

Bless Those Who Persecute You

by John Piper

John Piper's sermon emphasizes the radical call to bless those who persecute us, rooted in faith and the transformative power of Christ's love.

Duration: 46:56

Topics: "Christian Living", "Humility"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by explaining why he didn't quote the whole text when summarizing it earlier. He believes that by doing so, he would minimize certain important pieces of the text. Instead, he decides to go verse by verse, focusing on two verses in this session. The main theme of the chapter is described as Christians offering their bodies as living sacrifices to God as an act of worship. The speaker then moves on to verse 3, emphasizing the importance of not thinking too highly of oneself but instead having sober judgment and relying on the measure of faith that God has assigned. He also highlights the need for believers to find their satisfaction and joy in Christ rather than worldly things.

Transcript

The following message is by Pastor John Piper. More information from Desiring God Ministries is available at www.DesiringGod.org Romans 12, verses 14 through 21. Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse them.

Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty but associate with the lowly.

Never be conceited. Repay no one evil for evil but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Beloved, never avenge yourselves but live it to the wrath of God. For it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. To the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him.

If he is thirsty, give him something to drink. For by so doing, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.

Let's pray. Oh Lord God, I so long to be the kind of person I'm going to preach about tonight. Blessing those who persecute me.

Blessing and not even thinking about a curse. And I want to be among those who weep easily when others are weeping. And are happy when others are happy.

I don't want to be the kind of person who is sort of above it all, looking out and frozen with analysis of that weeping or that rejoicing. I want to be easily drawn in to others' hearts. So there's our challenge, Lord.

We want to be new, different kinds of people. We don't want to defend ourselves right now saying we grew up in a certain house or we were born with certain DNA. We want to be open to the Holy Spirit.

And so we ask now that you'd come and make your mighty word an instrument of our transformation. In Jesus' name, Amen. It's amazing as you look at this paragraph, isn't it? Verses 14 to 21.

Over and over again, same thing. Verse 14. Don't curse those who persecute you.

Verse 17. Don't return evil for evil. Verse 19.

Do not avenge yourselves. Verse 21. Don't be overcome by this kind of evil.

And then the positive side. Same thing. Verse 14.

Bless those who persecute you. Verse 18. Live peaceably with all.

Verse 20. Give food and drink to your enemy. Verse 21.

Overcome evil with good. Don't get sucked into revenge. It's really clear what this paragraph is about.

It's really clear. And I'm tempted to really hasten through Romans 12 and say we can do this in one sermon. We can pile all this into one, put the banner over it.

Love of enemy. This is about loving your enemy. And I'm going to resist that temptation.

For two reasons. One, each of these commandments has a slightly different nuance. And I think if I lumped them all together, I'd start generalizing in a way that would miss some important practical implications for our lives.

That's one reason. The other reason is I didn't quote the whole text when I summed it up right then. There are some pieces in there I left out like weep with those who weep.

And how does that fit into this theme? And there are other pieces. And if I tried to crunch it all under this one banner, I think I would minimize those pieces. So I've decided instead to move right through verse by verse.

We're going to do two verses tonight. In fact, maybe one and a half. And then pile that other half into next week, Lord willing.

So that's where we're going. Verses 14 and 15. Here, let's do it.

Bless those who persecute you. Bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice.

And weep with those who weep. Now right off the bat, in that little unit, the question arises what those two verses have to do with each other. I mean, is Paul just stringing verses together with no connection? Or do these two verses somehow link with each other? How does weeping with those who weep and rejoicing

with those who rejoice relate to blessing those who persecute you and not cursing them? How do they relate to each other? One answer emerges when you ask the question, what would be one reason I can think of about seven? And that's what I might talk about next week.

But what would be one reason that you wouldn't weep with those who weep? One reason might be that you are happy that they are weeping because you're mad at them. They hurt you. And then they had a car wreck or something.

You're really glad. So you're not about to weep with those who weep because you think they got what was coming to them. And as soon as you pose it like that, the link with verse 14 is immediate.

Right. Bless those who persecute you. Weep with those who weep.

Pose like that or one. This is not hard to even imagine one situation, and there are others in which blessing those who persecute you is directly related to whether you have a heart to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice. There's another question that arises here immediately.

Do we rejoice with all rejoicing? And weep with all weeping. Or must we make some distinctions here and say some rejoicing shouldn't be rejoiced with and some weeping shouldn't be wept with. And I think the answer to that question is manifestly yes.

