

Text: I Corinthians 13:5b (Pew Bible, pg.1137)

Title: “Get Over It”

INTRODUCTION

Before I get started this morning I want to talk for a moment about our church’s upcoming centennial celebration. I think this is a crucial time for our church to recommit ourselves to the Lord and His mission for us in our city and around the world. If we’re not careful we can look at this occasion with more memories of the past than we have dreams and vision for our future. I’ve been meeting and praying with some of our leaders in the church and there is a strong feeling among us that God is calling us to come before Him as a church to seek His face for revival. And here’s how we intend to respond. We are marking off a nine-week period between September 11, 2011 (the 10th anniversary of that fateful day in our nation’s history) and November 6 (the weekend we will celebrate our church’s 100th anniversary). During those weeks we are going to earnestly seek the face of God as church. It is my conviction that we must do this in a united way. Now unity is a key component to revival. So for that nine-week period we will change our Sunday schedule to make it possible for us all to meet together in one worship service. And in order to be fair we’ll ask everyone to adjust their Sunday schedule. We will have Sunday School at 9:00am and one combined worship service at 10:30am. Those of you who come to the early service will start your Sunday 30 minutes later, but we’ll all get out earlier since we’re starting our worship service at 10:30.

Again, we feel this is important because if we are to experience authentic revival, it’s best if we’re all together. As you see the pattern of the great movements of God among His people in both the OT and the NT, it was most often when they were all together seeking the face of the Lord.

ILLUSTRATION – There’s a park that I drive just about every day on my way to and from the church. In this park there is a small lake that is fed from the runoff from the surrounding neighborhood. Obviously, with the drought we’ve been in, there’s been no rain runoff. And the water level of the lake has steadily gone down. Now you can see parts of the lake bed that are normally not visible when the water level is normal ... and it’s not a pretty sight. Through the years all kinds of stuff has been thrown into the lake ... cans, bottles and other kinds of trash. Those things sank to the bottom of the lake and now they are visible. Hopefully some city workers will be able to go in now and clean up the lake bed with the hope that one day the rains will come, and fresh water will once again flow into the lake and the level will rise and we’ll have something beautiful to behold.

The same thing is true in times of spiritual drought. The water of our spiritual vitality recedes revealing the dry bed of our life. And along with that, things become visible that weren’t visible before. Sins that lay beneath the surface, now come into full view; and it’s not a pretty sight. And the trash that is revealed in times of spiritual drought often takes the form of *unloving* attitudes, words and actions. What we need is for the Holy Spirit to go through the dry lakebed of our life and clean up things. Then we need for the Spirit to send the refreshing rains of revival in our lives that will fill us up once again. I’m praying that will happen in the weeks and months ahead.

Let’s pray together.

Now let's look once again to the passage we're studying this summer, I Corinthians 13:4-8. We come to the middle part of v.5 that says...

1 Corinthians 13:5b - It is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

REVIEW MEMORY WORK

1 Corinthians 13:4 - Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

1 Corinthians 13:5 - It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

Now sooner or later someone will offend us. Something will happen that pushes our button and sets us off. And Christ's love for us and in us has to be the motivating factor as we respond. So the first thing we see is...

1. LOVE HAS A LONG FUSE (I Corinthians 13:5).

Maybe you've watched a movie where someone is setting a load of dynamite to blow up something. And after they light the fuse, they have to have time to run for cover before the dynamite blows up. So they put in a long fuse, so that will burn a long time before it explodes.

And today people who have a quick temper, who get mad easily, are said to have a "short fuse." Well that's not true of love.

1 Corinthians 13:5b – (Love) is not easily angered...

The word "angered" means to be irritated or to be irritable. It means to be stirred up to the point of being really angry. And so love is displayed in a spirit that is not irritable or easily moved to angry outbursts.

Remember that all of these qualities of love reflect the One who is love, our Lord God. When God revealed Himself to Moses (and at other times as well) this is what He said:

Exodus 34:6 - "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness,

Notice it says that God is "slow to anger." So God gets angry at times. We see God's righteous wrath flashing at various times in the Scriptures. It is the display of His holiness. So there is a place for anger. But God *reserves* His anger for that which *deserves* His anger. And so should we.

ILLUSTRATION – Now there are people who say, "I just can't control it. I'm just a hot-headed person." But we all know we can control it if we really want to. For instance, have you ever been in a heated discussion with your mate, and it gets louder and louder, and you are really "discussing" this

matter vigorously. Then the phone rings and you pick it up and with the nicest, calmest voice you say, “Hello.” You can control it.

Well with the help of the Holy Spirit we can keep our spirit under control.

Proverbs 29:11 - A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.

Uncontrolled anger will get you into trouble.

Proverbs 29:22 - An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins.

And the Bible tells us how to deal with someone who has a short fuse.

Proverbs 22:24-25 - Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared.

HOW TO MANAGE ANGER (you’ve probably heard this before, but it’s worth repeating):

- **Name it accurately.**

You need to know your own spirit well enough to recognize when you’re struggling with unrighteous anger.

ILLUSTRATION – On the dash of your car there are a number of warning lights that tell you when something is not working properly in your car. One of those is a temperature light. It tells you when your engine is getting too hot.

And an irritable spirit is a warning light. And if you’ll let Him, the Holy Spirit will help you see what’s really causing you to overheat. Is it because someone hurt you? It is because of something you fear? It is a frustration or a disappointment? And remember, it doesn’t have to be something selfish or sinful. It may be you are angered because the glory of God is being disgraced.

