

Tables Turned, Tables Spread, Table Manners

I. Intro:

- A. **Story** - A farmer had been pestered by a carload of people who delighted in climbing his orchard fence and eating his apples without asking permission. One day, as he walked up to them, one of them smiled sheepishly and said, "We hope you don't mind that we took a few of your apples." "No, not at all," said the farmer, "and I hope you don't mind that I took some of the air out of your tires."
1. We love **retaliation**...it's our nature.
 2. We'd rather **Get Even** *rather than* **Get Justice**.
 - a) Do you ever struggle with "getting even"? Loosing your temper? Retaliation? Going too far? Loosing control?
 - b) Do you find yourself reliving/rehearsing a certain hurtful situation over/over in yur mind?
 - c) Then, how then do you feel **after** a road trip down that *miserable memory lane*?
 - d) How many can relate to Paul in Rom.7:19 **For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.**
 3. Lets glean from how Esther choose **self control** over **self advancement**.

II. TABLES TURNED (9:1-17)

- A. Remember in 3:7, the **Pur**(die) landed on the 12th month (**Adar**) on Fri the 13th (ok, I made up Friday)
1. An edict where all the people throughout the kingdom could **destroy, kill, & annihilate; man, woman, & child; & plunder the Jews possessions.**
 2. But as the NIV says, **but now the tables were turned!** - And they can **attack** also.
- B. **SELF CONTROL is greater than SELF ADVANCEMENT**
- C. **But**...they don't "go on the attack". They simply defend themselves.
- D. They don't "plunder". They simply defend themselves.
- E. (6) **500 men** - They attacked right under the king's nose, in the capital of Shushan.
1. Remember, their hero Haman had fallen, **& now what, lose out on all the Money they could plunder...no way!**
- F. (7-10) During the feast of Purim they'd read **all 10 names in 1 breath**, as they all died together.
- G. So, what's **the key** to choosing **Self defense/control** rather than **self advancement**? Choosing **Getting Justice** over **Getting Even**? Choosing **Restraint** over **Retaliation**?
1. The **answer** to this is **easy**, **but applying it...is a lifetime project.**
 2. The answer? **Self-Control**
 3. Self control – 2 words **in & strength**. Or, "inner strength".

- a) It describes those who have *mastery over their inner desires* (both sensual & emotional)
 - b) “The holding in of passions & appetites.” (LKGNT)
 - c) *How is that done?* By bearing *the fruit of the Spirit*.
 - (1) *Fruit* = that which is produced by growth. (maturity)
 - (2) *Of the Spirit* = indicates the source or cause of the fruit. (God, not you)
 - d) They say **self control** is like brakes to a car...without it, a crash is inevitable.¹
4. Remember, they didn't call for war on these Gentiles, but it was called upon them.
- a) They were simply ready for them. Like the *Yom Kippur War* in 1973 which was when Syria attacked Israel on the Holy Day of Yom Kippur. Their thinking was that they'd catch the Jews at home relaxing & not ready.
 - b) But, this was their demise. Since they were all at home(explain), one phone call to a soldier's home & they were able to contact all family members on *active & inactive* duty. **Result** - They were able to force Syria back to almost Damascus.

H. FEAR is greater than THE SWORD

- I. You've heard *the pen is mightier than the word*. Well I think **fear** is also.
 - 1. Deut.2:25 This day I will begin to put the **dread** and **fear** of you upon the nations under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you, and shall **tremble** and be in **anguish** because of you.
 - 2. Paul nailed one of our problems in our world today, when he said in Romans, **There is no fear of God before their eyes**. Rom.3:18
 - 3. Many say, like Pharaoh, **Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice**.
 - a) But, what have the unbelieving **seen in us...**to make them **fear/respect/revere** the Lord?

J. RESTRAINT is greater than RETALIATION

- K. (6) **500 men** - They attacked right under the king's nose, in the capital of Shushan.
 - 1. Remember, their hero Haman had fallen, **& now what**, lose out on all the Money they could plunder...**no way!**
- L. (7-10) During the feast of Purim they'd read *all 10 names in 1 breath*, as they all died together.
- M. **75,000** – That's approx 600 men per province.
 - 1. The Jews were so outnumbered – Which speaks to their **faith, courage & God's mighty Sovereign hand**.
- N. **But they did not lay a hand on the plunder** – 3 times (10,15,16)
 - 1. Remember it was in Saul's *taking of the plunder* (from this *same clan*) that got him in trouble **&** made him lose his kingdom in 1 Sam.15.

¹ Charles Swindoll, Esther.

- a) They weren't going to learn that lesson over again.
2. They were aloud to plunder but they simply wanted to **save** their lives...not **improve** them w/their goods.
- a) I just heard Rick Warren say, "*The **Good Life** is not about **looking good, feeling good, or having the goods; but being good & doing good.***"
- b) Some Lawyers push their clients to go for **all you can get** rather than seek what is **just/fair**.
- c) When someone strikes you & then you strike them back, you fall into a **viscous cycle**, ever to be broken (like the Hatfields & Mccoy feud).
- d) **Self-control** must step in & take control of the situation. You must gain **mastery** over vengeance.
- (1) **General Robert E. Lee** was asked what he thought of a fellow officer in the Confederate Army who had made some derogatory remarks about him. Lee rated him as being very satisfactory. The person who asked the question seemed perplexed. "General," he said, "I guess you don't know what he's been saying about you." "I know," answered Lee. "But I was asked **my opinion of him, not his opinion of me!**"
- O. Here's 3 things to do when tempted to retaliate.
1. Remember **you're different** from the world.
- a) Rom.12:2 **And do not be *conformed* to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** - *Conformed* [Don't be *squeezed* into the worlds mold]
2. Remember **you're a member** of God's family.
- a) You're a **member**...not the head of the family (Christ is).
- b) So our role is **not to take charge** like Saul, **but to take direction** like Samuel.
3. Remember **the Lord is your Defender**.
- a) Sum up: *You're different. There's a head over you. God's your defense.*
- P. There are 2 roads in life: the road of **Forgiveness** & the road of **Retaliation**.
1. Which road did Jesus take to the cross?
- a) Because he took the road of forgiveness, **what was the fruit of it?**
[the salvation of the **thief**; the **Roman Centurion**; oh & salvation to **the world**]
2. Which road should **you** travel on?
- Q. (17) In vs.1 the **Tables were Turned** & now the **Tables are Spread**.
- R. **They rested** - They sought **Peace** not Punishment!
1. If **peace** is your goal, that makes it easier to **keep your perspective** when confronting an enemy.