There is some rejoicing we should be very sad about. And there is some weeping we should be very glad about. Jesus said, Luke 6, 25.

Woe to you who are full now. For you shall hunger. Woe to you who laugh now.

You shall mourn and weep. Now, I assume that's a laughter I shouldn't be excited about. Woe to you who laugh now.

It's going to turn. And we don't want to be encouraging that kind of laughter with our laughter. And the other side is true as well.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 7, 10. Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret. There is a godly weeping.

There is a wonderful weeping. Oh, painful for a moment. Painful.

And indeed we might hurt with them for a moment. But oh, inside we are exploding with joy at this weeping. This penitent heartbroken weeping of the straying one.

Nothing could make us happier than this weeping. We can scarcely contain our joy at this weeping. So manifestly from the Bible we must make distinctions.

And figure out what kind of weeping do you weep with. And what kind of laughter do you laugh with. I think we'll get closer to the meaning here if we try to figure out the root in Christ.

The Christian root of this behavior. They both have the same root. 14 and 15 I think have the same root.

In the dying of the self. And the treasuring of Christ. The work of Christ.

And so I want to try to pull together from the context of Romans 12. The Christian root of these two verses. What makes these two verses Christian? Now to do this I could do exactly the same thing I did last time.

Right? I could go to verse 1. I could do this at every verse. I could go to verse 1 and say. I appeal to you therefore brethren.

By the mercies of God. Bless those who persecute you. And root it all in the mercies of God.

Abundantly displayed in chapters 1 to 11. That's exactly what I did last week. I could do it again right now.

And it would be exactly right. That would be the right thing to do. But there are more ways to skin this cat.

Than one. And so instead of doing that. I want to go to verse 3. And remind you of some things from months ago.

And show you the link between verse 3. And verse 15. And Christ. Verse 3. For by the grace given to me.

I say to everyone among you. Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think. But to think with sober judgment.

Each according to the measure of faith. That God has assigned. Now we spent a lot of time on that verse.

I think we lingered there for three weeks. Let me put it in context. Verse 1. By the mercies of God I ask you all.

Give up your bodies as living sacrifices. Which is your spiritual service of worship. I think that's what's being described through this whole chapter.

What does it look like when Christians say to the Lord. You have me. Body, soul and spirit.

I am yours. Make yourself look good on my life. That's my living worship.

Then verse 2 unpacks how. That happens. Don't be conformed to this world.

If you do, you're going to look just like it. He's not going to get any praise from you. But be transformed.

How do you do that? How do you get so transformed that your life looks like worship. By the renewing. Of your mind.

Now that's where we are when verse 3 begins. That you may prove what is the will of God. Good, acceptable and perfect.

How do you get a mind that is so different from the world's mind. A mind so much like Jesus' mind. A way of thinking that is so out of sync with the world.

So in sync with the Bible. That you can smell the will of God. Prove it.

Discern it. Do it. Embrace it.

Love it. Follow it. Intuit it.

And verse 3. I think. Goes as deep as you can go. In answering what the renewed mind.

Is. Let me read it again. For by the grace given to me.

I say to everyone among you. Not. To think of himself.

More highly. Than he ought to think. The first thing the renewed mind does.

Is go after the exalted self. And get it. Down.

Then secondly. But. To think with sober judgment.

How? How? How Paul? What do you mean think with sober judgment? What's this? What's this sober thinking? Each. According. Think in accordance with.

The measure of faith. That God has. Assigned.

And I said weeks ago. The alternative. To thinking too highly of yourself.

In the Bible. The alternative. In the Bible.

This text in particular. Is not. Mainly.

To think. Lowly. Though that's a very good place to start.

And essential. But mainly. To think very little.

And to think a lot about Christ. Faith. Is turning away from self.

Preoccupation and self infatuation and self exaltation. And. Looking at the.

Christ. Who. Is so valuable that we become Christ.

Preoccupied. And Christ. Exalting.

And Christ infatuated. That's the alternative to. Thinking too highly.

Of ourselves and the root of all sin. Is these two things. Not happening.

Not. Getting the self. Down.

And then turning from the self. To Christ. In faith.

Remember I use the image. Of a mirror. The goal of Christian.

Thinking. Is not to. Get a better view of the self.

That you see in the mirror. The goal of Christian thinking. Is to stand in front of the mirror and have faith.

