

Finding Thankful Through Letting Go Of Bitterness

This message is super timely because we are in for holiday mode. For some of you, you've been listening to Christmas music, drinking eggnog, and have had your Christmas tree up since September! For others you cannot wait for the holiday season to be over. Why? Because whatever emotional state you are in it is magnified during this time of year.

If things are good then the Christmas music sounds a little sweeter, the carbs taste a little bit better. However, if you were going through difficulty of any kind it magnifies the pain also.

So today we are going to talk about bitterness and how it robs us of being thankful and steals our joy. What bitterness is, and how to get free of it, are you ready to go this morning?

So, I want you to remember this as we move forward this morning, you cannot control what other people do, but you can control how you respond. That is the defining factor of our lives.

So, what's the problem with bitterness?

1. Bitterness has a dangerous root.

Hebrews 12:15 "See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many."

I think it's very interesting that Paul used the word "**root**" to describe bitterness. What you cannot see underneath the surface is slowly

growing deeper and deeper. You might think, Pastor Jimmy I'm not bitter or maybe you have no idea a bitter root has to hold.

Follow along with me to first Corinthians chapter 13. It's the famous love chapter. In chapter 13 Paul descriptively defines what love is and I want to read just an excerpt. It says, "***love keeps no record of wrongs.***"

Bitterness however keeps detailed records of wrongs. He lied to me, she hurt me, they let me down. The root of bitterness will keep growing and growing and that root system will continue to expand until it starts pushing on your foundation and disrupts your thankful and joy.

Bitterness definitely has a dangerous root.

2. **Bitterness produces a poisonous fruit.**

So, let's go back to Hebrews 12:15 "See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause **trouble and defile many.**"

Paul understood that if a person continues to nurse an offense that it would have widespread damage. We know this right? One bitter person can destroy a small group. One bitter person can divide a family, because of workplace to be a miserable place to go, and a marriage too much to bear.

Now you would think after this description bitter people would be easy to pick out but here is a dirty little secret, are you ready for this?

Bitterness is the hardest sin to see in the mirror. Why? Because you feel justified in it. Some people wouldn't know what life would be like without bitterness because it is Part of them.

And if we're not careful we will come into a setting like this and worship God with all of our mite while hating someone in our heart simultaneously. **1 John 4:20 says, "If anyone says, I love God, yet hates**

his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.”

If we aren't careful, we can receive the forgiveness of Jesus Christ but withhold forgiveness to others. Whether it be a boss that doesn't appreciate you or a spouse that doesn't lift a finger at home and for some of you, you have a problem with you.

And the real of it is, **we cannot heal from that which we are not willing to acknowledge.** We need to ask God to reveal anything in our heart that is growing underneath the surface of our soul and then allow the Holy Spirit to excavate that and heal your soul.

So how do you kill the root of bitterness?

Ephesians 4:31-32 tells us. “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as Christ God for gave you.”

1. First, we kill bitterness with compassion.

The laws of heaven almost always go against your human nature. Jesus said if you want to be great then serve others. If someone strikes you, offer them the other cheek. Do you want to kill the root of bitterness then offer love and compassion.

Paul wrote in ***Romans chapter 12 verse 21 “Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good.”*** Be part of the solution and be careful that you're not perpetuating the problem. Jesus said it best, ***“Bless those who curse you and pray for those who mistreat you.”***

If you wanna find your thankful again you're going to have to release the bitterness in your life.

If you can't find it in your heart to forgive them yet, then pray for them and at least open the door for the Holy Spirit to heal you so that you can forgive because it's harder to hate someone your blessing.

Praying for someone else may not change them but it will always change you every single time.

2. The second way you kill the root of bitterness is by forgiveness.

Remember Paul said, ***“be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as Christ God forgave you.”***

Here's something that's going to help you this morning and hopefully set you free, you are not required to generate something, you are merely passing along something you already received and that my friends is forgiveness.

So how was it that Jesus forgave you? He hung on a cross not to pay his debt but to pay yours and he said three words that changed everything, ***“It Is Finished.”*** When he said those words, he was thinking of you. For some of you today, you believe Jesus is Lord and receive his forgiveness, but you are not walking in freedom. You are in prison to the memory of an offense that is caused you not to forgive.

This morning you can relive it, you can rehearse it, or you can release it. It's up to you.