

Overcoming Evil With Good

by Vernon Helmuth

The sermon emphasizes the importance of overcoming evil with good by being sincere in love, abhorring evil, cleaving to good, being kindly affectionate one to another, rejoicing in hope, and continuing instant in prayer.

Duration: 1:13:03

Scripture: Proverbs 25:21, Matthew 5:44, Luke 6:27, Romans 12:9, Romans 12:21, 1 Thessalonians 5:15, 1 Peter 3:9

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

The sermon titled 'Overcome Evil with Good' discusses the principle of responding to evil with good in our lives. The speaker shares that as we grow in our Christian life, God often brings harder challenges into our lives to teach us this principle. He uses the example of a familiar saint, Dirk Williams, who was fleeing for his life and encountered a thief catcher chasing him. Despite the danger, Williams chose to help the thief catcher when he cried out for help, demonstrating the principle of overcoming evil with good. The sermon emphasizes that we can be more than conquerors through Christ and encourages the audience to continually strive to overcome evil with good in their lives.

Transcript

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A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Greetings to each one this morning. In the precious name of Jesus, I've been tremendously blessed this morning.

Tremendously encouraged hearing the testimonies, the children's lesson. I would like to, I'm not sure where to begin this morning. I'm not sure why I'm nervous, but I'm grateful to be with you this morning.

God has laid a message upon my heart. It's been laying this upon my heart for a while. And I'm not sure who I'm speaking to this morning, but I know one person that I'm speaking to.

And that's the one that's standing behind this pulpit. So if this message is not for you, then it's for me. Turn with me to Romans chapter 12 for our text.

The title of the message this morning is the last verse of the chapter. I've titled the message, Overcome Evil with Good. Overcome Evil with Good.

It's something that I have, that God has been teaching me. If you would have asked me 20 years ago, I would have said that I understand this principle. And that I know how to apply it to my life.

But I believe many of us, as we sit here this morning, would also recognize as we grow in our Christian life, God at times brings harder and harder things into our life, does He not? As a young child, when my sibling takes a toy away from me, I can learn what it means to say, OK, you can have it. As I grow a little older, and my older siblings, I become a teenager, and maybe I'm ridiculed for who I am, and this becomes a little harder. But I can still learn to say, OK, that's OK, I'll accept that.

But as time goes on, and God gives us more harder things to do, harder things to carry out, God still calls us to return good. Overcome evil with good. To overcome evil with good.

To be an overcomer. And I guess the burden of my heart this morning is that as I've watched Christians, as I've watched my own life, it's an area where I believe us in America, many of us don't understand this principle. We don't understand this principle.

And what I mean by that is simply this, that when something comes against me, I quickly just say, as a brother Tanner shared, I can't do this. I will not accept this. This is too hard for me.

I will not accept this. I would like to read here, beginning in verse 9, before I get ahead of myself, I would like to just, the last verse in the chapter here says, Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. And then I'd like to back up in verse 9. Paul goes through this chapter, the last half of the chapter, and he gives us some principles.

He gives us an outline, what does it mean by overcoming evil with good. And this is a very familiar chapter, it's a very familiar passage here. And this is a very simple message, but I trust that God will use it, that God would speak to us.

Before we begin, I would just like to pause for a word of prayer, ask the Lord to illuminate our hearts. Let's close our eyes and bow our heads for prayer. Father, we do pray this morning as we look at your word.

Father, we know it's bread, it's life from heaven. Father, we know that it will change our lives if we apply it. Lord, it needs to be more than just in our heads, but God, that you would shine it upon our hearts.

Father, to make these applications in our lives. Father, we do pray that you would break the bread of life this morning. God, you know the frailty, you know the infirmities of my own self, Lord.

You know where I am, you know my own needs, Father. And I thank you that you have given us this word in our hands that we can hold. Father, that we can live by it.

Father, as we've heard this morning, that we can be more than conquerors, that we can be overcomers. Hallelujah. Father, we pray for the congregation this morning, that you would bless them.

Bless the hearts of the hearers, Lord. Father, I pray that you would help us this morning to take these few words, God, that you would illuminate our hearts and minds. Father, that it would change the course of our lives.

Father, there may be some sitting in this building this morning that are stuck, Father. They may find themselves in a difficult place, Lord, not knowing how to overcome evil with good, Lord. And I know this is very simple truth, but God, we know the enemy blinds our eyes, God.

And I pray this morning that you would bless your children, Father. Bless those that aren't converted this morning. May they see the light of Jesus.

Father, we give this time to you. We pray for your blessing, God. We pray for your anointing upon these feeble lips, God.

