

Sovereign Grace Church

“Pay Back?” outline

November 13, 2016

Exodus 20: 13; HC 105

We have been considering several modern applications of the commandment not to murder. We have looked at abortion, war, capital punishment and today we will consider the problem of vengeance.

Vengeance is the infliction of some form of pain upon someone who has inflicted pain upon us. This seems to be a natural response learned at a VERY young age and it is not immediately clear that it is wrong. As a matter of fact, given what we know of God's standards for righteousness and justice, it must in some meaningful sense be right! Yet our society seems ready to affirm that one should not inflict personal pain upon someone who has inflicted it upon him. But there does seem to be real confusion as to why that should be the case.

Many of the more popular movies produced are centered around a person who has suffered serious and sustained harm who then seeks revenge. It is interesting that when this revenge is finally attained that people cheer exuberantly....justice has been satisfied! Yet the practice of taking personal vengeance for real wrongs usually issues in more serious wrongs being committed and a never-ending cycle of revenge taking place. This is also one of the major motivations that the state uses to get its people into a state of war. So vengeance is an important application of the sixth commandment and we will turn our attention to this controversial subject during this morning's sermon.

1. Justice requires Vengeance.

Ex. 21: 23-25; II Thess. 1: 6-8; Rom. 6: 23;; Ex. 22: 2-3

2. But vengeance does not belong to individual human beings....even wronged ones.

Deut. 32: 35; Rom. 12: 19-20; Ezk. 18:23; Rom. 3: 23; Jer. 17:9

- 3. Vengeance belongs to God.**
Deut. 32: 35; Gen. 9:6; Matt. 5: 48; I Cor. 4: 5; Rom. 13: 3-4

- 4. Mercy requires Justice.**
Rom. 3: 25-26; Phil. 2: 5-8

Questions for Discussion and Edification

- 1. Have you ever desired to take vengeance on someone for a personal injury? Did you? (Don't compound your sin at this point!) What form did your revenge take? Was it effective? Was it satisfying? Was justice served? Was there any unintended injury to a third party? Does God provide us with a "better way"?**
- 2. How do wars often result, at least in part, from a desire for vengeance? Is vengeance a just reason for a nation to go to war? Are there other courses of action that might be more profitable in the long run? How is vengeance related to what is called "war fever"?**
- 3. Have you ever resorted to the "silent treatment" to "pay back" someone who hurt you? Was it effective? Did the person KNOW they were being ostracized by you? Was anyone else hurt by this?**
- 4. If you have experienced significant wrong-doing is it right to just ignore it? How can an effective resolution be sought which issues in the genuine good for all parties?**