

Msg #124 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*

“Turn the Other Cheek”

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today, I'd like to talk about your testimony. I mean, about your testimony that Jesus Christ is Lord of your life. You know, you go around telling people that you're a Christian, or you tell them that Jesus Christ died for them. Maybe you invite people to church, or maybe you pass out tracts with the church evangelistic team. Maybe you don't do any of these things, maybe you just go about your life every day and don't say anything. But whether you tell people about Jesus with your mouth or not, one thing is certain, and that is that you are telling everyone around you what you think of Jesus Christ by your actions.

We give witness of Jesus in one of three ways. I've talked about this before, plenty of times. The first way you give testimony is with your lips. It's what you confess with your mouth. The second is the type of things your body does. If what people see when they watch you conforms with the testimony of your mouth, then it's a second testimony that you give of Jesus Christ. The third testimony that you give is by your spirit. You can go through the motions of religion in your outward actions, and you can testify that Jesus Christ is Lord with your lips, but if you have no spirit for it than you have no third witness that Jesus Christ means anything to you at all.

You may not understand how important it is to have three witnesses within yourself that Jesus Christ truly is Lord and Savior of your life, but you are giving three testimonies every day of your life whether you realize it or not. The testimony you give may be false and it may be true, but whether it is false or true will depend on whether or not it lines up with God's spoken and written word. You will understand God's word when his Holy Spirit reveals it to you, and if God is revealing his word to you, then you have a responsibility to give witness of him according to that word. You can give all kinds of testimony with your lips, but if you want your testimony to

make a difference in the lives of other people, then you're going to have to give testimony that is true. It's just simply, one, two, three. One witness with your lips, one witness from your body, and one witness with your spirit.

We are told in Scripture that when judgment is determined in a life or death situation, then there needs to be two or three witnesses in order to provide a judgment that is sure and true. It's the same thing in our courtrooms today. We don't condemn a man just because one witness testified against him. We require at least two witnesses, and if there are several witnesses, then there must be general accord. One of the witnesses can give a different testimony, but the majority of the witnesses will overrule that one different testimony and judgment will still be determined. This is what actually takes place around you every day. People are watching you. They are waiting to see if you really are a Christian or not. They hear your testimony, but they hear it in three ways.

So, let's take a look at a couple of Scripture's in the Bible and see if we can find something interesting. First of all let's look in Romans 10:8. It says that, "the word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart, that is, the word of faith, which we preach." Notice that this verse refers to faith which is represented in two different ways. First, it refers to that faith which is in your mouth, and second, it refers to that faith which is in your heart. Believing the truth in your heart is a far cry from just mumbling the sinner's prayer. When we become Christians we have to take the word of God into our heart. It has to be something that finds its way down deep within us until it becomes part of us. Not just the surface thing. If God can't get deep within your heart, then he's probably not there at all. Remember, the Bible tells us that we must worship God in spirit and in truth. It has to be that we believe his word, the actual truth, but we also have to have a heart for his word. There has to be a spirit witness in our lives that we have truly received his truth and not just confessed it with our lips only. If we only have the truth of God on the surface, but not down deep inside, then we really don't have the truth at all.

Now, when the truth of God's word goes beyond our lips and finds its way down deep within our heart, then we will begin to understand the word much more clearly. It's like a student who has to read a homework assignment, but has no heart for it. If a student has an assignment to read, but has no heart for it, how much information do you think that student will retain? It's the same way for Christians. If we have no heart for the word of God, then how clear can God possibly make it to us? If you're reading your Bible without really looking for truth that will change your life, then you're not going to understand much of it, or even be able to stay awake for very long. If you aren't really interested in what the Bible is telling you, then you will soon lose your focus and your thoughts will drift away unto other things.

You know, one of these days every one of us will stand before the Lord God in judgment. The books will be opened, and about 75% of all the people who claim to be Christians will say something like, "Oh really! I didn't know that's what the Bible really meant." And the Lord will say, but if you truly had a heart for my word, you would have understood it when you read it.

Now, you're a Christian. At least, I'm assuming that if you're listening to this program you probably are a Christian. But do you really want to get to heaven and stand before the judgment seat of Christ and be told that what you thought was Christianity really wasn't? No one likes to be disappointed, including you. If you're looking forward to heaven, you don't want to be told on judgment day that there has been a significant change of plans for your future. But then, it's the same thing for God. He doesn't like to be disappointed either. He has given us his spoken and written word, but he has also given us his Holy Spirit so that we can understand the spoken and written word more clearly. God wants us to read and hear his word and listen carefully so that we understand very clearly what his word says, so that we might meet the obligation to God that he has set before us.

