

New Year's Retreat 2016

Conference Theme: "God is Real, God is Deep, God calls You."

Class Topic: Making the Bitter Sweet

Theme Verses:

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." Eph. 4:30-32

Bitterness - acidity, sharpness, tartness, asperity, distress, harshness, hostility, sarcasm, venom, discontentment

1) What is bitterness? Do we choose it?

- a) Offense/hurt — we didn't respond correctly to it
 - i) Unwillingness to forgive
- b) It's an emotion that destroys

2) How do we recognize it? What effects does it have?

- a) Conviction (every time we ignore this — does it make a bigger stronghold in our life/heart? A larger chasm in our relationship with the Lord? Our conscience gets seared.)
- b) Sarcasm and condescension towards people or individual(s)
- c) Physical health (anxiety, stress)
- d) Spiritual effects
- e) Relational effects
- f) "Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one comes short of the Grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled." Hebrews 12:14-15

3) Why do we have to deal with it?

- a) Relationships w/ the Lord and others
- b) Creates a stronghold for Satan — gives him freedom to bother us — (he reminds us of our failure/sin and continues to hinder relationships from healing — he doesn't want us to have good relationships
 - i) Takes our joy

- ii) Consumes our passion for serving God
- iii) "The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly." John 10:10
- c) "Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one of you, for we are members of one another. Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity." Ephesians 4:25-27
- 4) What do we do about it? How do we resolve it?
 - a) Acknowledge it
 - i) "If we **confess our sins**, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9
 - b) Disciple our minds, thoughts — don't dwell
 - i) "**..taking every thought captive** to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5
 - c) Forgive others (or the Lord if we blame Him) for the wrongs we perceive. Ask the Lord for His help to forgive them if needed.
 - i) Realize how/what we are
 - d) "You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. Therefore **repent** of this wickedness of yours....For **I** see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity." Acts 8:9-24
 - e) "But He gives a greater **grace....Submit** therefore to God. **Resist** the devil and he will flee from you. **Draw near** to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and **purify** your hearts, you double-minded....**Humble yourselves** in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you." James 4:6-10
 - f) "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart." Matt. 18:34-35
- 5) How do we prevent it?
 - a) Take it to the cross
 - i) While we were yet sinners
 - b) "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things." Philippians 4:8
 - c) Know who you are in Christ

- i) "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." 1 John 4:4
 - d) "And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." 2 Corinthians 12:9
- 6) Miscellaneous:
- a) "The bitter heart eats its owner."
 - b) Is Christ bitter at us for sending Him to the cross?
 - c) Was Ruth bitter?
 - d) Was Job bitter?
 - e) "...vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord." Romans 12:19