

Avenge Not Yourselfes

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Preacher: Pastor Wolski

[0 : 0 0] All right, well, if you have your King James Bible, then open it up.

Quit just standing there waving it around. Open it up to Romans chapter 12. So Romans chapter 12 to the end of this chapter, and I want to read these last five verses together with you.

Beginning in verse 17, Romans 12, 17 through the end of the chapter, verse 21. The Apostle Paul writes, Recompense to no man for evil.

Provide things honest 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.

[1 : 2 3] Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Now, my intentions here, and I was studying this this week and coming through this passage and others, was to preach a message here out of this.

And the more I dove into the scriptures, the more it just kind of came to light some things. I decided I want to go through this passage and teach something first, and then come back again into it and preach it.

And I don't know how much of that we're going to cover this week. Maybe we'll get through the first section and then start this. I don't know how it's going to go. But my intention is to teach something, then preach it. So do a little Bible study on it, and then come back through it, and really kind of hammer home what God's commanding us when it comes to this thought in verse 19 of avenge not yourselves.

Now, in verse number 17, I want to point something out here. It says, Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. I've been taught, and I really, the strongest reason is because it was in a book that I read, and I used this book, dealt with rightly dividing the word of truth, and it used this passage in Paul's epistle to show how to rightly divide the word of truth.

And I've read this, and I liked it, and I used it, and I even taught it in some things in curriculum that I used for some teenagers over the years. And it's often been taught that the Old Testament commandment of eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, tooth, stripe for stripe, burning for burning, all of that, that that's what the Old Testament commands, but the New Testament says, No, don't do that.

[3 : 1 0] And Paul says in verse 17, Recompense to no man evil for evil. And so the thought is that the Old Testament says one thing, but Paul says in the New Testament to the church something different.

And I don't believe that's precisely the case, and I've taught this, and I've kind of had to unwind some things in my studies this week, I don't believe that's precisely the case, that the Old Testament says that.

Paul changes it in the New Testament. Another case is where Christ says to turn the other cheek and kind of gives a different take on some teaching. I'm not sure that that's an accurate description of the Old Testament practice, when one is defrauded and harmed by another.

Now, it's true that the law allowed, or maybe even demanded, that equal and measurable punishment be dealt out, but there's something that should be noted and understood about the Old Testament practice.

And we're going to go to that, but for a minute before that, in verse 17, Paul says, Recompense to no man evil for evil. I'm going to show that Paul is not contrasting the law of Moses with his church-age teaching, as some proclaim.

[4 : 26] I think he's reinforcing it, and I'll show you why. But then in addition to that, the latter half of verse 17 says this, Provide things honest in the sight of all men. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

What does that mean? As I stand before you, I've never understood what that means, or why that's in this passage. To say, just be honest, and let your yay be yay, it just doesn't seem to match this context of recompensing evil, and not avenging yourselves, and giving place to wrath, and doing good.

And I didn't quite understand what that means. My Bible, the Schofield Reference Bible, says this, it suggests an alternate reading. And so, sometimes when I'm confused, I'll look at the alternate suggestion to see if it has anything better to say, or at least give me...

And here's what he says. Instead of provide things honest in the sight of all men, he says, Take thought for things honorable. And I guess he means in the sight of all men.

And that's, as I found out, and did some studying, that's what pretty much all the modern versions suggest, that the reading should be. Instead of provide things honest in the sight of all men, here's what most...

[5 : 43] Here's several modern versions, and very, very much similar, a lot of them. It says, one of them says, Try to do what everyone regards as good. Or try to do what people think is good.

Another one says, Focus on those things that everyone considers noble. But what does that have to do with recompensing to no man evil for evil? It doesn't even seem to match.

one says, Providing good things, not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men. And what's strange about that is there's no Greek text to back up that reading, ever.

You can't just add, not only in the sight of God, when it's not in the Greek anywhere. And this touches on something I pointed out on Sunday, where the new versions want to attack the word devils and replace it with demons and say, We're staying true to the Greek.

And I told you, they only use that as an excuse when they want to. And here's a great case where a version just adds to the word of God just because they want to make it say that. Here's the funniest one, or whatever, the message.

[6 : 46] The message says, Instead of, Recompense to no man evil for evil, provide things honest in the sight of all men, it says, Don't hit back, discover beauty in everyone. So that sounds pretty modern to me.

