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November 2008

DELAYED CONSEQUENCES

God built delayed consequences into the fabric of life. "Seedtime and harvest" are such a given in nature that we tend to forget it was God's idea and is the pattern for all of life. "Waiting on God" is the spiritual parallel to seedtime and harvest, but our flesh, our appetites, demand gratification right now! So it is a big test for us to learn to wait.

Ecclesiastes 8:11 says, *"Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."*

If I were teaching this subject before a class in the spring or summer, I would take as a visual aid three branches that I had broken off a tree or bush. One branch would have been broken off in the last day or two, one from a week or two ago, and the third from a month or two ago. The oldest branch would be dry and brittle and the leaves would be brown and falling off. The second branch would show some spots on the leaves, but the branch recently broken off would appear to be healthy and full of life. Of course, any branch broken off would immediately be in the process of dying.

God said to Adam and Eve, Don't eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or you will surely die! They ate from that tree, and nothing appeared to have changed. But they were immediately cut off from the source of life. They immediately died spiritually, and were in the process of dying physically. That tree represented independence from God, fulfillment apart from God, and life cannot work that way. When we choose that life of independence and rebellion, it is all too easy to assume that the Bible is not true or that God doesn't really mean what He said because He doesn't immediately whack us.

There is a common statement in our society to the effect that "The death penalty doesn't deter crime." On a number of occasions prison inmates have said that to me, and I never debate the point with them. (Actually, I have mixed feelings about the subject, especially since I have met some inmates who were serving a life sentence for murder and who had become outstanding Christians.) But the point I want to make is that our method of justice is an example of delayed consequences. When someone is sentenced to death for some heinous crime, usually it takes fifteen years or longer for the sentence to be carried out. Isn't there something in our Bill of Rights about a speedy trial? If little Johnny defied his parents and did something destructive, what would happen if his punishment was delayed for fifteen days? I read one time that when Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, John Wilkes Booth was hunted down and shot, and his co-conspirators were rounded up, had a jury trial, and were all hung, within thirty days!

I have heard inmates talking about "narcing," or testifying

against someone in prison, for instance, a gang member, who was guilty of some crime committed in prison. They said, "Oh, you can't do that." When I asked why not, they said that you would be a marked man, the friends of that gang member would certainly kill you as soon as they could. So obviously, the death penalty does deter crime (or it deters testimony against crime) if it is enacted speedily.

God, however, does not enact His punishment against a sin speedily. And I, for one, am so glad! Because if He did, I would be dead and in hell forever. He was patient and long-suffering with me, and with you, giving us time to repent. That is why the consequences are delayed. But we can ignore His mercy and decide the Bible is not true, that there are no consequences, and proceed to live like the devil. *It is given onto man once to die and then the judgment.* Now is our opportunity to cry out to God for His mercy.

JUDGE NOT!

Jesus said to judge not (in the Sermon of the Mount and at other times and places). But what does that mean? If someone in the church is living in a sinful way, we may be cautioned not to judge that person. But this is not what Jesus was warning us about. In fact, the Apostle Paul clearly teaches in 1st Corinthians, Chapter 5, that we are to rightly judge those in the church (the sexually immoral, covetous, extortioners, idolaters, drunkards), and not even to keep company with such people. Please understand that to refrain from judging sinful conduct in the church is not loving, it is unloving, because it is failing to warn and admonish people that their sinful conduct is inevitably leading to judgment by God. One of the ways we show love to one another in the church, and in our families, is by correcting and warning one another.

Paul makes a distinction between judging those in the church and those in the world. People in the world regard church people as judgmental because they publicly and loudly condemn sinful conduct but privately do the same thing they are condemning. You have seen the poll numbers that show there is not a hair's breadth difference in the conduct of church and unchurched people. Brethren, these things should not be! We should not be preaching about morality to the world, we should be living a holy life and loving people and rescuing them.

What then does it mean to "judge not?" It means: **Do not condemn others, don't find fault, don't be critical, don't talk about people, don't be self-righteous, don't act haughty and superior, don't assume you know another person's heart and jump to conclusions about why they did**

a certain thing (the loving thing would be to talk to the person and find out what their motivation was).

