

Love Vs. Resentment, 1 Corinthians 13:5b, 6/3/18

v.5b *[Love] is not irritable, it is not resentful.*

The Greek word here creates a vivid picture, which is better captured in the NIV translation- *Love keeps no record of wrongs.* Where are the accountants and record keepers? This word is an accounting term- it literally means to keep the books, to keep a record, to keep a file...filing cabinet, floppy, CD, Thumb drive, to the cloud. This word is all about keeping records. This idea will always remind me of school. I remember one of my teachers in elementary who would use the scare tactic to remind me- "You know, Mr. Keeler, this goes on your permanent record!" As if I'm going to go for an interview and they are going to pull out my report card from 3rd grade... But this is the idea of the word used here.

Paul says an amazing thing, almost hard to believe, about love. He says love keeps no permanent record of wrongs done against it. Some of us hear this and bristle, maybe even are offended but this suggestion because of the things done against us- people who have hurt us, those who betrayed us, mistreated us, talked bad about us. And you have a file on them. God expects me to forget it? To get over it? To act like it never happened? Hold on! We are going to talk about that. But first we need to remember this is a divine attribute- This is God's love. So let's talk first about God's files before we talk about ours.

If God opened the heavenly filing cabinet on you, what would he find? For some of us that is a terrifying idea because of all the things in your past, every thought, every action, everything you are ashamed of... Maybe a few of you feel pretty good about that because you think you have lived a pretty good life and generally been a good citizen and nice to people.

What does the Bible say? Let's review the Gospel message shall we?

1) *God is holy and just, therefore he takes sin seriously.*

God is called holy more than any other word.

Galatians 6:7

Do not be deceived, God cannot be mocked, what you reap is what you will sow.

2) *We all have a file of sin*

Romans 3:23

All have sinned and fall short of God's glory, none who are righteous.

3) *Our file of sin is bigger and more serious than we think.*

Jesus tells us that sin is not merely the physical breaking of the commandments, but even our thoughts.

Psalm 103:3

If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand?

4) Our good works and religious efforts cannot expunge our record.

Galatians 2:16-17

Yet we know that a person is not counted righteous (same word as record) by works of the law... by works of the law no one will be counted righteous.

Trying to overcome our sin is like taking a Kleenex to an oil spill.

5) Our file of sin condemns us.

Romans 6:23

The wages of sin is death. (permanent, eternal)

So the file on every one of us is long and condemning. This is the bad news, but the bad news is what makes the good news so good!

6) God, in his love, has provided a way of expunging our permanent record of sin: Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:19

God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them.

Guess what? This is the same word here, love does not keep record of wrongs. There is a way for us to have a squeaky clean record...and it's not through trying really hard to not do bad things or erase it ourselves.

2 Corinthians 5:21

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Jesus' perfect record, his squeaky clean file and his claim to be God in the flesh qualifies him to be the substitute in our place. Obtaining a clean record is located in only one person- Jesus.

7) A clean record and declaration of righteousness comes through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

Galatians 2:16

We know that a person is not counted righteous by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ.

When we place our faith, not in our ineffective efforts to erase our records, but in Jesus Christ's effective work- not only is our record expunged, but when we open up the file it just says righteous!

Just take that in for a minute- squeaky, clean record. I can't speak for you, but that just shouldn't be. I know the things I've done. And I know at 36, I have a lot more

sinning that should be added to the record...and yet, it just keeps opening and saying- Righteousness. That's grace! Mercy, That's love! That's forgiveness! This is why Paul echo's David's words in **Romans 4:8 Blessed is the one against whom the Lord will not count his sins.** This is the love of God toward those in Jesus Christ. We must really understand this in order to understand what God is calling us to do. Because God is asking us to do for others what he has done for us!

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Are we keeping a record of wrongs against us? If we opened up the resentment files, whose names would we find there? A parent who mistreated you, let you down? A boss that fired you? A friend that stabbed you in the back? A boyfriend/girlfriend, husband/wife that abandoned you or broke your heart? A church that didn't deliver on your expectations? Someone who judged you...Or maybe it is group of people or a system of injustice that has caused bitterness and resentment, a desire to get even, make them pay...

For us as Christians, this isn't optional. This is part of what it means to live as a Christian. Sometimes we read the Bible as though there should be an asterisk on it, and we follow that asterisk, and there's a picture of us that says on the back, "Except you," and then there's a little box there where you get to write in the rules for you and exceptions. "But you don't know what they did." Maybe it is an issue of our will, we just refuse to do it. Maybe it is an issue of not knowing what it looks like. We do need to have a proper understanding of what it means to keep no record of wrongs done to us. What it isn't.

NOT "Forgive and Forget"

When the Bible says that God will remember sin no more, it does not mean God forgets our sin. It means that God no longer counts that sin against us because it has been accounted to Christ. Forgiveness is not God's forgetting what has occurred, but rather God's loving despite what He remembers and knows all too well. The same is true for us. We have been sinned against in some egregious ways that we will never forget and that's OK. And that means we don't necessarily go back to trusting someone or back to being best friends, or back to intimacy. That may take time, and it may not be possible.

NOT "Sweep it under the carpet"

It is not pretending to feel good about what was bad, or so downplay something bad, trying to live in denial. We must be honest about what hurts, that's healthy. Keeping no records isn't the absence of anger at sin. I counseled a woman whose husband abused her, left him. And she struggled with anger and felt guilty about it. You are not expected to feel good about what happened. God is slow to anger, but he experiences righteous anger against sin and it's consequences. This is fitting up to a

point. But you don't need to hold on to that in a vindictive way that desires harm for your husband.

1 Peter 2:23

When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

You can hand it over to God again and again. Forgiveness is not feeling good about horrible things.

NOT "Become a Doormat"

It's not becoming a doormat for victimization. There are consequences because of actions. God disciplines those he loves. He is willing to allow us to suffer consequences for our sins for the purpose of correction (Hebrews 12). That may be that they are unable to spend time with the children if necessary. Or not allowing them to live in your home after continued unrepentance. In other words, sending a person to jail does not mean you are unforgiving to them.

Two Resources:

Boundaries- Henry Cloud and John Townsend

Changes that Heal- Henry Cloud

Here's what it does mean to keep no record of wrongs.

I found an old quote from a puritan preacher that I think sums this up so well Biblically.

When we strive against all thoughts of revenge; when we will not do our enemies mischief, but wish well to them, grieve at their calamities, pray for them and seek reconciliation with them.

-Thomas Watson, *Body of Divinity*

1. Resist thoughts of revenge.

Romans 12:19

Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

2. Don't seek to do them harm.

1 Thessalonians 5:15

See that no one repays another with evil for evil.

3. Wish well to them.

Luke 6:28

Bless those who curse you.

4. Grieve at their calamities.

Proverbs 24:17

Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles.

5. Pray for them.

Matthew 5:44,

But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.

6. Seek reconciliation when possible.

Romans 12:18

If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

Keeping no Records

1. Resist thoughts of revenge.
2. Don't seek to do them harm.
3. Wish well to them.
4. Grieve at their calamities.
5. Pray for them.
6. Seek reconciliation when possible.

How is it we can keep no record of wrongs? Because God took our filing cabinet of sin and placed it on Jesus. Forgive as you have been forgiven. Communion.