Now, the only way you're going to meet that obligation is if you have the word of God in your heart. You can't have a bunch of confusion in your brain about the word of God and still expect to give the proper threefold testimony that God requires of you. If the word of God says something, but you follow another social doctrine instead of what the word of God says to you, how do you think God will respond? God has not given us his spoken and written word just so we can misinterpret it and live our lives in a fashion which is contrary to God's word. God gave us his word specifically so that we might live a threefold testimony specifically according to that word. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that if God has put something in his word, he means it. After all, if you have kids, and you tell them that you want them to do something, would you want them to ignore you and just assume that you really didn't want them to do what you asked them to do? If you tell your kids not to play in the street, and then they go out and play in the street, what's your response? Do you want them to stay out of the street or not? It can't be that hard to realize that when God says something in his word, he means it, or he wouldn't have said it in the first place.

Now, let me give you an example which might best express the concept of taking God's word at face value instead of using the social interpretation of it. To begin with, let me read Matthew 5:44. It says, "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless them who curse you, do good to them who hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

Now, I'd like you to zero in on the portion of this verse which said, "love your enemies." This is the whole gist of this verse, to love your enemies, and to do good to those who are not doing good to you. We can pretty well understand the Christian principle of love. However, when the Bible says to love your enemies, why is it that the prevailing doctrine in the church is to only love our enemies if they are minor enemies? What I mean is, preachers tell us that if someone isn't nice to us, that we should still be nice to them. But they also tell us that if anyone threatens to harm us severely, or to harm our family, then we can take whatever physical action is necessary to subdue the enemy, even to the extent of killing them. Hmmm! Think about it. The Bible says to love our enemies. Yet, we are told by many preachers that we can kill our enemy. We are told that we can defend ourselves if necessary against an attack.

Now, we know that in the Old Testament, under the physical law of commandments, that Israel was instructed in many ways to defend themselves. However, Jesus made a specific reference to this concept in Matthew 5:43, which is the verse just prior to the verse I read to you. He said that even though it had been taught in the past to love your neighbor but to hate your enemy, he was telling you that now you should love your enemy, and even do good to them that would harm you.

There is a decided difference between the Old Testament covenant of a physical law and the New Testament covenant of a spiritual relationship with God. Under the Old Testament covenant of a physical law mankind was required to subdue wickedness and to establish righteousness by the works of their own hands. If there were wicked people within their own nation, the Israelites were to punish them, even stoning them to death. If there were wicked people within other nations surrounding them, God would even have them go against them, killing the people of those other nations, and sometimes even the children of those wicked people. Yet, Jesus brought the new covenant of Grace to us. Not a covenant of physical action where we attempt to establish righteousness by the strength of our own hands, but rather a spiritual covenant whereby we war against the spiritual wickedness instead of the physical wickedness. Ephesians 6:12 tells us that our warfare is not with flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and rulers of darkness and spiritual wickedness in high places. The Bible also tells us in 2 Corinthians 10:4 that our weapons God has given us are not carnal. They are not weapons that this world uses.

As a people of God, Christians are not called to right the wrongs of the wicked. In fact, as Jesus put it in Matthew 5:39, if someone hits us on the right side of our face, then, instead of hitting that person back, we are to present the left side of our face for that person to hit us again. It doesn't even say that we should run away, but that we should actually present the other cheek and give our enemy an opportunity to hit us again.

Now, when Jesus says that we are to turn the other cheek, and to love our enemies, then why do we continually preach a doctrine which calls for defense against enemies and to kill our enemies. You may not understand what I'm referring to. This might be harder than you can handle. But what I'm talking about is doing exactly what the Bible calls us to do, and under the new covenant of Grace, we are to cease from hating our enemy, and are to now love our enemy.

Let me ask you a simple question in light of this thought. Imagine yourself as a soldier on the front lines, and imagine yourself seeing the, quote enemy, unquote, and you raise your rifle and point it at that enemy. Then when you have the enemy firmly in your sights, you mumble the words, "I love you." Then you pull the trigger and put a bullet through your enemies head. Now, explain to me how you can give love to your enemy, and at the same time, kill him. There is no stretch of the imagination that can say killing your enemy is equivalent to loving him.

Oh sure, I know all the comments. People say you're un-American when you talk about not killing your enemies. But what do you think it's called in other countries when the enemy is

America? It doesn't make any difference what country you live in. If you're Christian, then you're to love your enemy, whether your enemy is Russian, Arabian, German, or American. 1 Peter 2:19-21 says, "For this is worthy of thanksgiving, if a man for conscience toward God endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what glory is it, if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But if, when you do good, and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." Now, listen closely to verse 21. It says, "For even for this reason were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps."

