

The 8th Day Message

INSPIRATION FOR SEPTEMBER 2011

REVENGE! Who needs it? Who wants it? Certainly not you!!! Or, do you? It has been over a decade since the events of 9/11 occurred, but the horrific sights and sounds are forever etched on our memories, and the feelings and emotions these horrible events left us with is enough to make us vomit every time we think about them. It is fair to say that some of those directly involved with these events, those who lost loved ones, long for justice or even revenge! Some live with unforgiveness as part of who they are now. But the question is, how long can one live with the spirit of unforgiveness before it has a negative impact on their emotional or physical well-being?

Many of us have experienced our own personal 9/11 at some point in our lives. Some of us have experienced rape/sodomy--personal or a child or family member--this has a very devastating effect on the whole family, not just the victim! Whether the perpetrator is known or not, the wish on/for that person is usually revenge as well as justice, for so often there is no justice for the victims of such crimes. Then there are those who have experience the murder of a loved one, or an untimely accident of small children or a spouse. This too has severely devastating effects on families, and parents have been known to divorce over the death of a child because of an accident, where one of the parents was the driver of the vehicle. My heart goes out to these parents who were so devastated that they felt they could no longer live with the spouse who drove the vehicle that became the weapon of death for that child or children. There are many people going through ugly dragged out divorces and child custody battles. These evil events are like living in purgatory for those going through them because they usually have no idea when or how these events will end. These legal cases are so time consuming and emotionally draining! Ugly death penalties and torture is wished upon the spouse or parent who would inflict such emotional and financial pain on a family! Perhaps when revenge involves a loved one, it is deeper, who knows?

The story is told about a missionary couple whose son was murdered, by a young man that was about the same age as the beloved son. This bereaved couple took that murderer in and adopted him as their new son! Has anyone heard such a story? Have you heard of a woman marrying her rapist and loving him as Jesus would? What insanity, you might rightly say, what stupidity! Yet what about saying, "What Agape love, what Godly, unselfish love is this?" How do people develop such love for such human beings who do such hurtful and hideous things to other human beings? Only God can love in such a nonjudgmental way; they could only get such love from God. NO ONE in their right minds would want to even look at such despicable persons with anything but vengeful eyes and thoughts. But God has the power to change hearts and minds; ONLY God. No human in their own power, could make such a right-about-turn in their hearts to forgive, and not just forgive, but to turn around and love such people, and allow them into their arms, into their personal space and feel alright with it! That love and forgiveness has to be as powerful as the hatred and lowness it took for the despicable human being who could commit such crimes against another human being.

Like unforgiveness, the same with revenge. Creator-God said; "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." The apostle Paul goes on to say, "...Therefore, if your enemy hungers, feed him, if he thirsts, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12: 19-21) Friends, only a changed heart and mind can obey such a command! Only a God-centered person can repay evil acts with good actions. To those who are God-haters and those of you who do not believe in God "NEVER" say Christians are wimps and that they

use Christianity as a crutch! In order to be a true Christian, THIS is the kind of loving we are called to; the kind of loving that Jesus came to show, bestow, and live. We as Christians are called to LIVE God's love, not just to preach and teach it. Love in action, nothing less, is required as a Christian and a follower of Christ. Retaliation and revenge is not for us; we must leave those for the ungodly, for atheists and agnostics.

We're not talking about "good" people here; we are talking about GODLY people, for only godly people can adopt a murderer, the murderer who murdered your son or daughter! Too many people would like to think that they are not "that bad" of a person because of the "sometimes" good things they do, but the proof of how "good" we really are is seen when horrible events come crashing abruptly and rudely into our lives, causing mayhem and disruption like nothing else can. These evil wake-up-calls, usually come when we are either asleep in our lives, or when we are looking the other way—otherwise distracted! They usually come when we are totally NOT ready for them to come, much like Hurricane Katrina did on U.S. soil a few years ago. And oh what unsightly revelations did that catastrophe expose to the world about America! What shame and disgrace we suffered here!

What did the personal catastrophes that turned up in your life reveal about you? Devastation has its way of revealing things to us about ourselves that we were totally unaware of. May the God of all comforts not only comfort you during these times of ugly revelations of something deep and dark about yourselves, but may He also be allowed to give *us* the strength to accept these truths and then the courage to make positive changes where we must in order to go on living and not just coping but dealing with and loving life again, (or perhaps for the first time in our lives).

And remember that only God can truly deal with revenge. He knows exactly where to put His finger on the person who has ever done us wrong; He knows the best time to visit those who have harmed us. You'll be glad that you forgave the person and left them for God to deal with. REVENGE, who needs it? NO ONE!!!

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