Father, it is your time. It is not my message, Lord. I pray it's your message.

I pray, God, that you would have your way. In Jesus' name, Amen. Let's begin reading in verse 9. If you want, you can rise to your feet with me.

And we'll read starting in verse 9 of chapter 12 of Romans. He says, Let love be without assimilation. Abhor that which is evil.

Cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love in honor, preferring one another. Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer. Distributing to the necessity of saints, given to hospitality. Verse 14.

Bless them which persecute you. Bless and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep.

Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of lowest state. Be not wise in your own conceits.

Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things on us in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. For it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him.

If he thirst, give him drink. For in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. The last verse.

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. You may be seated this morning. We are truly living in a day when there is evil, is there not? We are in a day where there is lots of evil.

But I'm also blessed to say this morning that we can be more than conquerors. Through Christ who loved us and gave himself for us. That we don't have to walk in a day when we are defeated, defeated, defeated and defeated.

Amen? Just write the title here on the board so you can see it. How many of you have mastered this? How many of you have mastered this? I know this is a broad question. But I would like to say this at the

beginning.

I believe many of us have found ourselves being able to do that. But there's also times in our lives when maybe we let our guards down. Maybe we find ourselves falling.

Maybe we find ourselves relaxing a bit. Maybe we become proud. And maybe we become self-sufficient.

That's been my testimony. Of times when maybe I've not been calling on the Lord. Like the children's lesson said.

Maybe we're not calling on the Lord. Maybe we think, I can do this. I can do this.

And maybe we're not calling on God when evil comes against us. I have a number of points here that I would like to just go through here. And look at them in light of this last verse.

For an introduction. I believe, I find myself looking at this again and again as an elder in the church. I see the need for this.

I see the great need for this. Unless we can overcome evil with good, we will not make it. The world doesn't understand this Scripture, does it? The world doesn't understand.

When someone comes to me with something that's painful, the world retaliates. My son-in-law had a message a week ago at home on responses. Which fits in very well with this message.

We all respond. I will not go there. I'll get sidetracked here.

But let's just look at some of the principles that God has given in His Word. That we can look at, what does it mean to overcome evil with good? All of us in here, I think, many of us would say, yes, I understand. Yes, I know what you're talking about.

It's easy. It's easy language. We can say, if someone does me evil, then I just return good.

We know it up here, do we not? But how is it in my heart? When the trial comes to me, when evil is spoken of me, how do I respond? How do I overcome that? Do I just turn away from Him? Do I go another way? Do I get my little book out and I write them in my book? When something evil comes my way, do I start writing things down? Brother so-and-so didn't do this to me. He didn't respond right to me. I'm going to write that in my book.

In my heart. Deep in my heart. We can do that.

Very quickly we can do that. And this is the burden of my heart. That our hearts this morning would be free and open before God.

No animosity. I had a brother come to me yesterday. He said he was liberated from unforgiveness.

It's one of the things that will cripple us. It's one of the things that will close the door for us to come to God. And to overcome evil with good.

Let love be without dissimulation. What does dissimulation mean? Sincere. True.

In German it says, Die Liebe sei nicht falsch. Not without... You know, I had to think of the term that we many times use coming in for the wedding. We meet a lot of familiar faces.

And the term is used many times. Oh, I'm so glad to see you. It's good to see you again.

Is that sincere? I think those are good words. I think it's right for us. But is my heart sincere in that? A brother that has passed away this last week, he was a brother that would many, many times come to me, almost every Sunday, and he would say, I love you, Brother Vernon.

And I didn't question it for a moment. It was from the heart. His love was without dissimulation.

Is our love sincere? Is our love genuine? This is point number one. That we need that. We need that genuine love to be able to overcome.

To be overcomers. If our love is not sincere, if our love is not genuine, we cannot overcome evil with good. We have many things to look at here.

Brother, I pray that you would ask you to pray for me. I don't feel like I get distracted very easily. It is sometimes hard to get my thoughts out.

Pray for me. Paul admonishes us to be sincere without pretense. And I hope that doesn't make you feel like, well, I won't say that again because I'm maybe not as sincere as I should be.

I'm not discouraging you from saying that. I'm encouraging us, let's be sincere about it. Only God can do that for us.

In the same verse there in verse 9, he says, Abhor that which is evil. Cleave to that which is good. If you look at the word abhor, I get the picture of something that you just stay far away from.

The drunkard should abhor going close to the tavern door. He should not go close to it because it's something that he abhors. He looks at it as, this is something that I cannot go close to.

