

BREAKING THE BARRIER OF BITTERNESS

Willis 10/3/10
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Heb12:14-

Our focus these past 5 weeks has been breaking down the self imposed and perhaps even at times demonically imposed barriers that keep us from entering into all the Lord has intended for His created order.

- Realizing as King Solomon said, “there is nothing new under the son...” **we have looked at four ancient gates that serve as barriers seeking to keep us from entering into the fullness of our calling in Christ.**
- These four gates are those which have been around from the beginning. Fear, familiarity, unbelief and hopelessness have undermined the purposes of God from the start.

Today we want to look at another gate which has been around from the start and that is barrier of bitterness. Bitterness is an ancient root that goes all the way back to the beginning with Cain’s slaying of Abel.

- **Bitterness is a root, meaning it is a life source. If unattended it becomes a source of negative life that has the power to defile those it comes in contact with.**
- I have often wondered while dealing with marital or relational conflicts, “How can you hate someone you love so much?” The answer is bitterness. Bitterness is both a source and a thief.
- **Bitterness is a thief that steals true and accurate feelings. It is also a source that creates inaccurate perceptions redefining true realities into false conclusions.**

As we see in our text, the destructive force of bitterness is in its ability to defile. A bitter soul is a soul toxic to those it touches. Like some roots that are so toxic they taint the dirt they grow in, a bitter root negatively flavors everything that surrounds it.

- **Defile: sully or taint, to contaminate rendering one unable to worship fellowship or serve God.** Ultimately bitterness is a gate of hell that seeks to block one from their access to God.
- Like cancer bitterness is an unseen root that does its devastation virtually unnoticed. It is only after it has metastasized that it reveals itself in bitter thoughts, bitter words and bitter actions.
- One bitter soul can poison an entire community so Dt29 gives a stern warning for those who harbor an evil root of bitterness.

Dt29:14-21

Moses gives the stern warning because of the devastating consequences of bitter roots. **Negative seeds become bitter roots, bitter roots become defiling judgments. Defiling judgments become invasive thieves who come only to lie, rob, kill and destroy.**

- So Moses makes covenant with the people and warns them not to let a poisonous root grow to bear poisonous fruit. Bitter thoughts about your spouse can only produce a poisonous marriage. Bitter thoughts about others produce poisonous affects in the body.
- **A root can only reproduce after its own kind. If it is a bitter root it will poison and defile everything it is allowed to touch.** That is why Scripture warns us against associating with those infected lest we get defiled.
- To defile is to render one unable to worship, fellowship or serve God. Consequently bitter roots cannot be cottedled or catered to. Bitterness is a poison that will defile.
- Notice how the Word ties bitterness to presumption. V.19 “I have peace even though I walk in stubbornness of heart...” **When we presume upon God we get bitter. When we presume upon relationships we get bitter. Presumption creates unrealistic expectations; unrealistic expectations give opportunity for bitter root judgments.**

Bitter Roots express themselves in two forms:

1. **Bitter Root Judgments: These are the bitter conclusions and condemning judgments we have of others, often those we love the most.** These bitter conclusions enslave their holder to discouragement, disappointment, disillusionment and depression.
2. **Bitter Root Expectancies: These are the bitter expectations we hold that function like self fulfilling prophecies.** Just as righteous expectations have the inherent power to release good...bitter root expectancies have the inherent power to release evil.
 - These judgments and expectations must be taken to the cross; their roots pulled up and destroyed that we might get free from the defilement they produce.

How do we pull up the bitter roots in our lives?

1. **Reckon Our Selves Dead to Sin and Present Our Selves to God: Rom6:11-13**Note the progression, we can't present ourselves to God until we have first reckoned ourselves to be dead. How often do we give something to God then wonder why He hasn't taken it away.
 - **For God to take sin away we must first reckon ourselves to be dead.** Reckon: to put it together in your mind; to resolve it, to settle it once and for all...you are dead to sin. To reckon is to confess our agreement with God's assessment.

- To reckon yourself dead means to settle the fact you are dead no matter how you feel. **In the Kingdom we believe it to feel it not feel it to believe it.** We must believe ourselves to be free from bitterness to feel ourselves free of bitterness.
 - It is a belief based in the Word by faith before it is feelings based in experience.
 - **Reckoning is the spirit informing the mind through a work of grace that the will is no longer in charge.** When bitterness presents itself as a choice, reckoning is the choice to stay dead and not allow that evil emotion to resurrect.
 - Rom8:17 “Do not pay back evil for evil but overcome evil with good.” This doesn’t mean we go passive in the face of wrongdoing. It means we take bitter roots captive in the midst of the wrong and present ourselves to God so He can execute justice...we chose God rather than bitterness.
2. **Tend to the Garden of Our Heart: Pr4:23** Bitterness is the sickness of an unattended heart. Bitterness is the result of a heart that was not guarded. Like a neglected garden, if a heart is not tended to or protected, it becomes easy prey to bitterness.
- **Heb12:15 “See to it...that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble and by it many be defiled.”** The words “springing up” show bitterness happens, it is like weeds, no one has to plant bitterness it will spring up on its own.
 - Therefore we must “see to it.” “See to it” is the Greek word, episkopeo which means bishop, overseer or one who sees over.
 - **To remain free from a root of bitterness we must become the bishops of our own souls...those who see over potential causes of bitterness and chose the higher ground of preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**
 - The first and foremost act of tending your garden is repentance from any BRJ. The second act is to replant or re-root bitterness with blessing.
3. **Forgive: Ep4:30-32** Like every other admonition to forgive, this one to is given as a command. The command is to put away bitterness and forgive as Christ has forgiven us. Notice the link between bitterness, forgiveness and grieving the Holy Spirit.
- **Bitterness is an intentional act of the soul to withhold forgiveness that results in the grieving of the Holy Spirit.**
 - In spite of the bitter treatment by his brothers, Joseph remained free from bitterness and the defilement it brings because he chose to forgive.
 - **Joseph enabled his own forgiveness because he 1. He left all judgment to God. 2. He embraced the sovereignty of God.**
 - As a result instead of growing bitter Joseph was able to love his brothers, bless his brothers, pray for his brothers and do good to his brothers.

Bitterness is not your friend. I know it promised to comfort you but bitterness is a thief it can only lie, rob, kill and destroy. There is no peace in bitterness. If you thought have made peace with bitterness it is already a lie it is only a matter of time before it robs, kills and destroys.

- **Bitterness is a gate of hell. If you have made an agreement with it, break it now. Repent and command that gate to be torn down.**