Do you hear what the Bible is saying? It is a good thing if we endure grief and suffer wrongfully at the hands of our enemies. If we do good, yet suffer for it, and we take the suffering patiently, this is acceptable with God. But verse 21 really emphasizes the essence of Christianity when it says, "for even for this reason were you called."

We were called to bring glory to Christ Jesus by suffering persecution at the hands of our enemies. And, rather than trying to right the wrongs of this world with our physical strength, we have now been called to use prayer as our weapon of choice. When Jesus said, "love your enemies," there is no other way to take it except to love your enemy.

There are many preachers who try to persuade Christians that they should participate in the killing of their country's enemies. But I would like to say to you, Jesus did not call us to fight the battles of the world's armies. He did not call us to join forces with those who try to use might and power to accomplish their own gains. From the time of Satan's initial rebellion, he has stirred up the hearts of men to kill one another. Then, after he stirs up the nations to warfare, he tries to get us to think that righteousness can then be established by some more physical warfare. But, the Old Testament clearly demonstrated the futility of man's own ability to establish righteousness. It is man's own might and power that causes war. More might and power will not cause the warfare to cease, but it is only God himself who has the power to establish peace.

Haggai 2:22 tells us that there will come the day when God will overthrow the throne of kingdoms in this earth. There will come the day when man will no longer try to rule over others by force. But, until that day arrives, we have been called to suffer persecution, and to thereby give glory to God. When we suffer persecution without returning anger in place of it, this gives glory to God. It gives glory to him because it tells all people that we look to him as the Almighty God, and that he, not us, is the revenger of all things, and the Judge of all people. When we turn the other cheek, we are demonstrating to the whole world that the love for Jesus Christ is stronger than the love for our own self, or even for our own earthly family. We have not been called to love ourselves. We have not been called to make self-preservation the ultimate purpose on earth. We have been called as lambs to be led daily to the slaughter. This is not a very popular doctrine, but it is the doctrine of Jesus Christ. We no longer live under the Old Testament law of commandments, but live as born-again creatures in Jesus Christ. If we are truly born again in Jesus Christ, then we will not forsake him. He spoke in his word that we were to take up our cross and follow him to Calvary. Calvary is a place where crucifixion takes place. If

we were not to be crucified with him, there would be no need to take up our cross. Yet, Jesus made it plainly clear. If we seek to save our life, we will lose it. However, if we lose our life for his sake, then we will find it.

There are many things in Scripture which can be plainly understood if we take them for what they plainly say. However, to follow the Bible closely is a difficult thing. Satan has firmly established an acceptable world social system that is not easily ignored by Christians. Yet, we Christians are called to be crucified with Christ each and every day of our lives. The Bible says that we are not to resist evil that is formed against us, but we are to return good for the evil.

Now, I know that what I'm talking about is a very difficult thing, because it's one thing to claim to be a Christian, but it's a whole different thing to be ready to die for Jesus. If you seek to save your life, you will ultimately lose it. But Satan wants you to be more concerned for your own life and your own rights than for the life and rights of Jesus. It's not easy to be a Christian. It's much easier to be a Christian from the view of the world's social standard. But, the world social standard is not the same standard as the Bible sets for us.

The only way you can be born again is if you let your old man die. In the Old Testament the life was in the blood. In order for God to receive glory, the blood has to be shed. The only way that the new born again in spirit man can live is if the fleshly man first dies. It is not flesh and blood which will inherit the kingdom of God. Flesh and blood was never meant to inherit heavenly things. God is a Spirit, and anyone who wants to be in heaven with God is going to have to reject the man of flesh and choose to be a spirit being.

Now, once again I'd like to bring you back to that Scripture of Matthew 5:44. It says to love your enemies. There is no situation where you or your loved ones have come under attack without that attacker being considered your enemy. Whether someone has said something hurtful, or whether someone has taken something from you that was not theirs, or they have attempted to harm you or your family in one way or another, you would quickly describe that person as your enemy, at least for the present. The question is, what does Jesus say you should do to that enemy? The Bible is very plain, but it is man's doctrine within the ranks of Christianity which brings confusion. No one wants to stand up and be counted for Christ, but there is plenty of encouragement to stand up and be counted by your country. But it isn't your country that promises eternal life. The most your country can do is to promise you temporary freedom. It is God who promises eternal freedom. Yet, you have the choice to choose your freedom. If you seek to preserve your life in this world, then you will lose your eternal life in the world to come. It would be much better to allow your flesh and blood human being to suffer persecution or even death at the hands of wicked people than to take your life into your own hands. You may be able to preserve your flesh for a short time on this earth, but just remember that you don't have the power to give yourself eternal life.