Disdain it. Abhor that which is evil. What evil is he speaking about here? In context here, I believe he's speaking about abhor that hypocrisy.

Abhor that which is not genuine. Stay away from that thing that is not real. Let your love be without assimilation.

Let it be genuine. Proverbs 6 verse 19 says, well, let's go back to the... I had to think of this love. Abhor that which is evil.

I had to think back. I had to go back to Proverbs 6 where it speaks about six things that the Lord hates. And the seventh is an abomination.

What is the abomination? Does anyone know what that seventh thing is? Well, sowing discord among brethren. Speaking evil of brethren. This is something God hates.

And I think this is in the context of this verse. Let love be genuine. Let it be sincere without pretense.

Abhor that evil speaking. Abhor that which is not edifying. It will cripple us.

It will keep us from overcoming that evil. Overcoming evil with good. Proverbs 6 verse 19 says, a false witness that speaketh lies and he that soweth discord among brethren.

This is something God hates. This is something that will keep you and I from overcoming evil with good. How many of you in here this morning would love to come to a place where you can say that I have come to a place of rest with this Scripture? How many of you would love to have that? I know that everyone in here, if you're honest, you would say, I want that with all of my heart.

But there are principles here that I would like to share with you that have to be in place. I so appreciated the wedding message yesterday about the steps to a godly marriage. You know, all of us want all of these things.

We want all of God's promises in here. But there are things that God requires of us. And that's what I would like to share with you that God has burdened my heart with.

Not for you so much, but it's for me. It's for me. Plead to that which is good.

Philippians 4, verse 8 speaks about whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are of lovely report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things. We should dwell on those things. Things that edify.

Think good of others. You know, I had to think of when Christ was born, the angels came out to the shepherds and He said, Glory to God in the highest. Peace.

And what was the next? And good will toward man. It's good. It's thinking well of us.

Christ didn't come looking down my nose thinking, who are you? Are you going to match up with what I want you to be? He came with good will. He came with a heart of love toward us as we've heard this morning. Point number two is be kindly affectionate one to another.

I like the way the German puts it. If I can read it in German, I'll read it in English too again. It gives a picture of just a warmth.

Be kindly affectionate. Have that tender compassion for your fellow man. This is something that you and I need if we are to be overcomers of evil.

Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love. With brotherly love. And I like that last part.

Such a blessing. I've cherished these verses. Cherished this one verse that our deacon when I was a young man, he quoted them many times and God used them in honor of preferring one another.

Not saying I did these things always, but it is life. It is life and it's health. If you come to your spiritual life, if you come to your brother and you say, what do you think? What is your opinion? It's not my opinion. It's not my way or the highway.

It's what do you think? It's in honor preferring my brothers. This is life to the believer. Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love in honor preferring one another.

If we do this, this is also another key that unlocks us to overcoming evil with good. To overcome evil with good. If I were to ask you this morning, how many of you have had evil come into your life? How many of

you have come face to face with a difficult thing? I think probably all of you that have come to the knowledge of God would all raise your hands.

I'm sure you would. There's no one exempt this morning. If you say, well I haven't experienced that, I would dare say you're probably a young believer and God has something for you yet.

But not to discourage you, God is wanting to mold us and to shape us. And God many times uses hard things in my life and in your life to mold us, to shape us, to draw us closer to Himself. Many times I remember praying, God, I want to be more like You.

And right on the heels of that, God said, are you really sure? And He brings a hard thing into my life. Very difficult. It's like, Lord, I wanted to be closer to You, but not this way.

That's the way it is. God brings hard things for us to mature in Christ. What did Jesus do when He hung on the cross? We know the story.

It's a beautiful story. Jesus lay down on the cross and He spread His hands out. And they were pounding these big nails in His hands.

And all at once the soldiers heard something muttering from His mouth. Father, forgive them. For they know not what they do.

Can we do that? Do you and I have that concept in our hearts? That the love of God is so burning in our hearts that when my brother accuses me, when my brothers come against me, when some false accusation comes against me, that I can just say, Father, forgive them. And my love toward them changes not. My love changes not.

I wish I could say that I could score 100%. Point number three is not slothful in business. Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

We know what a slothful person is. He's lazy. We cannot overcome evil with good if you're lazy.

You cannot be an overcomer when something evil comes your way if you are not diligent. If you are not earnest seeking God. If you are not calling on God and you are not sincere about what you're doing.

If you're just lazy and nonchalant, you will not be able to be an overcomer. Point number five is rejoicing in hope. Rejoicing in hope.