Turn the mirror into a window. Behind which we see the glory of Christ. Remember I said.

When you get to heaven and somebody says to you. Are you now. Humble.

The answer is going to be not. Yes. But rather.

Christ is all. Don't lock yourself in. To low and high self esteem.

There is a third way to live. It isn't drawing down joy from high self esteem. It's drawing down joy from Christ esteem.

Christ infatuation. Christ preoccupation. Where you're thrilled with.

And occupied with. And ravished with. And taken up with Christ.

So much. The self. Is incidental.

It's just back there. The thing that's doing it. In fact.

If you were to ask me to. Define the new self in Christ. Define it.

What's the new. Creature. I would say.

The self that looks away. From itself to Christ. Is the new self.

That's the meaning of the newness of the self. It looks away from self. To Christ.

As it's treasure. As it's joy. As it's hope.

I think that. Is the. Root.

Of. Verse 14. But before we go there.

And show that more specifically. There's another thing in verse 3. That's absolutely essential. If we're going to do.

Verses 14 and 15. From this root of faith. And self-denial.

And it's the words at the end of verse. Three. Think with sober judgment.

I'm in the middle of the verse here. Each according to the measure of faith. That God.

Has assigned. In other words. The measure.

Of our looking away from our self to Christ. Which is what faith is. An embracing of Christ.

A treasuring of Christ. A holding fast to Christ. A trusting in Christ.

A resting in Christ. That's what faith is. Looking away to Him.

If that weren't enough to strip us. Of all self-exaltation. And self-preoccupation.

And self-infatuation. This phrase does it. Because this phrase comes in.

This phrase comes in. And. Spots.

The old self. Slowly. Theologically.

Raising its head. And at least saying. I produced the faith.

I was smart enough to believe. I was humble enough to turn away from myself. I. I. I believed.

It won't let us do it. It cuts us off at every turn. And says.
Turn to Christ. And think of self. In accord.
With the measure of. Self-forgetting faith. That.
God. Has. Assigned.
To you. By grace you have been saved. Through faith.
And this is not your own doing. It is the gift. Of God.
Not of works. Lest. Any little voice.
Would raise its head and say. What a good boy I am. I believed.
So. It started here. Two.
Grounds for boasting. Have been shattered. Number one.
I thought once that I could boast in myself. Satisfy myself. Save myself.
And I discovered. In the gospel. That I couldn't.
And that Christ was my only Savior. My only Lord. My only counselor.
My only. Treasure and. Joy.
And so I have now. By grace. Been enabled to look away to him.
Just test your own hearts. Right now. Do you find it within yourself.
Easily. To be ravished with Christ. Rather than.
Money. Television. Success.
Is that your native air. It isn't. You coast in this stream.
You're going backwards. You must be taken hold of by the Holy Spirit. And born again.
And then constantly. Worked on by the Spirit. In order.
That you would look away from self. And find your satisfaction. In Christ.
Rest in Christ. Trust in Christ. Hope in Christ.
Be glad in Christ. I can imagine that Shana is pretty discouraged. Right now.
Her violin snapped in two while she was playing. That's probably a pretty expensive instrument. I felt bad for her.
She had to sit there and. Think about it. While we finished worshiping.
And I just pray right now that. Shana would say Christ is all. Christ is all.

God will provide. The second ground of boasting. Is that.

At least Lord. Won't you let me. Won't you let me.

Take credit. For. Looking away from myself.

And the answer is no. I won't. I will take that to myself.

So that your salvation. Will be all of grace. And you will lean on me.

Now. With that kind of mercy flowing to us. Blood bought.

Mercy. To look away from ourselves to the all satisfying Christ. And to know that even are looking away from ourselves was assigned to us by Christ.

We meet three kinds of people. In verses 14 and 15. We meet persecutors.

We meet weepers. And we meet rejoicers. And this verse tells us how the kind of people who are looking away from themselves.

And. Thrilled. With Christ.

Relate to those three kinds of people. Bless those who persecute you. Bless and do not curse them.

Rejoice with those who rejoice. Weep. With those who weep.

Weep. Now, first of all, before we link. Verse three.

And what we've seen with this behavior. Notice how radical it is. You might be missing it.

It does not say. Don't retaliate. Like don't hit back.

That's true. It doesn't say that. Because it's deeper than that.