Now, the modern versions are distorting the truth of the word of God. And I'm going to point out, I'm going to try to point out to you what it means and why the words are right in your King James Bible.

And so, let's first get a little glimpse back into the Old Testament teaching about recompensing and how they're to handle things like this. Come back to Exodus chapter 18.

Exodus 18. So, before preaching this passage and really trying to nail your hides to the wall with it, let's understand the passage and let's exalt the King James Bible for the words that they are and understand why they're right.

And then we can go on and get something out of it. Exodus 18. And let's start in verse 13. The Bible says, And it came to pass on the morrow that Moses sat to judge the people and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening.

[8 : 09] And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? Why sittest thou thyself alone and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even?

And Moses said unto his father-in-law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God. When they have a matter, they come unto me. And I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God and his laws.

And Moses' father-in-law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou and this people that is with thee. This thing is too heavy for thee. Thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. And so he gives them counsel, and he suggests you get a bunch of men to help out.

Now, everybody attacks Moses' father-in-law, and they just wear him out and saying, This is not of God. Moses is supposed to do this. And I don't jump down his throat so hard.

But anyway, he does choose able men in verse 25, and Moses goes with it. And in verse, by the way, God doesn't condemn Moses for doing this.

[9 : 10] He doesn't come after him and say, What is this that thou hast done? Have not I commanded? He doesn't say anything. He lets them do it. Verse 26, And they judged the people at all seasons. The hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.

Kind of seemed wise to me. Now, there's more than that. Now, come to Judges. I'm sorry, come to Deuteronomy 16. So what do we see? We see that Moses is judging the people and making them know the laws and the statutes of God.

Come to Deuteronomy 16 now. When Moses gives to this younger generation the laws that God gave him years prior, some 40 years back, notice verse 18, what Moses adds to the law that they're to establish in the land.

Verse 18, Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates. Not just one, but all over the place. You're going to establish judges, which thy Lord thy God giveth thee throughout thy tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment.

Notice verse 19, Thou shalt not rest judgment. Thou shalt not respect persons. Neither take a gift. Rest like twist. Like twist.

[10 : 35] Wrestle. Twist it up. Pervert it. You don't pervert the judgment. You don't take gifts. You don't observe, or what's the word I want? Place one person above the other.

Does he say that in here? Pervert the words of the righteous. Anyway, so that phrase I want to point out now in verse 19 is going to come back a minute later.

Thou shalt not rest judgment. So Moses commands in the new land for there to be judges. We read in the book of Judges, Othniel and Ehud and Gideon and Samson and all the way into Eli and Samuel.

There's judges all over the place. And come now to Deuteronomy 17. A little bit more about this. Deuteronomy 17 verse 2.

If there be found among you within any of thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee a man or woman that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the Lord thy God in transgressing his covenant and hath gone and served other gods and worshipped them either the sun or the moon or any of the hosts of heaven which I have not commanded.

[11 : 41] And it be told thee and thou hast heard of it and inquired diligently and behold it be true and a thing certain that such abominations wrought in Israel that thou shalt bring forth that man or that woman which hath committed that wicked thing unto thy gates where the judges and officers are appointed even that man or that woman and shalt stone them with stones till they die.

Verse 6 says at the mouth of two witnesses or three witnesses shall he that is worthy of death be put to death but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death and afterwards the hands of all the people so thou shalt put evil away from among you.

So it's never one versus one. His word against his word and you just take one person's and judge. It's always got to be established that it's several. Two witnesses three witnesses if you're going to accuse them of something worthy of death you better have your ducks in a row.

And furthermore they're going to inquire about the thing they're going to make sure it's true they're going to check it out and establish that this thing is certain before we go forward with any kind of judgments.

This is the Old Testament. Okay? It's not just like eye for an eye he punched you in the face you punch him back and it's settled. There's actually a system set in place of how to establish.

[13 : 01] Look at verse number 8. If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment between blood and blood between plea and plea between stroke and stroke between matters of controversy within thy gates then shalt thou arise and get thee up into the place which the Lord thy God shall choose and thou shalt come unto the priests and unto the judge that shall be in those days and inquire and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment and thou shalt do according to the sentence which they of that place which the Lord shall choose shall show thee and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee according to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee thou shalt do thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall show thee to the right hand or to the left, and the man that will do presumptuously, he's going to act on his own, he will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God or the judge, even that man shall die, and thou shalt put away evil from Israel. All the people shall hear and fear and do no more presumptuously. So what's going on here?