Rejoicing in the Lord Jesus. Being hopeful. I had to think of our my brother Calvin that got married yesterday.

He was a man that had this testimony. He was rejoicing. Many times he was rejoicing.

He worked for me for three years. I worked side by side with him and he would rejoice even when there's things that were not pleasant. And many people blessed him yesterday for that.

I'm not here to lift Calvin on a pedestal but he had a testimony of praising the Lord. Rejoicing. Rejoicing in hope.

Rejoicing being hopeful. Yes, the clouds are coming. Yes, there's a storm and we're in a storm.

Maybe at times. But we can still rejoice. We can still be hopeful.

Amen? We can still be hopeful. The pressures of life. The pressures of life come.

But I would like to bring a word of encouragement. Bring us some promises of God. Hebrews 3, verse 6 says, but Christ has a Son over His own house, whose house are we if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

Firm unto the end. Our brother Leonard, he's been faithful to the end. His time is spent here.

It's over. He's with the Lord. My heart weeps.

I would love to be with him. But even more than that, I'd love to be with Jesus. But let's remain firm unto the end.

Rejoicing in hope. Patient in tribulation. Patient in tribulation.

Some of the things that often times cripples you and I from becoming victorious. Discouragement settles in. We look at the surroundings.

We look at the situation around us. And we become discouraged. Maybe we can't overcome the evil.

We cannot overcome evil with good. We become discouraged. We think people aren't what they should be.

My brother has failed me. My wife has failed me. How can I overcome evil with good when I'm in discouragement? Let's be rejoicing.

Rejoicing in hope. Patient in tribulation. In the last part it says continuing instant in prayer.

Continuing instant in prayer. That's a good place to be, is it not? Praying. When you find yourself weak, pray.

Pray. It's the avenue to overcoming evil with good. Pray.

Pray. The other thing is being thankful. Being grateful is also a very vital key for you and I to be able to overcome evil with good.

Verse 14, point number 5 is bless them which persecute you. Bless and curse not. How do we make applications to this? In Matthew 5, verse 44 he says just turn back there and read that Sermon on the Mount Jesus said Ye have heard that it has been said Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy but I say unto you love your enemies bless them that curse you and then he says do good.

Do good to them that hate you. Do good to them that hate you and what? Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. Again this morning I pray God would speak to each one of our hearts.

God knows where each one of you are. You know where you are. You know the applications but that bless them which persecute you.

I believe it's simply speaking about doing good. Doing good. Going the second mile.

Going out of your way to those that persecute you. It's the natural tendency of my flesh. Each one of us here.

It's the natural tendency for us if we get hurt to sort of turn and go the other way. Is it not? Is that not the natural tendency? I would like to Jesus told us in that same chapter chapter 5 the last verse he says Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. I think there's no other place.

There's no other place in the Bible that we can read of that applies closer to this principle by loving our enemy. Doing good to them which despitefully use you. That refines us, does it not? It brings us to a high plateau of seeking God and walking with God.

But if we have this thing of all these slots, you know, and this person doesn't use me quite like I think he should and this one here is really friendly so I'll come to him and it gets us all confused and it gets us bogged down. But if we love those even that don't love us, it's such a joy, it's a peace, it's a liberty that we can experience in Christ that the world knows nothing of. I'm not saying all these things come natural, but it's only by the Spirit of God that you and I can be that we can overcome evil with good.

It's only by the Spirit of God. This is not something that is mastered in the human flesh. And may I say in this verse 14, I believe it is the master key to overcoming evil with good.

You know how it is? Sometimes you have a whole set of keys but you have a master key. It unlocks a bunch of different ones. That's the way this one is.

Bless them. Do good to them that hate you. Maybe you're sitting here this morning and you're thinking, well I have no one that hates me.

Everyone likes me. Bless God. But I know that if you're if you've walked with the Lord for a number of years, you've experienced heartaches.

You've experienced pain. And I believe He's speaking to us, not about people out in the world that hate us. I don't think He's speaking about those.

I think He's speaking about those that are near, close to us. We hurt our wives. Our wives hurt us.

We heard yesterday about relationships. How is it? Do we love? Do we? Not that we intentionally hurt our wives. Not that our wives intentionally hurt us.

But sometimes those things can become painful. Let's just be real this morning. It's real.

We live in a real world, don't we? Bless them. Bless them. Do good to them that hate you.

And again, I don't think this is now talking about maybe our spouses in particular. But it applies to all phases of our Christian life. Our walking with our brothers.

Do you follow my thought? How do you respond? How do we respond? How is it? How is it with you? Maybe we're touchy this morning. Maybe you're sitting here this morning and you're touchy. I pray that God would deliver you from that.