Because. If it really depended on what you did with your hands. It doesn't take any Holy Spirit to do that.

Stoics did that. Right. People with willpower do that.

So what's the difference between that? Not doing with your hands. What you feel like doing. What's the difference between that and verse 14? The answer is verse 14 is telling you.

To do something with your heart. Bless. Don't curse.

Bless. Don't curse. You're not even allowed to feel vengeance.

Blessing. Is. Is.

Wanting somebody to have it go well with them. That's the meaning of blessing. Wanting to have it go well with them.

Forever. We're Christians. We're not going to never, ever, ever say.

I hope it goes well with them for 80 years. And I don't care where they go to hell or not. We're never going to talk like that.

We want it to go well with them. Now. Because that's the way we'd like it to be.

And the Bible says do unto others as you'd have them do unto you. And. We want to go to heaven not hell.

So we're going to pray and work. And love. Towards that end.

This is a radical command. You can't imagine. How radical this is.

This is straight from Jesus. Right. This is just quoting.

Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere. So it's pretty remarkable. We're supposed to pray for them.

Well, let me just read the words of Jesus. Luke 6. Twenty eight. Bless those who curse you.

Pray for those who abuse you. That's the way Jesus said it. Bless those who curse you.

Pray. So take this inner longing for their welfare. And turn it into a Godward petition.

Isn't that amazing? So here's a husband or a wife who's let you down 10,000 times. Or he's a boss who mistreats you. Or here's a friend who's always told wrong things about you.

Or here's a dad who abused you when you were little. And this text says. Want their welfare.

And pray for it. Oh. You have loads of questions coming to your mind right now.

Which is why I said I was going to take this paragraph in one night. Or one day. I want to come back in the weeks to come.

I want to ask about. Should anybody go to prison? Can you be a policeman and carry a billy club? Should you ever spank a child? Can you give a student a C-? Can you fire somebody who comes in at 10 instead of 8? All the time? I mean. We're not playing games with this thing.

We live in a real world. When it says bless those who persecute you. Questions happen.

Turn the other cheek when your little kid sasses you. I think not. Well.

It says to bless. Well. So I guess we have to come back.

Don't we? Because. I'm not going there tonight. I'm just saying.

Come back. So where do we go with the minutes we have. Left.

And I want to. I want to show you. How faith.

From verse 3. Is the root. Of this. Behavior.

If you're going to have the kind of heart. That when somebody crosses you. Wrongs you.

Your longing is going to be for their welfare. You got to have a miracle happen. There's got to be a death.

To your old self. It's got to be a new. A glorious new satisfaction.
Because it used to be. That my getting praised. And my getting treated right.
And my getting thought well of. Was where I got a lot of my satisfaction. And you're telling me.
That I'm supposed to have the resources. That when I'm wronged. Over and over again.
I can come back at that with. Blessing. I don't think so.
Unless. A miracle happens. And the miracle is what chapters 1 to 11.
Was all about and. This is the application of it. So I want to try to get at.
How faith in Christ is the root. Of this radical. Behavior.
The root of not cursing. When you're persecuted. But blessing.
The root of praying. For those who make your life hard. And really wanting good for them.
Here's the way it works. Faith in Christ. As we've seen.
Involves turning from natural self. Even our bodies turning away from our natural selves. As the source.
Of our main contentment and security. So the self even the body. Dies.
In a biblical sense. A death happens to my old self. I'm crucified with Christ.
It is no longer I who live. But Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the flesh.
I live by faith. By faith in the son of God. I'm turned away from that old self.
It has died. As the ruler. The controller.
The source of my contentment. My security. I'm not looking there.
And how that self is treated. I'm looking to Christ. For my security.
My contentment. My satisfaction. Christ is all to me.
Now. And therefore when people deal with that old thing. It's not decisive.
Anymore. In how I feel. We must get free.
From the impulse to retaliate. That used to rise up. In that.
Old king self. And. We must turn to Christ.
And find him as the all sufficient. Contentment. And security.
So here are the three ways that I think it works practically. Number one. The Christ that faith beholds and embraces.
So I'm thinking of faith now. As turning away from self. As a source of.

Our contentment and security and satisfaction. And looking away to Christ as a new source. Being ravished with him.

Preoccupied with him. Infatuated with him. Exalting him.

We just look in a way. To him. The Christ.

That this. Faith. Beholds.

And embraces. Is a Christ. Who lived.

