

The Key That Opens Hearts

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon teaches that we can overcome evil with good by treating our enemies with kindness and respect, which can lead to a change in their heart and behavior, and bring a reward from the Lord.

Scripture: Romans 12:20

Topics: "Overcoming Evil with Good", "The Power of Kindness"

Description

Erlo Stegen emphasizes the transformative power of responding to evil with good, as illustrated in Romans 12:20-21 and Proverbs 25:21-22. He shares a story of a Christian neighbor who, despite repeated harm from a heathen neighbor's cow, chose to respond with kindness rather than retaliation, ultimately leading to a change in the neighbor's behavior. Stegen highlights that such unexpected goodness can convict the conscience of those who do wrong, and that God rewards those who act righteously. He also draws parallels with Elijah's respectful treatment of King Ahab, despite Ahab's evil actions, showcasing the importance of maintaining integrity and goodness in the face of adversity.

Transcript

Rom 12:20, 21, "Therefore if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

Prov 25:21, 22, "If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; 22 For so you will heap coals of fire on his head, and the LORD will reward you."

Commentators differ in their interpretation of the words, "For so you will heap coals of fire on his head". If your enemy harms you and you deal well with him in return, he will find it surprising and unexpected. That will be like burning coals of fire on his conscience and the Lord will also reward you.

Example: There were two men who were neighbours; the one a Christian and the other a heathen. The heathen's cow regularly grazed in his neighbour's vegetable garden and destroyed much of his vegetables. Each time the Christian would return the cow and start his vegetable garden from scratch. Eventually he felt that he had had enough. He even thought of poisoning the cow, but then he prayed and asked God for wisdom. So he took back the cow and said to his neighbour, "Here is your cow that has been grazing in my vegetable garden. If it should happen again, then ...", and he stopped. His neighbour indignantly answered, "then what?". But he kept quiet and his neighbour pressed him and raised his voice, "tell me, what will you do then, ugh?". At last he answered quietly, "then I will bring it back to you again."

This soft answer pricked the heathen's conscience and the cow never roamed into the Christian's yard again.

In the same way Elijah also treated his king with great respect, although Ahab was so evil and only did him harm. After the prophets of Baal were killed, Elijah prayed for rain. When God answered him, he sent word to the king to prepare his chariot and go into the city lest the rain should overtake him. And Elijah himself ran in front of the king's chariot to his honour, as we read in 1Sam 8:10, 11.

Elijah did good to king Ahab and his wicked wife Jezebel, but they hardened themselves in their wickedness and God eventually destroyed them.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/erlo-stegen/the-key-that-opens-hearts/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net