If you're sitting here this morning and you're touchy, you don't want to be touched. You want people to let you go. You don't want to be responsible.

I pray that God would deliver you. You cannot overcome evil with good if you're touchy. If you're at a place where people can't even talk to you because you have so many needs in your life that you're afraid to open up for fear they might see something, I would beg you to repent this morning.

Turn from that. Whoever you are, I don't know. I'm speaking to a group of people that I don't know.

Coming back to our question, how do I bless those that persecute me? I have five sub-points that I feel like the Lord has given me. And the first point is self needs to die. My own self needs to die.

My image, my self image needs to die before I can bless those that persecute me. And number two, I need to recognize that I deserve this. I did this to Jesus.

I did this very thing to Jesus. What my brother is doing to me. Or my sister.

I did this to Jesus. Number three, my goal is to win him back to Christ. Number four is remembering that I am an unprofitable servant in need of God's wrath.

In need of God's wrath had not Jesus rescued me. Number five is trusting that Romans 8 verse 28 is true. That all things work together for good.

For those that love God and are called according to His purposes. That verse has been a tremendous encouragement to my life. To my spiritual life.

It's when things would come and I would wonder why there would be a dozen whys. Why? And then I would come to this place and realize that all things work together for good. I don't understand, but all things work together.

If their hearts get a hold of that, if in your heart you believe that verse, you can go through a lot of hard things. Point number six. Let's go down to verse 17.

It says, Recompense to no man evil for evil. What does the word recompense? It means to repay. Recompense.

Don't be concerned about repaying. Paul, he takes a few different ways of saying the same thing again and again and again. Don't try to repay those that have hurt you.

How easy is it to think, well, I'll get even with him some way. We would never say that in our heart, in our minds. We would never say that to a brother.

He hurt me, but wait until I get an opportunity. I'll get even with him. Do you ever think that way? Sometimes in our hearts, if our hearts are not free, we can have those thoughts.

Recompense to no man evil for evil. Don't worry about paying him back. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

High standard. A tremendous high standard, is it not? Can we reach it? It's possible. It's possible.

It's in the Word of God. Don't seek for ways to get even with him. And even on top of that, sometimes we think secretly in our hearts, I hope that things don't go well for him.

How is it with us? Do we secretly in our heart wish him ill will? He deserves this. Something happens and God avenges us. But I don't think God avenges us as long as we hold Him.

This has been something that the Lord has spoken to us some years back. As long as I hold a brother by the throat, I say, I will not let you go until you repent. God cannot work.

I don't think God can work. But when we take our hands off, we start praying for that brother. We say, I'll let my hands off.

I'll pray that God would have His way. We have released him. We intercede.

And God can work. I believe that is God's principle. This is only mastered by the Spirit of God and His grace flowing through us.

I know that many of you have experienced this. But I also realize that we are in a day when the enemy is coming against the church in a rage. He's coming against the church in a rage.

And all my heart is that every one of us this morning would come to a place where we recognize who the enemy is. And we recognize the promises of God. And we can overcome evil with good.

This is my burden this morning for us. This is possible by God's grace. Point number 7, verse 18, it says, if it be possible as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

According to Paul here, it was not possible to live in peace with everyone. There's some unconverted. There's some that will not follow the Word of God.

But He gives us a standard where we should pursue it as much as possible. Not excusing ourselves. Not compromising the Word of God.

But as much as lieth in you, go as far as you can without compromising the Word of God. Live peaceably. Matthew 5, verse 9 says, blessed are the what? Peacemakers.

Blessed are the peacemakers. When you're in the church and you see peacemakers, your heart rejoices. Your heart rejoices.

We need peacemakers. We need lots of them. It's the opposite of those that we spoke about earlier that go around speaking evil, showing discord among brethren.

It's the opposite of that. It has the opposite effect. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.

Who wants to be a child of God this morning? Every one of us wants to be a child this morning. To be a peacemaker, you can overcome evil with good many times. One of the keys, it's one of the keys to overcoming evil with good.

You know, I've watched this. People that are out spreading evil about others, that there's no way possible that they can overcome evil with good. Because they're being evil themselves.

And God is calling us to a higher standard. Amen? God is calling us to a place of overcoming that. Being a conqueror.

Being an overcomer. Point number eight. In verse 19, he comes again basically saying the same things.

He says, Dearly beloved, avenge not yourself. Avenge not yourself. But rather give place unto wrath.