There is a fine line between judging someone in a scriptural way, which we are commanded to do, and refraining from judging him in a wrong way, which we are also commanded to do. Love is the deciding factor. And much wisdom is needed in order to express God's heart in this area.

THE POWER OF WORDS

(Quoted from my friends, Paul and Gretel Haglin)

"We were ministering at a weekend gathering of elders when one of them said before we were to start a leg-stretching volleyball game, 'My ears hurt so badly that I almost left to go home. Will you pray for me?' We gathered around him to pray. But before we laid hands on him, Gretel said, 'Wait a minute! Let me share what Paul and I observed when this precious man arrived this morning. This is the way he was greeted: 'Boy, you have put on a lot of weight.' 'Oh look what the cat dragged in - late again.' And some other bad "joking" greetings. What did you put in his ears?"

The Spirit of God hit those elders and they dropped to their knees in front of their friend, and in repentance each said, 'Forgive me! I've been used by the accuser of the brethren, Satan himself!' 'Forgive me, brother, for what I've said to you. I really do love you!' There were tears of repentance and tears of joy, and when we then gathered around him again to pray, he said, 'No need to pray now. My ears are healed!'

THE SKY IS FALLING!

In addition to the huge concerns that confront our society, the financial melt-down, the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the threat of further terrorist attacks, the media is helpful in reporting a never-ending series of insoluble dilemmas and calamities just waiting to overwhelm us. These reports, which are dreamed up in the PR Department of hell, are designed to wear out the saints (not the New Orleans football team). The list is never ending, but following is a partial list:

- (a) The rain forest is being deforested
- (b) Animal and plant species are becoming extinct at a rapid rate
- (c) Global warming, the disappearance of the ice-caps, etc
- (d) The ongoing genocide in Darfur and in the Congo
- (d) Iran and North Korea are going nuclear
- (e) Putin is no longer Mr. Nice Guy
- (f) We won't be seeing much of Sarah Palin for a while
- (g) Encroaching Muslims
- (h) The big one is going to hit California any day now. "It is not a matter of if but when"
- (i) Viruses are becoming resistant to anti-biotics
- (j) Invasive species like the lion-fish, the zebra-mussel, etc., are devastating our ecology
- (k) The pine-beetle is destroying our forests
- (l) A monstrous asteroid will hit the earth one day, like the one that probably ended the age of the dinosaurs. "It is not a matter of if but when"
- (m) GM, Ford, and Chrysler are going away
- (n) Etcetera

We have to remind ourselves that we are here only temporarily and that this is not our home. *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not unto your own*

understanding. And Fear not!

THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH

Pastor Kirk just concluded a series of messages on the place of justice in our faith. I have only heard a few messages on this subject in over 50 years of attending church. Besides the teaching, we are being led as a church to start doing justice in some practical ways.

- Our church has adopted a grade school in Grand Junction where many of the children and their families don't have enough to eat on weekends. With the cooperation of the school, we have initiated a "Back-Pack Program." Back-packs are filled with food at our church during the week, the packs are taken to the school on Friday, the kids take a pack home and share the food, then the empty packs are returned to the school on Monday and brought back to our church. 200 families have joined this program. That means that 200 kids and their families are not going to go hungry over the weekends. Other schools and other churches have expressed an interest in being a part of this program. PTL
- We have also adopted an orphanage in Haiti. More information later.
- Pastor Kirk and Jane have a heart for orphans. They adopted a little girl from China three years ago. They named her Grace, and she is a precious gift from God. The series on justice showed the plight of millions of homeless children around the world. Kirk said he has a vision that people in our church will adopt at least 100 orphans in the next two years. On the final day of the series, people were invited to come to the altar if God was touching their hearts about adopting a child, and 60 people came forward! Fantastic! Praise the Lord, indeed!

MINISTRY

Had a good ministry weekend at a prison in Canyon City. It was a small group, but we saw guys repent, get filled with the Holy Spirit, and get healed. Glory to God.

Am getting some ministry opportunities locally, and some from other states because of my website. That is so amazing.

God Bless,

Glenn

Web-site: www.glennbrownministries.com

I would like to thank each of you for your support of this ministry.
If any of you want to receive tax credit for your financial contributions, you may send them to:
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