No man is allowed to act on his own in judgment or in executing judgment. Flip over one more time a little bit further to chapter 25. You're not allowed to just have one guy against another, and you're not allowed to solve matters on your own. It's got to be taken before the judges, and they'll determine, and if it's too hard it's going to go to that specific place like kind of taking the small matters, the big matters to Moses.

It's going to take those to which I guess in one time it would have been in Shiloh to Eli or to whoever the judge is or perhaps the high priest.

Deuteronomy 25 verses 1 and 2. If there be a controversy between men and they come unto judgment like they're supposed to, that the judges may judge them, they shall justify the righteous and condemn the wicked.

And it shall be if a wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down and to be beaten before his face according to his fault by a certain number. So you see there's a system set up in place of how to handle when somebody...

[15 : 11] So what did Paul say? He says recompense to no man evil for evil. And the point being, it's not... This is what's set up in the Old Testament. You don't handle things on your own.

Go to one more place back here. That's Leviticus. Back to your left to Leviticus 19. You're not to handle things on your own. You're to take it to the judges. You're to explain the thing. It needs to be sought out and found out.

There needs to be other witnesses depending on the case. And the judge will send forth his judgment. And if there's punishments to be meted out, it will be met out right then and there.

Leviticus 19. And now watch this command here that we just read in Romans 19 to the church. Leviticus 19 and verse number 17.

Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart. Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor and not suffer sin upon him.

[16 : 12] Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

And God puts his name stamped on that command. I am the Lord. Ye shall keep my statutes. Thou shalt not avenge.

And you don't get to just say, well, I didn't do it. He did me wrong and I didn't avenge. But then he says, thou shalt not bear a grudge. Thou shalt nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people.

You're supposed to forgive. You're supposed to let it go. You're supposed to love your neighbor as you love yourself. Christ said that's the second commandment. The second great commandment.

Right behind, love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. So the Old Testament is not just, they do it, you do it back. Eye for an eye. Tooth for a tooth.

[17 : 08] There's truth to that. The judge is, you know, that's what he determines from the word of God when they come before him. But it's not up to man to take matters in his own hands. Some have suggested that and I've even misinterpreted, misunderstood how things were to be handled in the Old Testament.

The Old Testament practice was to take matters before the judge. And he would give the mind of God, he would give the word of God to resolve the issue. And the punishment was to be equal.

The punishment was to be just. It was to be a tooth for a tooth. But it was never determined or even administered by the individual that was harmed.

His job is to love his neighbor, is to not avenge and not bear a grudge, not hate thy brother in thine heart, in verse 19. You can rebuke him, you can tell him you did me wrong, but you're not allowed to avenge him, or yourself rather.

And you're not allowed to hold a grudge against him either. You're supposed to love him. That doesn't sound so far from the New Testament teaching at all. Because right there it is. We just studied it in Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy.

[18 : 21] That's all the law. Now I'll come back to Romans chapter 12. And what is Paul teaching then? Is he just saying, go observe the law of Moses?

Let's take a look at it. Romans chapter 12, back where we started. What Paul's teaching, I don't think is anything new.

So in verse 17, the first part, recompense to no man evil for evil. Just like the Old Testament.

Don't take it upon yourself to recompense or to retaliate. Why? It's not your job. Look at verse 19. Dearly beloved, to avenge not yourselves, but rather give place on the wrath, for it's written, vengeance is mine.

That's God's job. That's God's doing to recompense the evil for evil. I don't think this is a contrast to the Old Testament at all, like I've taught and like I've read, that recompense to no man evil for evil.

[19 : 33] I don't think it's a contrast. I think rather it's a confirmation of the actual Old Testament law, the way it was practiced and taking things before the judge. And that's why the end of verse 17 reads the way it does.

Take a look at it again and we'll forget about all the modern perversions and how they distort the teaching and the truth. It says in verse 17b, provide things honest in the sight of all men.

What's that mean? Provide things. It doesn't say like the modern versions, commend or try to do or focus on or discover beauty in somebody.

