

# REJOICE NOT WHEN THINE ENEMY FALLETH

PROVERBS 24:17; ROMANS 12:17-21

Text: Proverbs 24:17

## **Proverbs 24:17**

<sup>17</sup> Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth:

Introduction:

One of the things that really frustrates me is the lack of justice in our land and in our world; when hardened criminals get off with what appears to be a slap on the wrist.

While injustice in our country and world abounds the Word of God clearly shows that the wicked will not go unpunished, however we must guard our attitude when our enemy falls.

A wrong attitude is as bad as the offense from the offender.

Notice:

# **1. THE PRINCIPLE OF PEACE (VS. ROMANS 12:17-18)**

## **Romans 12:17-18**

<sup>17</sup> Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. <sup>18</sup> If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

# **2. THE PROMISE OF VENGEANCE (ROMANS 12:19)**

## **Romans 12:19**

<sup>19</sup> Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

# **3. THE PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW (ROMANS 12:20-21)**

## **Romans 12:20-21**

<sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

So often we want to take matters into our own hands, but God gives us a procedure to follow.

Notice

## A. The Common Method is to Overcome Evil with Evil

- Overcoming of evil with evil is in the first place a most natural procedure.
- To recompense evil for evil is natural, but may God deliver us from the nature which makes it natural?

Note the example of Peter (Matthew 26:48-52)

### **Matthew 26:48-52**

<sup>48</sup> Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. <sup>49</sup> And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him. <sup>50</sup> And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. <sup>51</sup> And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out *his* hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. <sup>52</sup> Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Peter's reaction too often is our reaction. But note what the Lord said – "Put up again thy sword..."

When we return evil with evil we are already overcome with evil.

## B. The Divine Method of Overcoming Evil with Good

- If any man has done you a wrong, do not only forgive it, but avenge it by doing him a favor.
- If anybody has slandered you, or treated you unkindly in any way, go out of your way to serve him.
- “If thine enemy hunger, feed him.”
- The method of returning good for evil is that it preserves the man from evil. If
  - While this conduct protects you, it is the very best weapon of offense against the opposer.

### Illustration:

William Ladd had a farm and his neighbor, Pulsifer, was a great trouble to him, for he kept a breed of gaunt, long-legged sheep, as active as spaniels, which would spring over almost any sort of fence. These sheep were very fond of a fine field of grain belonging to Mr. Ladd, and were in it continually; complaints were of no use, for Pulsifer evidently cared nothing for his neighbour's losses.

One morning Ladd said to his men, "Set the dogs on those sheep, and if that won't keep them out, shoot them." After he had said that, he thought to himself, "This will not do. I had better try the peace principle." So he sent to his men and countermanded the order, and rode over to see his neighbor about those troublesome sheep.

"Good morning," said he, but he received no answer: so he tried again, and got nothing but a sort of grunt. "Neighbor," said he, "I have come to see you about those sheep."

"Yes," Pulsifer replied, "I know. You are a petty neighbor to tell your men to kill my sheep! You a rich man, too, and going to shoot a poor man's sheep!"

Then followed some very strong language, but Ladd replied, "I was wrong, neighbor, and I am sorry for it. Think no more about it. But, neighbor, we may as well agree. It seems I have got to keep your sheep, and it won't do to let them eat all that grain, so I came over to say that I will take them into my homestead pasture and I will keep them all the season; and if any one is missing you shall have the pick of mine."

Pulsifer looked confounded, and then stammered out, "Now, Squire, are you in earnest?" When he found that Ladd really meant to stand to the offer, Pulsifer stood still a moment and then said, "The sheep shan't trouble

you any more. When you talk about shooting I can shoot as well as you; but when you speak in that kind and neighbourly way I can be kind too.”

The sheep never trespassed into Ladd’s lot any more.

- Returning good for evil, again reflects great honor upon Christ.

Close:

May we not rejoice when our enemies fall, may our hearts not be glad when he stumbles.

Bless them that persecute you and curse not.

Return to no man evil for evil.

If your enemy hungers feed him, if he is thirsty give him something to drink.

Don’t be overcome with evil, but rather overcome evil with good.

Let the rest to the Lord.