

When the Need Arises

- Sometimes a church is faced with a need that exceeds its ability to meet.

- When this happens, an appeal is made to the brethren to make greater sacrifices.

- *Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. 29 Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. 30 This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. Acts 11:28-30*

Message from Malawi (Raphael)

- We have travelled to several places of late. All over, suddenly, people have gone into critical hunger once again.
- Government estimates about 4 million are facing this hunger. Brethren have pleaded with us for assistance.
- Chimkande called last evening expressing his experience in Dowa as well. Remember us in prayers especially at this time when we are fighting institutionalism.

A decision at Business Meeting

- We want to send \$10,000 if we can.
- But our budget has dropped so low that we can't do it unless we all make the same sacrifices seen in the first century.
- Hoping we will carefully consider those brothers who will be hungry in Malawi.
- Will be sending a check in January.
- Asking those who can to give “*according to their ability*” above what they are regularly giving for the work of the church here.

Jesus Asked us to Search our Heart

- *“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ 39 But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. Mt. 5:38-29*
- Are we still struggling with these things?
- We see it in our children when one hits another.
- Are we helping them to remove this attitude?
- Did our parents help us with this?
- Did they leave it to us to do by ourselves?

An Indictment of our Culture

- Jesus' words against any form of retaliation should strike a major chord of concern.
- It has grown into a huge fire in our culture.
- Seems to worsen year by year.
- From road rage to school and workplace shootings, hardly a day goes by.
- The entertainment based on vengeance in books and movies reveals it resonates.
- It is difficult for us to escape its influence.
- We all want to be treated fairly.

A Command for Government

‘If a man causes disfigurement of his neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be done to him — 20 fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him. 21 And whoever kills an animal shall restore it; but whoever kills a man shall be put to death. 22 You shall have the same law for the stranger and for one from your own country; for I am the Lord your God.’” Lev. 24:19-22

Command is not for individuals – but Judges

Different for Individuals

- *You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. 18 You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord. Lev. 19:17-18*
- *Do not say, 'I will do to him just as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to his work.' Pr. 24:29*
- Extension of “love your neighbor as yourself

God Ordained Civil Government

- *Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God...for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil. Rom. 13:1,4*
- *Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme; 14 or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well. 1Pet. 2:13-14*

The True Attitude of a Christian

- *Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Rom 12:17-21*

A Wisdom From Above

- This is not something we will learn naturally in this world. It is a wisdom that came down from heaven and only exists in the hearts of those who are influenced by heavenly things.
- *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Jas 3:17*

An Earthly, Sensual, Demonic Wisdom

- What they were hearing was from this world:
- *But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. Jas 3:14-16*
- *For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. Titus 3:3*
- Growing out of this is a critical step to maturity.

It will bring Commendation and Praise

- *For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 1Pet. 2:19-23*

Jesus led the way... We must Follow

- *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 “Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; 1Pet. 2:19-23*

In the Home, Workplace, Church

- *To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; 9 not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. 1Pet. 3:8-9*

True Forbearance

- A reputation for forbearance is a badge of honor. It is costly and difficult but needed.
- *Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Phil 4:5*
- *And if anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. (Mt. 5:41-42)*