It tells you to provide things. You know what that is? That's a disclosure. That's revealing of something before others. Provide things honest.

That is, honestly, openly. Paul's teaching transparent and an honest disclosure of the details of the evil that was performed upon me.

[20 : 35] Recompense to no man evil for evil. Instead of recompense, provide things honest in the sight of all men. Disclose the details that was committed.

Look at another verse here in the New Testament. 2 Corinthians chapter 4. 2 Corinthians chapter 4.

Here to be an open book as a believer. And this is confirmation of that. 2 Corinthians 4, we begin at the very first verse, verse 1.

And the Bible says, Therefore, seeing we have this ministry as we have received mercy, we faint not, but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

But if our gospel be hid, it's hid to them that are lost and whom the God of this world blinded the minds. If the lost don't know something, or if the gospel is hid, it's because they're lost and they're blinded by Satan.

[21 : 57] But Paul is saying nothing else is hidden. We are open books in our life. We're providing things honest. We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, and walking in craftiness, and trickery, and deceit, and handling the word of God deceitfully, like resting the judgment that they did in the Old Testament, or could have, or attempted to.

Instead, nothing is to be hid. Believers are to be open and transparent in their dealings and in their actions, not secretive, not shady, not deceitfully handling the book either, and just using it where it works for you, or twisting it to make it fit what you just did.

So, coming back to Romans 12, when Paul teaches on this subject of vengeance, and retaliating, and recompenses, he tells you not to do it.

And in verse 17, we've read it, Recompense to no man evil for evil, provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Now, continuing the passage in verse 19, Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.

[23 : 25] Now, I don't know if you even followed through all of that, or that cleared any confusion up, or maybe the potential for the confusion. It probably did more for me than it did for you, but what I like about doing some Bible studies, it clears up some things, and I love it when I get some light on a passage that I just didn't have quite right.

And the comments and the thought, I think, from what I'm presenting in verse 17, it definitely destroys the alternate translations of all the modern versions.

And they always never, you know, they don't get it right, and whenever they go away from what the Bible says, you can count on something being off. And so this teaching and this thought allows the Bible to teach and speak the way it does without changing the words, and they're no help at all.

One phrase, this has stuck in my mind from working on that curriculum, I have it put in there, a quote that I read somewhere, it says, the Bible is the best commentary on the Bible.

And that's just something maybe if anything that you pick up and learn and plug away and realize this is how you make sense of passages you don't understand, you study the Bible out.

[24 : 39] Now, let's get to something else here. We only have a few ten minutes left, but I'd like to at least maybe get one point in out of this other thought. In verse number 19, let's look at it again.

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. Avenge not yourselves. I want to give you some thoughts here, God willing, we'll finish next week on why you shouldn't avenge or why that statement, avenge not yourselves.

The first thought is this, because you're commanded not to. I'm just going to let that sink in. That's, I know it's not witty, and I know it's not a deep thought.

I know you're probably like, come on, you know, you said you studied. You ought to have more than that. No. You know what? You know why you shouldn't avenge yourselves? Because you were commanded by God not to do it.

And if that's not good enough for you, what else do you want? You know what you want? If you don't like that, if it's not deep enough, you know what you want? You want something to be good for you. You know, avenge not yourself because you'll get a blessing if you don't.

[25 : 44] And then we'll talk about that for a while. God's going to reward you in heaven if you'll obey Him today. And that's great, that's probably true. But we don't even have to go that far.

Point number one, reason number one to avenge not yourselves is because God told you not to do it. You may desire more than that, but I think this is a good enough reason to avenge not yourselves.

Take it as thou shalt not. One of those thou shalt nots that's written right to you. And considering that He commands you to do it, when you do avenge yourself, you're not submitting to God and something's wrong.

Because He doesn't give you the green light to go take care of things that come up in your life and you deal with it, you handle it. He tells you don't do it. Don't recompense.

Don't avenge yourself. What are you commanded to do? If you're commanded not to do this, what are you commanded to do? I'm glad you asked.

[26 : 49] Turn to Colossians chapter 3 because this is important. This might be the most important thing you heard all day. Colossians chapter 3.

What are you commanded to do if you're commanded not to recompense? I'm going to just read a good portion of this passage and let it build and let it be a heavy weight on all of us of what we are to do.

