The Sons of Zeruiah

"And I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me: the LORD shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness."
II Samuel 3:39

Introduction:

1. The last two weeks we have studied Paul's two reasons for living a new life in Christ (II Cor 5:10-17): if He died for us, we want to live for Him; if we must give an account to Him, we want to live without sin.
2. The Lord has a message for all of us to keep our spirits and attitudes righteous toward all men. Amen.
3. We want to be the children of our Father in heaven by treating our enemies as He does (Matt 5:43-48).
4. For more from the Lord on this subject, see the sermon outlines titled, "Sons of God and Sons of Belial" and "Righteous Indignation."

I. The EXAMPLE FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT (II Samuel 3:1-39)

- A. Abner, captain of the host, tried to preserve Saul's dynasty through Ishbosheth (2:8-10).
- B. Abner killed Asahel, Joab's brother and David's nephew, in a very fair battle (2:18-23).
- C. Abner and Joab made peace and ended the conflict, but Joab held bitterness (2:25-28).
- D. God blessed David over Saul, until Saul's profane son highly offended Abner (3:1-11).
- E. Abner worked diligently to bring all of Israel to submit to David forever (3:12-21).
- F. Joab jealously and maliciously killed Abner for earlier killing his brother (3:22-27).
- G. David calls down the Lord's curse on Joab and his house for his evil deed (3:28-30).
- H. David states his great grief over Abner dying innocently by horrible deceit (3:31-38).
- I. David condemns his own nephews, who had served him, for their hard spirit (3:39).
  1. He corrected them when Saul was in his tender hands (I Sam 24:1-22; 26:1-25).
  2. He would express this same judgment much later (II Samuel 16:5-14; 19:16-23).
  3. And He had his son Solomon promise to kill Joab after his death (I Kings 2:1-7).
- J. Therefore, we want to avoid this hard spirit that offended David and the Lord so much.

II. The EXAMPLE FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT (Luke 9:49-56)

- A. John forbids another man from casting out devils, because he was not with them (9:49).
  1. This kind of envy is not unusual, but it is wrong (Num 11:24-30; John 3:26-34).
  2. He was no son of Sceva, by comparing Scripture (Acts 19:13-17; I Cor 12:3).
- B. Jesus corrects John from foolish notions of condemnation of those in agreement (9:50).
  1. Elijah thought he only served the Lord, but there were 7,000 more (I Kgs 19:18).
  2. This is very different from Luke 11:23, where division over Jesus made enmity.
  3. Our brother Paul, full of grace, rejoiced in enemies preaching (Phil 1:15-18).
- C. Jesus knew His time had come, so He was resolved and focused on Jerusalem (9:51).
  1. No one took our Lord's life. He laid it down. He was safe in Galilee (Jn 11:7-8).
  2. Between Galilee and Judea was Samaria, so He was only passing through it.
- D. Since He would be passing through a village of Samaritans, He sent messengers (9:52).
- E. They did not welcome Him, as they were offended by His focus on Jerusalem (9:53).
- F. James and John, full of misguided zeal, offered to play Elijah and burn them up (9:54).
  1. The event they claimed was Elijah burning up captains of fifty (II Kings 1:1-17).
  2. Is it any wonder Jesus had already named them the sons of thunder (Mark 3:17)?
- G. Jesus directly rebuked these good men for their spirit, which was not from God (9:55).
- H. The Spirit of Christ is to save men, not destroy them; so He avoided the village (9:56).
- I. Therefore, let us reject artificial exclusivity and seeking vengeance on innocent others.

III. The EXAMPLE OF GOD AND JESUS CHRIST

A. Ten times in the Psalms we have reference to God's tender mercies (Ps 103:4; 145:9).
B. God sends rain and sunshine on the evil and good, proving His perfection (Matt 5:45).
C. Paul was able to tell those of Lystra God had put gladness in their hearts (Acts 14:17).
D. Jesus could slice Jews (Matt 22:33-35,41,46; 23:1-38), and be gracious (Luke 4:22).
E. How did the Lord show Himself very pitiful and of tender mercy to Job (James 5:11)?