This way. This. Verse fourteen way.

Luke twenty three thirty four. Father. Forgive them.

They know. Not. What.

They. Do. And faith.

In looking to that Christ. Sees. And savors.

Everything. About that Christ. That's what faith does.

Faith doesn't pick and choose. Faith doesn't say. I like seventy percent of what Christ is.

And the other thirty percent. I think he was a fool. Faith says.

Everything the Bible reveals to me about Jesus. I love. And you cannot say.

I love. The way he treated those who persecuted him. And call.

Cursing your persecutors. Right. Or beautiful.

Or good. And. Say it the other way around.

You can't look to Christ. Faith cannot look to Christ. Embrace Christ.

Savor Christ. As one. Who.

Blesses those who persecute him. And then regard. Our blessing of those who persecute us as stupid.

You can't do it. It's a living. Inner.

Contradiction. Of soul. That's the first way it works.

Second way it works is this. The faith. That beholds and embraces.

Christ. Sees him. Having mercy upon those who persecute him.

And are his enemies. Not in a vague general way. Faith isn't about belief in a historical fact.

Merely. It isn't about a belief in a theological truth. Merely.

Faith. Looks into the face of the living. Christ.

And knows. He did that for me. I was his rebellious.

Traitorous. Subject. In the kingdom.

I was on my way out of here. I was in his face. I didn't like Christianity.

I didn't like church. I didn't like Bible. I didn't like anything about him or his people.

They're just a bunch of hypocrites. And I'm going my way. And he looked at me and said.

Father. I pray for John Piper. You chose him before the foundation of the world.

I intend to shed my blood for him. And I will pour out our Holy Spirit upon him. And break his heart.

When he sees me. Lift it up. And God.

Did it. That's what faith sees in Christ. That's what faith sees in Christ.

And therefore. When you know. That not in general.

But your specific life. Hangs. On undeserved.

Mercy toward an enemy. You can't be swimming in that ocean. And taste it.

Towards your enemy and say. I don't like the way mercy tastes here. Oh no.

I don't like mercy here. Towards you. You can't do that.

It's an inner. Contradiction of soul. You have tasted that.

Christ. Blessed you. Romans 5. 6. While we were still weak.

At the right time. Christ died for the ungodly. Christ blessed you while you were still his enemy.

Christ didn't curse you. Therefore. You can't feel the wonder of that.

And then turn around to somebody. Who has mistreated you. And not love mercy.

Third way it works is this. The Christ that we behold. And embrace.

Because of his death and resurrection. Made our future. Absolutely secure.

This is huge. Because I think we are tormented. In a moment of mistreatment.

That if I don't make this right. My life is going to be miserable. And they are going to get the last word.

And great injustice will be done. And I will not see justice done. And I will be miserable and unhappy forever.

That's a great act of unbelief. In the death of Jesus. Because.

He who did not spare his own son. But gave him up for us all. Will he not with him.

Freely give us all things. Will he not make your future absolutely secure. So that neither death.

Nor life. Nor angels. Nor principalities.

Nor things present. Nor things to come. Nor powers.

Nor height. Nor depth. Nor anything in this world.

Will be able to separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Is that not blood bought. So why do you think you need to take it into your hands.

So that your future. Will be better. You don't.

In fact it's unbelief. To think you need to take it into your hands. Do not fear.

Those who kill the body. And after that have no more that they can do. Rather.

Fear him. Who after he has killed. Both soul and body can cast into hell.

Yes I tell you fear him. Are not two sparrows. Sold for one penny.

And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your father. Fear. Not.

You are of more value than many sparrows. That's the way Jesus talked. About how rock solid secure.

You. Are. In.

Him. Let him kill the body. That's all they can do.

That's all they can do. Paradise. Home free.

Failure. Enemy. You thought.

You put it down. And you put it up. That's what faith does.

So. In summary. The root.

Of radical Christ like. Love of. Enemies.

Is death. To an old self preoccupied. Self infatuated.

Self exalting. You. Self.

Self. Self. Mirror.

Mirror. On. The.

Wall. Who's. The.

Fill in the blank. Of. Them.

All. Whatever. You.

Like. No. No.

Mirror. Mirror. On.