Because, and the reason I'm saying it like this is because you're no different than me and some, maybe we're, maybe we have a little bit, you know, somebody says, I have an anger issue. Maybe somebody gets a little more volatile than others in their personality.

But the truth is, in our flesh, every single one of us has this, you don't dare step on me. You don't dare push me around or tell me I'm wrong. We have it in you. And when somebody does, you're going to have this quick spark inside of you to react, to flash right back at them and more than you should.

And God tells you, put it down, put it down, don't do it. Now, Colossians chapter 3, start in verse 5. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.

[28 : 10] What's that? Fornication, uncleanness, unordinate affection, evil concupiscence and covetousness, which is idolatry, for which things sake the wrath of God, notice it's his wrath, cometh on the children of disobedience, in the which he also walked some time when you lived in them.

Verse 8. But now, this is a different time, right? Now you're saved. You're a child of God. You have a new man inside of you. Christ is in you. But now, ye also put off all these, anger, wrath, malice.

Boy, those first three are really hitting home on this thought of vengeance and avenging yourself. Put off anger, put off wrath, put off malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

Verse 10 says, put on the new man. And what's the new man like? Verse 12. Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved. I'm telling you, this is, every word is going to start getting heavier and heavier of what you're supposed to be in Christ.

Holy and beloved. Put on, therefore, it says, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind.

[29 : 29] You know, when you apply this, when someone does evil to you, recompense to no man evil for evil. Instead, put on bowels of mercies.

But he's done me wrong. Put on kindness. But he's done me wrong. I didn't do anything to him. Humbleness of mind. It just keeps taking it away.

Takes the justification away that you have in your flesh for why you're allowed to retaliate and do to them what they did to you. And the Bible says, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, putting up with each other.

When? When they're doing you wrong and forgiving one another. When they've done evil to you. If any man have a quarrel against any, what do you do?

Get him back? No, you forgive him. It just, it doesn't stop. Paul, come on, move past this, right? This is too much. Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

[30 : 38] In verse 14, and above all these things, put on charity. What about charity? Charity suffereth long and is kind. Charity vaunteth not itself.

If you could put on charity, you're going to put off all of those other things, the anger, the wrath, the malice. He goes on to say in verse 15, let the peace of God rule in your heart.

Rule. It's ruling. It's not letting anything else in because it's ruling inside of me. It's keeping the anger and the wrath out because it's ruling in my heart.

The peace of God resides in here. In verse number 16, the word of Christ ought to dwell in you too. And this is kind of the word we're reading. It ought to be kicking out the anger and the wrath and the malice.

And in verse 17, whatsoever ye do in word or deed, in word or deed, considering this recompensing and avenging yourselves, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

[31 : 40] Giving. Can you respond? Can you retaliate against your brother or against anybody out here in this world that does you wrong? Can you respond to them in the name of the Lord Jesus?

They cut you off in traffic and you're ready to cuss at them. Can you, in Jesus' name, blankety, blankety, you can't do it. It takes it away. And it throws it away and says, get that out of my mouth.

Instead, be thankful. Verse 15 says, be thankful. Be thankful. Verse 17, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. You can give thanks for one thing in this passage, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

Now, you're commanded not to avenge yourselves. And on the other hand, you're commanded to do something in place of avenging yourself. You're commanded to forgive, to be long-suffering, to exercise mercy and kindness and humbleness of mind.

You know, whenever somebody's traffic thing keeps coming up, whenever somebody does something in traffic to me, it happens every day, pretty much. Somebody runs a red light or, you know, you beat them to the stop sign but they take off anyway or just, that stuff happens so often.

[32 : 57] And I have this knee-jerk reaction to just say, oh, you're more important than me. Oh, you're more important than all of us out here. You have to have your way.

And it happens so much and maybe I'm guilty of it too sometimes. But the vengeance thing has got to go.

The peace has got to stay. Avenge not yourselves. The passage said, give place unto wrath. Now, I'm going to keep going a little bit further here.

Turn to Ephesians chapter 2. And there's a, maybe a little heavier point here that I can make with some of this. This is what you're commanded to do.