What is one of the sayings that the world has about revenge? Can someone tell me this morning, what is revenge in the world's view? Is it sweet? That's what the world says. Revenge is sweet. God forbid that that would be our testimony.

The world says, when my brother does me wrong, I'll get him at sweet. Feels good to my flesh. But Paul says, avenge not yourself.

Something comes against you, don't avenge yourself. Don't try to get even. Don't seek revenge.

Says, but rather give place unto wrath. Let God's wrath take care of it. It's not my job.

It's not your job. And I would like to qualify that. As leaders in a church, there's times when God calls us to work with hard things and bring discipline and all those things.

But I believe Paul is speaking here on an individual basis. He's speaking about when things come against me individually. I would beg you this morning, if you're here and you nurse those thoughts, you nurse revenge in your heart, I pray there's no one here this morning like that.

But you can be free from that. God can deliver you from that. If there's revengeful thoughts in your heart, if there's a revengeful attitude in your heart toward a brother or sister or someone that has wronged you or maybe doesn't like you, you can have total freedom.

You can have a heart of love toward them. This is possible in Christ. Christ can do that.

He wants to do that for you. Look what it says here in the last part of the verse here. Jesus said, Vengeance is mine.

I will repay. I will repay. Leave it up to me.

I know the situation. I know all the circumstances. I know what is best.

Isn't it a blessing that we can just take our hands off of it? Say, God, you know what is best. But I confess to you that many times I'm like Peter. Lord, we need to fix this thing here.

We need to fix it right away. Oh, we need to take care of this. Or maybe defending myself, which is even worse.

Vengeance is mine. I will repay, saith the Lord. Then in verse 20, point number nine, notice the word therefore.

What is it therefore? Here he calls us even to a higher standard. You notice that? He's calling us now to even a higher standard. He said, when things come against you, just let it go.

Let the revenge to God. Don't avenge yourself. But now he's saying, if thine enemy hunger, if he hungers, what does he mean by that? When he's asking something from us, when he may have us by the throat, or maybe he has us, maybe he's hard on me.

What is my response to him? I won't give him anything. He's not been very nice to me. I don't think I'll give him anything.

I'll not move my hand one inch to help him. He wasn't nice to me. That's not what the Word of God says.

It says, if thine enemy hunger, feed him. How do we feed him? We do good to him. If he thirsts, give him drink.

For in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. There was a man and wife that couldn't get along one time. There was just a story that was told.

They couldn't get along. The guy told... I'm not sure who... Somebody encouraged him to put some coals of fire on her head. And he said, well, he's tried to poke her and that doesn't work.

He didn't get the point. Takes coals of fire. Takes love.

Takes going the second mile. Takes blessing, not cursing. Takes doing good.

We all know the story of the familiar saint that was running across the water. Dirk Williams. We all probably all know the account there.

If we could just wrap our hearts around that this morning. As we come to a close here. Look at that picture again.

He's fleeing for his life. He's running across the lake here and he's thinking, praise God I got across this lake. And in my mind, this ice was cracking as he was going across and he was probably thinking, I just made it.

Praise God. And he's running for his life and the thief is behind him. They called him a thief catcher.

He was the man that was after him. Catching him to put him in prison. He didn't get very far across the water.

He heard this man in the back hollering, screaming at him. Help, I'm drowning. Help me.

Would you help me? This man could have easily justified himself, said, well, I'm being chased. I can't turn around. It wouldn't make sense.

But what did he do? He turned around. He went down across the water and this ice was cracking and he was helping this man that hated him. He was trying to put him in prison.

And the other men were out on the other shore. They were not moving. The ones that were encouraging him to go after this slave, this fugitive.

We all know the point that is made here. He was loving his enemy. He was doing good to those that hated him.

It's a principle. It's a very simple principle. And yet I feel like it's a principle that many of us maybe don't get.

Including myself. We don't get it. We know it and then it gets out of our grasp again.

Maybe we come and get it again. And then maybe we lose it again. I don't know.

That's what the Lord has been pressing upon my heart. The highest standard. The highest place that we can reach is loving those that oppose us.

Loving my enemies. Can we overcome evil with good? It says, be not overcome with evil. Be not overcome with evil.

And this happens a lot. There's evil that comes and because our response is not correct, we overcome. We're overcome by evil.

And we don't overcome evil with good. In closing, I would like to just share one more little account. I don't know the story of this account very well, but I know the principle.

I know the basic story of it. There was a family that they were in their house sleeping one night and they had some people up on their roof tearing their house roof off. And the man and the wife there, they were questioning what to do and they knew this was done not in good will, but it was ill will toward them.