2. “Do make it a habit of **getting even** with people...**not** those you think **wronged** you, **but** those you know who **helped** you.”

III. TABLES SPREAD (9:18-32)

A. PURIM

B. Vs.28 is a key to **why** we should celebrate something...**Remembering**.

1. **Instead of mourning** *what could have happened* they celebrated **what God had done**.
 - a) **Many live their lives in this mode**. We call them **pessimists** (Tendency to see the worse).
 - b) They say when **Robert Fulton** gave the 1st public demonstration of his **steamboat** one **pessimist** started chanting, “He can’t **start** it, He can’t **start** it.” Suddenly he fired it up & startled the man. The man stared for a moment then started chanting...“He can’t **stop** it, He can’t **stop** it.”
 - c) **2 men, 1 being a major pessimist**: 1st man said, what a beautiful **sunny** day. *Ya, but it will probably burn my grass*. 1st man said, what a beautiful **rainy** day. *Ya, but it will probably wash away my garden*. 1st man decided to take his pessimist friend duck hunting. He shot a duck & thought this will impress the man. His dog **walked on water** to go fetch the duck...the pessimist responded, **dumb dog can’t even swim**.
 - (1) **Celebrate** what God has done!

C. MONUMENTS & MEMORIALS

D. What happens if we do **not** erect monuments? - 4 things:

1. **Our Focus** will be in the **wrong direction**. On the bad, the hurt, the sin.
 - a) Phil.3:13 **forgetting** those things which are behind.
2. **Our Feelings** will be in the **wrong direction**. Depression, Grief, Bitterness, anger, hatred
 - a) God wants to turn our **sorrow** into **Joy**.
 - b) Ps.30:5 **Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning**.
3. **Our Forgiveness** will be **lacking**.
 - a) Because we’ll keep bringing it up in our minds *“for another walk in the park.”*
4. **Our Former lessons** will be **forgotten**.
 - a) As the philosopher George Santayana once said, “Those who do not remember the past are **condemned to relive it**.” And I add, “& *relive it, & relive it, & relive it!*”

E. Why are Monuments/Memorials important?

1. **They help us to reconstruct our lives**.
 - a) **After a**: death of a loved one, Job loss, Divorce, infidelity, torn family, hurt from a church member or church, a friend hurt you.

- b) You only have 2 Options: remember the hurt, or remember the healing God brought!
2. They also help us to **remember** what **God** has done.
- a) Ps.77:10 **And I(Asaph) said, This is my anguish; But I will remember** the years of the right hand of the Most High. **I will remember** the works of the LORD; Surely **I will remember** Your wonders of old. **I will also meditate on** all Your work, And **talk** of Your deeds.
3. They often help us to **learn & understand** why the trial (i.e. lessons from them)
4. They teach us to **forgive**.
- a) Think about this. How would we know how to forgive, if we never had the opportunity to forgive, which only comes by someone offending or hurting you?
- F. **Our Forefathers understood this concept**. When they reach our New England shores, they **didn't** look at the **loss, death, disease, or the burden of where they came from**, but **instead** they set up a monument of **Thanksgiving!**
1. Imagine us celebrating on that 4th Thursday in November, Happy **"Loss, Death, & Disease Day!"**
- G. **What Monuments/Memorials will you pass on to the next generation?**
1. **Do you have a story of God's Faithfulness to pass on?**
2. Declare your own Purim for your family – **What would it be centered around?**
3. Build a monument to **God's Grace** in your life.
4. **Erect a Mental Monument**. (i.e. **It was on this day I choose to no longer hold this grudge against so & so**)

IV. TABLE MANNERS (10:1-3)

- A. **3 things to learn from Mordecai's story:**
1. **God uses unexpected people at unexpected times.**
- a) God moves **David** from being a shepherd of a few sheep to king of His nation.
- b) God takes **Moses**, an 80 yr. w/a criminal record, & uses him to pull off the Exodus.
- c) He uses **a Harlot** to hide his spies (**Rahab**); a **rebel prophet** to spearhead an evangelistic crusade in Ninevah (**Jonah**).
- d) He used a **Pharisee & murderer** to pen most of the N.T. (**Paul**)
- e) He used **a deserter** to kick off the early church (**Peter**).
2. **God uses people with an other centered heart.**
- a) Contrast Haman vs. Mordecai.
- b) When the Lord gives you **Affluence** or **Influence**, use it to the Glory of God, and for the *weak, the doubting, the tempted, & the comfortless.*

3. God uses those who **seek the good of others**, & who speaks **Shalom** to others.

B. “Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God!”²

C. So, God preserved the Jewish nation & we would have **a Bible & a Savior**.

² Corrie Ten Boom