All of those things. Ephesians 2, look at Ephesians 4 first. Ephesians 4, 31. The Bible says, let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

[34 : 17] That's a good reason. Now, in Ephesians 2, we're going to kind of cross paths here with some of the Sunday school material. But in verse number 2, it says, wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

That's the same term we read in Colossians 3, if you recall, that they're the children of disobedience and God's wrath is against them. And verse 3, among whom, among whom also, we all had our conversation in times past in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

The children of wrath. They're children of wrath. They're called the children of wrath. They're called the children of disobedience. And they're the lost. They're following their daddy, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

And they're called the children of wrath. The Bible says of Satan that in Revelation 12, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, for the devil's coming down unto them having great wrath.

That's the guy. And you don't want to be his child or be even connected to him. Now, there's more about this, so come back to Luke. And I want to make another connection to that thought that the lost are being influenced or following their daddy.

[35 : 44] They are of their father, the devil, the children of wrath. Luke chapter 9. And we're going to go back to Ephesians again too, Ephesians 4.

Should have had you keep your place. If you can grab both places, we'll finish up. Luke 9 and Ephesians 4. So look at Luke 9 and remember this little passage here during the ministry of Christ and the reaction of his disciples.

Verse 51. It came to pass when the time was come that he should be received up. He steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem and sent messengers before his face and they went and entered into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him and they did not receive him because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them even as Elias did? That's, that's avenging yourselves.

They rejected you. Should we take care of them? Should we do it right now? Should we burn them up? And Christ said, what are you talking about?

[37 : 09] Christ says in verse number 55, but he turned and rebuked them and said, ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

For the Son of Man has not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went into another village. Just moved on. Something interesting, these guys are of the wrong spirit.

They want to call down fire. They want to destroy them because they did them wrong. Christ said, whoa, and he rebuked them for it. Something's wrong with your spirit.

You got the wrong spirit. And when you disobey the command, that's where we started, to avenge not yourselves. When you disobey the command, it's good enough to just say you do it because you're commanded to.

When you disobey the command, something's wrong. Something's very wrong on the inside that you're giving place to. Now, Ephesians 4, let's finish this up.

[38 : 12] You're allowing somebody to control you. You say, well, that's the old man. Yeah. I think somebody's in that old man. Ephesians chapter 4, you're supposed to put off the old man in verse 22.

Look at verse 26 and 7 where Paul says, be ye angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath. Neither give place to the devil.

Isn't that interesting? So, Paul says, avenge not yourselves. God says, vengeance is mine.

And there's that devil sneaking in to God's children or to the children of wrath, to all of us, and saying, no, avenge yourselves.

Get them back. You're better than that. He just puts that in your mind. He puts that in your heart. And that boils up inside of you and you can't hold back or you choose not to, I should say.

[39 : 20] And that devil gets in there and he tries to usurp what God says is mine. And he tries to get you to act in the place of God or maybe acting inside of you in the place of God.

So the Bible says, avenge not yourselves. Reason number one, because you're commanded not to. When you avenge not yourselves, you know what that is?

I don't know if you realize this or not. I think like this all the time now. That's living by faith. When you read that Bible and it says, avenge not yourselves, neither give place unto wrath, for it is written, vengeance is mine.

I will repay. When you read that in Romans 12 and you say, okay, I'm not supposed to avenge myself. I'm not supposed to recompense evil for evil. Instead, I'm supposed to be humble and be merciful and be kind and be forgiving and display charity.

And I'm going to do that by the grace of God and in his strength. And when I do that, you know what you're doing? You're living by faith. You're believing something some old book says that it's the right thing to do.

[40 : 26] It's not because somebody's going to give you a check, slip it into your hand because you didn't do it. It's because you're just, you're obeying from the heart the word of God.

That's exercising faith and it pleases God. When you put down the flesh and you say, Lord, I trust you. You see the situation.

You know what they did. Help me to respond the way you want me to respond. Help me to respond in mercy. Help me to respond in patience and in kindness.

But whatever I do, don't let me avenge myself because it's wrong. So point one, and I gave it to you, it's because the Bible tells you not to.

God commands you not to. Next week, we'll look at a few more things about this and give you reasons again why you shouldn't avenge yourself. And hopefully, this will help all of us because we have it in our flesh.

[41 : 23] It's inside there deep. And if we allow it to, boy, it can come up quick. So let's be dismissed together in prayer. And then, we'll get out of here.

Father, thank you for coming.