

For Such a Time as This

A Daily Devotional

Friday, April 16, 2021



From 2 Corinthians 2:

But if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to you all.

Holding grudges – sometimes we do that all too well. We are remarkably adept at remembering and recalling the offenses that we have endured from friends, families, neighbors, and strangers alike. We remember every time that we have been cut-off in traffic, endured ‘line jumpers’ at the supermarket or received a rebuke from one who is much closer to us than those cited above. We are all tempted to some degree or another to hold a grudge; to be less than forgiving of those who have caused harm, hurt or pain to us.

Paul alludes to this in his second letter to the good Christians in Corinth. He seeks to shed off the temptation to hold a grudge for those who have slandered him in his work of carrying the gospel to the city and people of Corinth. He suggests that such slander against him is more hurtful to the people of the congregation than it is to him personally. The logic is foreign to us and a bit difficult to follow, but the underlying effort that the apostle espouses is a letting-go of such urges to hold grudges and to ultimately forgive ... and let go.

Recently, I had reason to read St. Augustine’s commentary on the Book of Genesis and found the following: **As for my saying, ‘Sins do no harm to any nature except its own,’ the reason I said it is that the person who harms a just man does not do him any real harm, seeing that in fact he increases his heavenly reward, but really does harm himself by sinning, because on account of his will to do harm he will get back the very harm he has done.**

Though I am not as convinced as the great fifth-century theologian of the depths of retributive justice, I am convinced that grudges do more harm to the one who holds them than to the one that they are held against. There is a great relief in moving ‘above the remark’ and beyond the offense so that one finds their ultimate worth in their being a child of God rather than the recipient of a hurt or harm. I am not advocating that we just let all offenses go, but rather that we come to a realization that those who have caused harm are dealing with issues, hurts and pains possibly beyond our knowledge or recognition. And we must make our decision about our response based upon the actual or real harm that has been done to us ... if it is only that our feelings have been hurt, then maybe, just maybe, we can move ‘above the remark’ and have grace towards even those who have sought to hurt us.

Prayer for the Day: (From *Call from God*, by Karl Barth)

Dear Father in heaven! We thank you for accompanying us over every hill and into every valley of our lives. Amen.

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