They were tearing the roof off. And he told his wife, let's get breakfast ready. Get breakfast on the table.

They waited a while and breakfast was ready. The man went out, invited the men down to come in and have breakfast with them. To start with, they were not sure what to do with it all.

This was such a different approach. They couldn't quite figure out what to do with it. And I'm not sure if they really tried to get out of it or how that all was, but they ended up going in and eating breakfast with them.

After breakfast, they went out and put the roof back on. He could have went out and shouted up on the roof, get off my roof! What are you doing up there? This is my roof! It's going to leak! He could have done a lot of things in the flesh. But he took the approach of Christ.

He fed them. He said, come in and let's have breakfast. And they listened.

They might have shared the Gospel with him. I don't know what all happened there. But it's a picture of Christ.

That's what I want. That's what I want for each one of us this morning. As we endeavor to seek the Lord and see how we can in these last perilous times overcome evil with good.

God bless you. Amen. It's hard to think, Brother Vernon.

A few years ago, I still remember the message. I don't exactly remember the title. To preach the message here on the grace of God.

That it being divine enablement. I thought about that this morning. As Vernon was sharing, I thought, you know, take the grace of God.

His divine enabling to enable us to love those who hate us. Or who spitefully use us. So maybe you're here this morning and you're struggling in your heart with your tendency is to seek vengeance.

Or to want to see that other one, that brother or sister that has hurt you. You're secretly wishing evil. Or somehow maybe even wishing to get even.

God is able by His divine enabling. By His divine grace in your heart to remove that poison. You know, that wants to embitter you and defile you.

And defile others with it. When that takes place. So let's keep our hearts with all diligence in this matter of thinking evil and despising others in our heart who may have hurt us, but rather by the grace of God, overcoming evil with good.

Recently we were, my wife and I were at a restaurant and this wasn't necessarily someone doing us evil, but we were at a restaurant and well no, I should back up a little bit. My brother in the church here and I were at a restaurant and I noticed that the man on the grill there, it was a buffet, he looked like he was just having a very sour day. And so I went to him and I said, I won't use his real name, but I said Tom, how are you doing today? I said I wish this day was over.

I just spoke to him a little bit, I said Tom, Christ makes a difference. That's all I said, I just went back to my seat and a few days later my wife and I were in the same restaurant and here he was again and we went up to the grill cheerfully and my wife she was waiting, I went back to sit down and she was kind of waiting on her egg omelette and it was Memorial Day and quite a bit of people were there and my wife said it's enjoyable watching you we get to watch you, yeah. And he said, I wish I could be watching and so we went back, Barb came back to the seat and a little while later all of a sudden we were talking to each other, all of a sudden I realized that this man was beside us and here was this cook and he said to us, he said, yeah I just want you to know that I wasn't trying to act snobbish this morning and then he just spoke a few other words about us having a good Memorial Day and so forth, but somehow God used us to be a conviction to Him and may we be that in this world that we live in, as we see evil and people who are struggling with sin and overcoming that with good and thus not just being a positive influence in our lives, but on theirs as well that they would be drawn to Christ through that sweet savor coming forth from the good that is coming out of our lives.

I think there's one more scripture that says, let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying that it may minister grace to the hearer. So let's seek to have that kind of attitude and heart, that it's ministering grace. The words that are being spoken are ministering grace to the hearer.

Okay, is there anyone that wants to share? We have a bit of time here yet. Back there we have a hand. Comments, testimonies? Amen brother, that was a beautiful lesson there.

I thank God for that. It's truly something that God has been working in my heart and life. And I examine my heart by the words that were spoken and I can see more need in my life in that area.

But I'm rejoicing this morning in that I'm looking at where I was and now where I'm at today. And I can just see so much headway that I've made. And I desire to grow more in this area.

In that grace and the knowledge of Christ. In this area of Christ-likeness. Walking these things out in love.

And the greatest challenge in my life right now and you guys can pray for me is that I just watch what comes out of my mouth. I've been challenged. I've been tested.

In different areas of my life. And my response is definitely getting better. I don't wish any ill will towards anyone or in any challenge that I've been faced with.

But just that tendency to still withdraw is there. There's another point that Brother Helmuth made. And I can't think of it, but it's another area that I can sense that God is wanting me to shore up in by His grace.

I just see my need for His grace in this area. I do desire to walk it out as He gives me direction. Gives me instruction in these areas.

But I'm again rejoicing in the headway that I'm making. God is merciful and long-suffering to us who believe. I am prodding along and wanting to be more like Him.

And so I'm thankful for that patience and long-suffering that He's had towards me. God bless you all. God bless you Dave.

