

July 10, 2016 -

James 5: 17-20

- "Restoring One from Error"

Introduction:

Yesterday, July 7th, the oldest person in America Goldie Michelson, of Worcester, Massachusetts died at 113 years old. More precisely she was almost 114 with only 30 days before her birthday. Highly educated at a time when most women didn't attend college, she received a master's in sociology from Clark University in 1936. She lived to hone her strong sense of social justice. Her granddaughter, Marilyn Melton said her grandmother told her a story of how after a class at Clark University, her professor invited the students back to his house for coffee. All of her classmates were welcome except one: the only African-American. Mrs. Michelson decided the best correction of this wrong was to boycott the professor's get-together. She instead invited the student to her house for coffee. Melton said, "She was going to do what she felt was best and what was right." "She's definitely made a very big impact on me," Minsky who is her great-daughter told reporters who is now working on her master's degree in social work at Boston College.

None of the innovations of the late 20 century really fazed Mrs. Michelson, said Minsky, who added that "she would often say, 'It's not what I've seen, it's what I haven't seen: Man's inhumanity to man, why hasn't that changed?' We can all whole heartily agree! Mrs. Michelson bravely held her professor accountable for his error and so must the church of Jesus Christ hold its members accountable so they will be above reproach. This is the lesson of James to us all today. Yet, too often we are reluctant to correct and restore an erring member. "Failure is not a person," "It's an event. We are to learn from it, don't wallow in it."

Many do not want to defend the truth or rescue the backslider because it requires an honest look at one-selves. When it comes to restoring sinners every believer who is walking in the spirit has this responsibility. James teaches us to do so.

I. Correction is our Responsibility. Vv.17-19

1. James now moves on to give an illustration of a great man of prayer, Elijah. During a period of judgment, God held back the rain from the nation of Israel for three and a half years. The nation of Israel needed correction and God answered this prayer. He was helping to right a wrong. When Elijah prayed again he asked God to bless again the nation and the rains came and the nation was saved.

2. My friend that is what we as a nation need most today. We need men and women who will cry out to the Lord for a spiritual awakening in our land. II Chronicles 7:14

James 5:19] Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20] Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

The word translated err in Greek is "Planethe" (pla-not-o) means "go astray." It is the word from which we get our English word planet" and depicts a person leaving a course he or she once knew, like a planet leaving its orbit. So James is referring to one who gets off course in

the Christian life and strays from the truth. What is the truth? Jesus answered this in John 17:17. Thy Word is Truth.

There is a reality we must come to grips with. Christians do at times wander from the truth. That truth is God's Word. Unless a believer stays in the Bible, sooner or later he or she will get off course in his or her spiritual life. We do backslide... **And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt [him]. Hosea 11:7**

3) James continues... James calls believers to a ministry of restoration, not a ministry of condemnation. The sin in view is a deliberate overstepping of divine boundaries. It may be a sin whereby the individual is hurting them or it may be an offense against you or sin that affects the church. The word for convert means to return, turn back, **come back**. Save a soul (PSUCHE) (sue key) refers to physical life; remember sin can lead to death.
- the vital force which animates the body and shows itself in breathing.

When a fellow believer strays from the truth there are always those who are quick to point a finger but slow to help get them back on course. A verse that should always be considered with James 5:20 is Galatians 6:1. The apostle Paul states... - **Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. [2] Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Galatians 6:1**

Jesus taught that we bear the responsibility to correct an erring brother. To let such an offence go is to aid and abet a person into backsliding even more. The Lord commands... restore such a one. --- **LK 17:3 - Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. Jesus gave the command to all!**

4. Restore means to bring a person back to his former moral condition. The original word in the Greek is used of mending fishing nets. The word was used in secular Greek for setting broken bones. So we too must bear this responsibility, not just the pastor or deacons this is every Christians' duty before God. Paul also in writing to the Romans stated, " ...

15:1- We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. [2] Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.

II Correct according to Scriptures

1. Too often in our day Christians go without the correction needed. This is not a good thing in spite of what some say. It may be because many are not walking in the spirit in order to be qualified to do so. Note what Paul added ...ye which are spiritual - this phrase refers to those who walk by the spirit; these are examples themselves in these matters. - **Acts 18:24-27**

II Corinthians 13:5 says, [5] Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves

One thing can be said with certainty about correcting others: Hasty, unfair judgments and hypocritical double-standard judgments are perhaps what Jesus had in mind when he made His famous statement about judging others. Jesus didn't condemn judging. He condemned hypocritical judging... "First take the log out of your own eye, then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

2) We must not take a frivolous attitude toward sin. We are to confront it with humility and love (Gal. 6:1). We need to reassure the struggling believer, "Do not despair. Keep serving the Lord. Do your best. You're still one of us." He or she needs loving correction and acceptance to prevent despair and to encourage growth in Christlikeness. We need to develop a compassionate heart that sympathizes with weak believers who are painfully aware of their shortcomings.

Illustration:

In a Connecticut city, fifty-three residents of a certain neighborhood signed a petition to stop reckless driving on their streets. The police set a watch involving two squad cars parked inconspicuously at different locations. A few nights later five violators had been caught. All five of them had signed the petition! So we are instructed ...in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

III. Correction can lead to change vv.20

1. Genuine love doesn't let a Christian go on sinning and hurt the reputation of Christ. Rebuking is not easy but it is the loving thing to do. Note that Paul says, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

The burdens here within the context are the moral faults of others yet it can have a wider application to other burdens as well. One must ask one self, "What is this law of Christ? It is the sum of all Jesus teachings; it is to love thy neighbor as thy self."

2) Such things as discipline and rebuke are the Lord's mandate for his Church. You have a duty and a God given responsibility to do so, If you do not you turn your back on what you know is God's way. Paul not only spoke it, he lived it, as we witness in Galatians 2:11-14.

Everything we do is to be done with love - without malice but not everything done will be considered loving. Hebrews 12:6 - Rebuke is the loving thing to do.

Conclusion:

One pastor writes of a man he had in his congregation, a Christian worker, a man used of God, but who unfortunately at an evil hour slipped badly. This man fell and he was serving a 7 year sentence in one of our penal institutions. Through his encounter with a godly Barnabas-like pastor this man was led to know the recovering power of the precious blood of Christ. On the fly leaf of his Bible he wrote: "The soul that comes to Jesus through failure, shame, or pain, by His wondrous love and mercy may soar high again." A sense of need and the spirit of repentance is a vessel into which God wills to pour himself in recovering grace. -gospel