Father will not forgive your trespasses". Matthew 6:14-15

Following Jesus is all about living by another set of values!
It's responding to wrongs in an entirely different way.

Illustration: Last week I had the privilege of attending the national conference of the Canadian Police Chaplains Association. I met some amazing and very dedicated chaplains from across Canada. Most of them were Christians (about 95%). I had supper with an Iman from Toronto (Nice guy. Born in English Guyana). He was telling me of all the rules the Muslims have to keep...

He asked me about our rules... I explained that our salvation is not based on rules but GRACE!
Jesus teaches us in this same chapter (Matthew 5:38)

"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. Matthew 5:38-39

"Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth" was the law of Moses...

But Jesus responded with GRACE... I tell you "do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek".

Verse 41...

If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles.

The extra mile is GRACE.

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Matthew 5:43-44

Jesus is the healer of our souls and what he teaches isn't about religious rules. It's about our physical, emotional and spiritual well-being and the health of our communities.

When you seek to forgive instead of seek to revenge you gain HEALING! Not only spiritual healing but emotional healing, psychological healing... EVEN physical healing!

Illustration: Some time ago I was responding to a situation as a Chaplain and this Roman Catholic lady was very angry at her ex-husband. It was obvious that it was totally consuming her so I told her **the African snake story** that Chaundra had shared with me that they use in the refugee camps with their Tutapona trauma program when talking about forgiveness...

Imagine you are walking in the forest and a snake bites your ankle. You know that its poison is now inside you. **Your first reaction is to kill the snake**, to chase it and beat it to death - you want to kill it because it has hurt you, poisoned you. But if you chase that snake without dealing with the poison inside of you, you will die! The poison will move through your body eventually making you unable to move, killing you slowly. You must take care of yourself first. Once you have taken care of yourself, **then you can go on with your life**. Unforgiveness is like poison; if you carry it in your heart, it will kill you, it can keep you from living life and caring for yourself and your family. You must take care of yourself first and not chase the snake. And, guess what, you might never find the snake!

- Forgiveness doesn't mean that you condone the wrong that was done to you... that snake bite was bad, poison, wrong!
- Forgiveness is a conscious and deliberate decision to let go of feelings of resentment, anger or vengeance toward someone.
- Forgiveness bring you healing!

I had the awesome opportunity to pray with that lady!

And at the end of this service I want to pray for you...

+ Booker T. Washington, the great African-American scientist who faced prejudice all his life said, *"I will never allow another man to control or ruin my life by making me hate him."*

+ Paul tells us in Romans 12...

"Repay no one evil for evil." Romans 12:17a (NKJV)

That's our natural instinct! Eye for eye! Insult for insult!

Anger, bitterness, talk bad about them, spread stories about them, turn people against them...

Paul goes on to say...

"Beloved, do not avenge yourselves." Romans 12:19a (NKJV)

What do we do instead?

"If your enemies are hungry, feed them; If they are thirsty, give them something to drink." Romans 12:20a

That's turning the other cheek, walking the second mile. That's forgiveness! **That's winning like Jesus won over evil!**

Paul finishes that chapter by saying...

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:21 (NKJV)

Illustration: I often am reminded of a nature program I watched years ago on the **African Cichlid** (*siklad*). The Cichlid is a Mouthbrooder fish. It incubates its eggs in its mouth and after they hatch they remain there while they mature. The little baby fish swim near the mother but the moment there's any sign of danger the mother scoops all her little ones into the shelter of her mouth.

- The Cuckoo catfish takes advantage of this by suddenly attacking the Cichlid mother. As she reacts to defend herself, she inevitably spills many of her eggs. Taking advantage of the tension of the moment the Cuckoo catfish lays her eggs and quickly swims away.
- The Cichlid mother then scoops up her spilt eggs, including the Cuckoo's eggs, taking into her mouth the seed of her evil enemy. The Cuckoo eggs mature faster than the Cichlid eggs and as they hatch they eat all the Cichlid eggs leaving the mother to raise her own enemy's offspring.

When someone does you wrong and you respond "eye for eye, angrily, vindictively, repaying evil for evil, you inevitably will take into your soul your enemy. That same evil will become a part of you and slowly destroy your future...

The poison of the evil that bit you festers in your soul and destroys your dreams, kills your joy, your freedom... it will eat away the goodness in you and you will breed and spread the very evil that destroyed your heart.

That's how evil spreads from generation to generation; from a hateful father to a son or a daughter... the abused becomes abuser... violence breeds violence... revenge sows the seeds of war and hate and crime...

- This past Wednesday, a man shot and killed two African-Americans at a Kentucky Kroger store after trying to barge into a black church.
- Then all of US was in high alert because of a Florida man who had railed against Democrats and minorities with hate-filled messages online sent 12 packages with bombs causing fear and panic.
- Then yesterday morning, a man shouting anti-Semitic slurs opened fire at a Pittsburgh synagogue, killing 11 people and injuring several others attending Jewish services. The worst attack on Jewish people in American history!

All of these recent events have one thing in common: Hate!

And I guarantee that each of these men are themselves victims of abuse, violence and hate.

When we respond to evil with evil we become part of the problem! We take into ourselves our enemy! Jesus invites us to life, forgiveness, peace, freedom by following a different way!

Tutapona = "We will be healed"

Prayer:

- Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who

trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power and the Glory, for ever and ever. AMEN.