

Weights of the heart – bitterness and resentment

My own story of the bitterness and resentment that I carried from my military days.

Psalm 71: 19 – 21 Your righteousness, God, reaches to the heavens, you who have done great things. Who is like you, God? Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again; from the depths of the earth you will again bring me up. You will increase my honor and comfort me once more.

1) Everything that God does is right

- A fundamental reason why we harbour bitterness and resentment is that we don't view the righteousness of God in perspective.
 - Bitterness is anger or disappointment at being treated unfairly, while resentment is a bitter indignation at being treated unfairly.
 - This is not right! I want justice! are our cries.
- We can't believe that God can allow us to go through such traumatic experiences and still be a righteous and loving God.
 - How can God allow us to be treated so unfairly?
- We often harbour bitterness subconsciously – without thinking about it – for atrocities that have been perpetrated against other people even though it never touched us personally.
 - The Jewish holocaust
 - The Rwandan genocide
 - The ISIS massacre of civilian in Iraq and Syrian
 - The millions of aborted babies
 - The tragedy of animal cruelty.
 - The hunger of the poor
- However, bitterness and resentment are normally firmly entrenched in our hearts and minds when we have been personally wronged, or perceive to be wronged.
 - We are bitter because of our incessant jealousy of someone else who received a promotion, or something else, over us
 - We resent people who have irritating habits, even if they can't help it
 - Someone does us wrong, intentionally or unintentionally, and we harbour bitterness against them.
- In the above scenarios we so often resent God for our bad experiences in life.
- Do we have a right to be bitter towards God?
 - Psalm 145: 17 The Lord is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does.
- Is it the righteousness of God or the sinfulness of man that causes your pain?
- The sinfulness of man brings pain onto others
 - Racism views one race as superior to another and we get the holocaust, genocide, religious massacres, apartheid, to name a few.
 - Corrupt politicians pocket money that's meant for the poor and there's hunger, no money for education, the poor lacking justice for their cause.
 - Was it God who hurt you who another person's pride, greed, ambition, racism?
- Before we become judgmental remember that bitterness and resentment are sinful responses to bad situations.
 - Bitterness and resentment lead to us being angry, depressed, negative.
 - Besides other people not wanting to have us around we live within the cocoons of our own pain, which we refuse to let go of but we always find someone else to blame, even if it is God!

2) God's hand in the cause of our bitterness

- As much as we have spoken about the righteousness of God and all that he does is righteous we also acknowledge his sovereignty and that his hand is also in everything, including the cause of our bitterness.
 - Psalm 71: 20 Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter.
 - Psalm 66: 10 – 12 For you, God, tested us; you refined us like silver. You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs. You let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance.
- Did God then orchestrate the wickedness that brought us into a place of bitterness?
- An active cause of suffering by God
 - God tests us and refines us to be Christlike.
 - For you, God, tested us; you refined us like silver. You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs. Psalm 66: 10 – 11
- An allowing of suffering due to sin and decay. A passive allowance with his sovereignty
 - God doesn't always cause our pain although he allows is as in the case of Job
 - You let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and water Psalm 66: 12
 - God gives people over to wickedness when they reject him. He doesn't intervene to stop their wicked actions in this world.
 - There's no purpose to these wicked actions
 - Romans 1: 24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts.

3) God restores us from our bitterness

- God never intends our hearts to be weighed down under the weight of the bitterness and resentment that we have due to bad experiences in our lives, whichever category they fall into.
- God not only saves us, but restores us from the effects of sin
 - Psalm 71: 20 – 21 Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again; from the depths of the earth you will again bring me up. You will increase my honor and comfort me once more.
 - Psalm 66: 12 You let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance.
- God wants you to be free and whole. He restores us through a process.
- Be proactive in not allowing bitterness to take root in our lives
 - Hebrews 12: 15 See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.
- Acknowledge that you have bitterness that God can forgive you
 - 1 John 1: 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
- Forgive those who caused your bitterness.
 - Matthew 18: 23 – 35 The parable of the unmerciful servant
- Pray for and bless those who hurt you. You can't bless and pray for someone and keep being bitter towards them at the same time
 - Luke 6: 27 – 28 But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.