EXAMPLE: This word, in the original language, is not very common. One of the few other places it is used is in Acts 17 where Paul goes to the city of Athens. And as he is walking through the marketplace he sees that the city is just loaded with idols ... statues and images everywhere.

Acts 17:16 - While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed (the same word that is translated “easily angered” in I Corinthians 13:5) to see that the city was full of idols.

- **Claim it personally.**

Be honest with God about it. If it is sinful anger, admit to Him that you are irritated at something, and that you are struggling to keep your spirit under control. If it is righteous anger then pour out your grief to God over the way that His glory is being disgraced.

- **Aim it appropriately.**

Ephesians 4:26 - “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,

Whatever it is that has provoked you, don't respond in a way that leads to sin. There is right and wrong way to aim your anger.

You see we act the way we act because we feel the way we feel. And we feel the way we feel because we think the way we think. So if I want to change the way I act, I first need to change the way I feel. And if I am to change the way I feel, I need to first change the way I think. Isn't it true that the more we think on something, the more likely it is to produce a certain feeling?

For example, if I spend more time meditating on the goodness and grace of God toward me, on the fact that because of what Christ did for me on the Cross, God has turned from His wrathful disposition toward me. If I am swallowed up in that glorious truth, I will be so overwhelmed with joy that I cannot spend much time irritated over something someone does to me.

So love has a long-fuse. But also...

2. LOVE HAS A SHORT MEMORY (I Corinthians 13:5).

That is, it has a short memory of the hurt caused to us by the actions of others. It may *remember* the event without *rehearsing* the hurt.

1 Corinthians 13:5b – (Love) ... keeps no record of wrongs.

The words “keeps no record of wrongs” translate just one word in the original. It is a word that comes from the world of accounting in which someone keeps a record of unpaid bills ... of people who owe them money. It's the picture of someone who is owed something and they think about it all the time. In fact, one translation simply says, “Love ... is not resentful.”

We're talking about the ability to forgive or to not forgive someone who has offended us.

Again, this is a value to us because it is a virtue of God.

Psalm 130:3 - If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

ILLUSTRATION – Corrie ten Boon talked about the fact that the Bible says that God has cast our sins into the bottom of the ocean, then He posts a sign on the shore that says, “No fishing allowed.”

And an unforgiving, resentful spirit can become a lethal weapon in a relationship.

ILLUSTRATION – What happens in relationships is that these unforgiving episodes go into a weapons arsenal. Each and every hurt or offense is carefully placed in this arsenal. Then what happens is that becomes a grenade. Let’s just apply this to marriage. So a husband and wife are having a disagreement about something. And before you know it we start lobbing grenades from our arsenal of unforgiven offenses. “Well, you did this...” “Well you did that...” And back and forth they go.

THREE WAYS TO CLEAR RESENTMENT FROM YOUR SPIRIT:

- **Repent before God.**

Resentment and an unforgiving spirit is a sin, and it will block the full experience of God in your life. Jesus taught us to pray, “Father, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us.”

- **Release your offender.**

ILLUSTRATION – I heard about a couple of brothers who were fighting and their dad stepped in to stop them. He said, “What’s going on here?” And one of the boys replied, “It all started when he hit me back.”

EXAMPLE: A sad thing was happening in the church in Corinth. For reasons we are not told, believers were taking their arguments into the public courts.

1 Corinthians 6:6 - One brother goes to law against another—and this in front of unbelievers!

They were so intent on getting the score settled that they were willing to compromise their witness and the reputation of Jesus in the community by taking each other to court. So Paul says...

1 Corinthians 6:7 - The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?

For the Christ-follower there is something greater than payback, and it is the forgiveness and reputation of Christ.

You can’t do it in your own strength. It requires the strength of Jesus who is living in us by His Spirit who said when He was crucified by His enemies...

Luke 23:34 - Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

- **Refocus your life.** Often the resentment we hold toward someone or something has so dominated our lives that when it is released it leaves a huge hole in our lives. Refocus your life on God's plans and purposes for you.

Move on with your life with a spirit cleansed of all resentment.

CONCLUSION

I've entitled my message today, "Get Over It." Actually, it's not that easy. And it is not something we can do in our own strength. It comes only as we have fully experienced the love and forgiveness of Christ.

Colossians 3:13 - Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

ILLUSTRATION – I read about a man who was travelling with a guide through the jungles of Burma. They came to a shallow river and waded through it to the other side. When he came out of the river he looked down and he saw that leeches had attached to his legs. His first instinct was to grab them and start pulling them off.

The guide said, "Don't do that." He explained that pulling the leeches off would leave little pieces of them under the skin. Eventually, infection would set in.

The guide explained that the best way to get rid of the leeches was to take a bath in a warm bath of balsam salts. This would soak the leeches, and before long they would let go.

When we are hurt by others one way to handle it is to just pull off that "leech" away and think that we're done with it. But often resentment still hides under our skin. The only way to become really free of resentment ... the only way to really forgive others ... is to take a good long bath in God's great forgiving love.

We get in this bath when we're saved. Christ died for our sins, and when we put our trust in Him, He forgives us and washes away all our sins against Him. Do you need that today?

We need to soak in this bath every day, to remember all that God has forgiven of us. Then it's not so hard to turn loose of resentment.