The. Wall. Become.
A window. To. Christ.
For me. Satisfy. My.
Soul. With. Christ.
So. May. Turn.
Away. From. Vengeance.
Last. Question. You're.
You're. Wondering. Well.
What. Are. You.
Gonna. Do. With.
Verse. Fifteen. Tonight.
I'm. Gonna. Do.
Just. One. Thing.
With. It. I've.
Done. A. Couple. Of.
Things. Already. I'm.
Gonna. Do. More.
Next. Time. Because.
I. Love. Verse. Fifteen.
I. Want. To. Be.
Verse. Fifteen. All.
That. Can. Be.
Not. Just. A. Little.
Bit. Of. What.
It. Can. Be.
I. Want. To. Close.
Like. This. And.

I'll. Tell. You.
Just. Really. Frankly.
Where. This. Came.
From. I. Read. Some.
Commentaries. And. I. Thought.
And. I. Looked. At.
My. Own. Experience.
And. I. Had. About.
Seven. Ideas. That.
This. Might. Mean.
And. I'll. Read.
Of. The. Martyrs. February.
Edition. That. Just.
Come. In. The.
Mail. And. I. Opened.
It. To. An.
Article. On. The.
Kuhn. People. K. H. U. N. In.
Laos. Half. Them.
Have. Become. Christians.
And. They're. Under.
Severe. Persecution. From.
The. Government. Forces.
In. Laos. And.
I. Read. I. Read. The.
Whole. Article. But.
These. Two. Paragraphs.

That. Shed. A. New.
Light. On. Verse.
Fifteen. For. Me.
In. The. Context.
Of. Persecution. Which.
Shows. How. How.
We. Need. To.
Try. To. Get.
Inside. The. Mind.
Verse. Fourteen. In.
Order. To. Rightly.
Handle. Verse. Fifteen.
At. Least. Handle.
All. Of. It.
And. I'm. Going.
To. Read. Those.
Two. Paragraphs. For.
You. And. You.
And. You. And.
You. And. Even.
Though. Our. Cultures.
Are. Different. She.
Says. We. Are.
One. Body. In.
Christ. Who. Boldly.
Shared. Quote. Our.
Business. Is. Your.

Business. Our. Hurt.
Is. Your. Hurt.
Our. Happiness. Is.
Your. Happiness. Verse.
Fifteen. It. Goes.
On. The. Apostle.
Paul. Wrote. I. Hadn't.
Thought. Of. This.
Parallel. I. Had. To.
Be. Given. This.
By. A. Suffering. Woman.
In. Laos. It's.
Closest. Parallel. In.
The. Apostle. Paul.
Why. Didn't. I. Think.
Of. It. I've.
Been. To. School.
I. Didn't. Think. Of.
It. Because. I. Haven't.
Suffered. Enough. That's.
Why. The. Apostle.
Paul. Wrote. If.
One. Member. Suffers.
All. The. Members.
Suffer. With. It.
If. One. Member.
Is. Honored. All.

The. Members. Rejoice.

With. It. Rejoice.

With. Rejoice. With.

It. Rejoice. Rejoice.

Rejoice. With. Rejoice.

Rejoice. Giving. So.

I leave it. With. You.

For. You. To.

Consider. Summing up. The.

Admonition. And I say. This.

To. Bethlehem. North.

Campus. Bethlehem. Downtown.

Bless. Those. Who.

Persecute. You. And.

Do not. Curse. them.

Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. And if you're struggling with bitterness still, or resentment, or grudges, or even planned retaliation, I just plead with you, go deeper with Jesus. Get to know Jesus.

Faith looks away from all the pleasures that the self will have out of getting our comeuppance, looks away from all those vengeful delights, and looks through the mirror, which has become a window, to Christ and embraces all about him as our treasure, our joy, our satisfaction, our contentment, our security, our future, our judge. Let's pray. Lord, I pray for all the saints and all the unconverted sinners who are listening to me now.

Would you please, O God, come in your power, by your Spirit, through your Word, and fill us with a longing for the sweetness of the liberty of forgiveness. Oh, how sweet to lay it down. Oh, how sweet to walk out into a night sky and look up free.

I'm free. I don't have to carry the burden of anger, the burden of vengeance, the burden of resentment anymore. I'm free.

I hand it over to him who judges justly. I embrace the all-merciful Christ as my satisfaction. I ask now that overflowing out of my abundant heart would be words of blessing and not words of cursing.

This is life indeed. Would you cause it to happen now? In Jesus' name, Amen. Thank you for listening to this message by John Piper, pastor for preaching at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

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