

CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY FOR PEACE

Outside the Church

(Romans 12:14,17-21)

Introduction:

- Alfred Nobel was known for:
 1. In his life – the manufacturing of ex_____.
 2. In his death – providing funds for the Nobel p_____ prize.
- Christians ought to be known for being peaceful people; why?
 1. At one time we were enemies of God (from God’s viewpoint) but He made peace with us through J_____ (Rom 5:1).
 2. This peace that we experience in Christ, should be lived out in our relationship to other Christians and unbelievers.
- What is your responsibility for peace in relation to the world?

It is a Misunderstood Responsibility (17)

- Some insist that Christians ought to be p_____ (never enlist in the military, never defend themselves) because of Jesus’ words of “turning the other cheek” (Matt 5:39)
 1. The c_____ of the verse forbids this understanding:
 - a. Jesus’ immediate audience was His d_____ (5:1) with a Jewish crowd listening in (7:28)
 - b. Throughout chapter 5 Jesus repeats the phrase, *you have heard that it was said*
 - 1) If He was referring to what scripture said, He would have said either:
 - a) *Have you not read*_____ (Matt 12:3,5; 19:4; 22:31)
 - b) *As it is written*_____ (e.g. Matt 4:4,7,10; 21:13; 26:24,31)
 - 2) He is referring to what respected R_____ traditionally taught about the law of Ex 21:24, which was that only personal retaliation in like-kind was justifiable.
 2. Ex 21:22-25 is a law that sets a penalty:
 - a. For a person who through careless violence causes a woman to deliver prematurely and the baby is affected.
 - b. That s_____ is to inflict on the guilty party that corresponds to the baby’s condition (*life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth...*)
- The “turn the other cheek” teaching by Jesus
 1. Forbids p_____ revenge of any kind
 2. Demonstrates that believers should be willing to suffer further i_____ instead of contributing to conflict.
- Rom 12:17 - Believers ought to be known as peaceful not reactionary; are you?

It is a Limited Responsibility (18)

- Resolving Conflict is not always p_____ - *if possible*
- Believers should do e_____ they can to resolve conflict with unbelievers, otherwise they are contributing to the conflict – *as far as it depends upon you be at peace with all men.*
- Believers are not to try to c_____ an unbeliever, but leave the rest up to God.

It is a Specific Responsibility (14,19,20)

- F_____ cultivates peace
 1. It is a d_____ to leave the offence in the past (the Greek word often translated as forgive literally means to leave behind).
 2. It releases you from being a continual v_____ of the past, so that you can live effectively in the present.
- P_____ for God's blessing upon those who persecute us (the blessing of salvation as opposed to the curse of damnation) – are you praying for your enemies? (vv. 14,19)
- If you have the opportunity to meet the p_____ needs of your enemy, do it (v. 20)
 1. Paul alludes to Prov 25:22, an ancient practice
 - a. A hearth (fireplace) was continually burning so that cooking and hot water would be a_____.
 - b. If the fire went out, someone would go with a pot to their neighbor's house and the neighbor would take burning coals (embers) from their fire and place it in the pot.
 - c. Ancients carried pots on their h_____
 2. The application of the proverb – heaping on their heads
 - a. Does not mean that we make them feel g_____
 - b. Does mean that we overwhelm them with k_____
 3. This act of kindness cultivates peace and can be the very thing God may use to bring them to Christ (Matt 5:16).