Testimony of growth in this area. Jeremy, in the back. I definitely have a lot to learn in this whole area.

Thank you Brother Vernon for sharing. Very convicted to me and encouraged me as well. You know, I had to think about the fact that so many times when, let's say a struggling brother would say something that really hurts, it cuts deep.

You know, in the flesh, if we respond, we can actually drive that struggling brother further away from the Lord. If I can say that, you know. A response in the flesh can be very negative and actually a driving point of pushing him further from God.

But God is saying, you know what, take the low road. You know, that retaliation wants to actually crop up and rise up in your heart and you're going to say something that's not right. Squelch it.

Take the low road. And let me deal with it. You know, I see as I understand God more and more in my Christian life, I see all of God's ways being redemptive.

And God knows that if we try to step in and defend ourselves or respond in the flesh, that it's not going to be redemptive. But it can actually be the opposite. God wants to take charge of that situation.

We just release it to God, give it to Him and He's going to do something redemptive out of that thing and bring that individual around. We can't do that a lot. I think of it, Jeremy, I think of something that spoke to me recently.

It says that God is kind to the evil and to the just. He's kind. So let's be kind in our responses even though things may have to come against us.

Another brother over here. Mike? I also appreciated the message because it was something that the Lord had been working in me in the last while also. So it was very timely for me.

And I just really appreciated how it was brought out that it's an entire framework of faith in God that will produce the right heart. That God is good. God He is all powerful and He can work in the situation and we need to trust Him.

And I also appreciated how He brought it close to where we are. When we see the word overcoming evil with good, we can sometimes think of things like war. We don't go to war.

But the Lord has worked in my life even in the area of spanking my children. Afterwards, I've noticed that there's retaliation mingled in with the correction and the discipline that in my heart there's just a retaliation mingled in with all of that and it's the same thing. And I just want to say that the Lord is working in me and I am just thankful that the Lord is good and He is all powerful and that we can trust Him.

So thank you for the message. Is my brother here? Joe? Do you have the mic here? Yeah, I just wanted to share a little something that came to my mind when Eve was up there. He said the phrase, we are more than conquerors.

And as soon as he first said that, something came to mind. I was still kind of trying to work through that when you asked if anybody had anything to add, Eve, and I couldn't say it quickly. So I'm taking the chance now.

But with that phrase, we are more than conquerors, the question isn't whether or not we win or not. It's how we win. And what I want to try to share with you to illustrate that this morning, I usually try to start my Sunday mornings lately in the last month or so, we've got this goat.

So I'll get up early with him, actually her, and go watch her graze. And I'll just kind of sit there and it's a very refreshing time. Well, on Friday we've got another goat.

And the two goats don't get along. So my time this morning, which I was planning to have a refreshing time with my goats, I came back and said I would spend a time wrestling with my goats, because the one wouldn't eat unless it was right where the other one was, and then the other one would stop. Anyway.

So I had to conquer these goats. I had to pull them where they needed to be. I had to try to get them to eat.

And when they wouldn't eat, I just decided, well, okay, I'll just take you back where you need to be. I'll leave you inside your fenced area. I'll give you water.

There's your thing. I have to go. I conquered them.

What I longed for was to be able to say, come here goat. And they follow me. And I go down to where I want them to graze and they graze.

But instead I had to pull them along. And I'm wondering why they won't come along. And the goats are wondering where I'm trying to take them.

But when we're more than conquerors, God's able to turn things on its head. When we're wrestling with issues of sin, we get transformed. We don't work it all up in ourselves so that we don't do those things anymore.

When we're interacting with, when we're trying to win someone to Christ, we don't bully them into it. We win them. We show them that it's a better way.

In a sense, the conqueror has to conquer. Someone who's more than a conqueror gets the same, he gets to win. If that's the right phrase.

But he doesn't have to use force to get it. So that was what came to mind when he passed. Okay, one more and then I think we'll conclude here.

Yeah, this is on what he had challenged us with about and question us with more than conquerors to be more than a conqueror. One point of that is Paul writes that we can comfort others with the comfort that we have been comforted with for many people who struggle with a certain sin. After you overcome that sin in and through Jesus Christ, rise up victorious over the temptation.

You can turn and help and counsel other people through that same thing. I would think that is being more than a conqueror because you're reversing what Satan intended to destroy and bring down a soul with. You can use a situation to bring that person to Christ.

Amen. Praise the Lord. Amen.

Okay. Aaron, you want to give us another song yet? You have one? Why don't we have a song yet and then we'll have some announcements.

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