IV. The DOCTRINE OF GOD FOR US

A. Walking in the Spirit of God leads to ***love***, ***joy***, ***peace***, ***longsuffering***, ***gentleness***, ***goodness***, faith, ***meekness***, temperance, righteousness, and truth (Gal 5:22-23; Eph 5:9).
B. The Spirit of God works love in our hearts, which excels all other graces (I Cor 13:13).
    1. Preaching, doctrine, faith, and works are totally worthless without love (13:1-3).
    2. The measure of a child of God is showing love where he should (I John 4:7-21).
C. Gentleness is a noble trait of godly men, for it takes much more strength to rule your spirit and show gentleness than react harshly (II Cor 10:1; I Thes 2:7; Tit 3:2; Jas 3:17).
D. We want to be tenderhearted (Ep 4:31-32). It is not effeminate, weak, or compromising.
E. Job, a perfect man before God, tenderly regarded his personal enemies (Job 31:29-31).
F. Moses, faithful in all his house, lost control of his spirit foolishly (Numbers 20:10-12).
G. Our speech must be always with grace, and only seasoned with a pinch of salt (Col 4:6).
H. Our mouths should have no contradiction: we cannot both bless and curse (James 3:10).
I. We should return blessing for cursing, rather than evil railing like others (I Peter 3:8-9).
J. Bitter envying and strife in the heart is poisonous venom from hell (James 3:14-16).
K. Let us be the harmless and blameless sons of God without disputings (Phil 2:14-16).
L. Righteous men even show tender care of beasts, but the wicked are cruel (Prov 12:10).
M. The true sons of God love their enemies, just as God favorably treats His; and this most important trait of true godliness should be a chief part of family life (Matthew 5:43-48).
N. Talebearing or any other such attack on others proves an unfaithful spirit (Prov 11:13).
O. Wrath leads some men to make strife, but slow anger will appease it (Pr 15:18; 29:22).
P. Proud men stir up strife, and they show their trust is not in the Lord (Proverbs 28:25).
Q. Note the beatitudes' blessing on the poor in spirit, meek, merciful, and peacemakers.
R. Let us live peaceably with all men, as far as we are able, by God's grace (Rom 12:18).
S. Do you have bowels for others (II Cor 6:12; Phil 1:8; 2:1-4; Col 3:12-15; I John 3:17)?
T. There is no compromise here; and choosing harshness over gentleness is wisdom.
    1. God requires compassion and gentleness in our personal dealings with others.
    2. God does not want compromise and gentleness with Him (De 19:21; Gal 1:8-9).
    3. When to be harsh (2%) and when to be gracious (98%) is a function of wisdom.
    4. It cannot be taught and must not be taught by black-and-white rules of action.
    5. Personal dealings are divided from civil authority and judgment (Matt 5:38-44).
    6. See the outline entitled, "Righteous Indignation," to study these divisions.

V. The EXERCISE OF GODLINESS

A. Let's begin with marriage, for it is at once the easiest and most necessary place to start.
    1. We have the most familiarity and relaxation at home for baser instincts to show: we are much more likely to act like Joab at home than in public with others; and spouses can hurt us more deeply than others, which often brings out revenge.
    2. We get into bad habits of indifferent, limited, and routine treatment of spouses, due to painful pasts, bitterness, selfishness, self-preservation, and other sins.
    3. Men can be harsh, critical, insensitive; women can be cold, domestic, neglectful.
    4. We can begin working immediately on our tenderheartedness with our spouses.

5. Are you tenderhearted? If a man, as David; if a woman, as Solomon's woman?
6. Each spouse has important emotional, sexual, and personal needs; how kind, merciful, considerate, attentive, loving, and thorough are you in supplying them?
7. Do you only give your spouse what you are comfortable giving? What you prefer to receive? What you have given for years? What momma taught you?
8. Any marriage with remaining bitterness, deprivation, or cold war, after all we have considered in the last two years, is begging for the judgment of God.
9. Where are the bowels you once had for your spouse? Remember, repent, reform!
10. If you can break the evil spirit of harshness with your spouse, you can anywhere.

B. Women cannot excuse themselves on this front, though they are called the gentler sex.
1. Women are just as guilty as men, but they deny it by falsely assuming gentility.
2. They ought to excel men by several times, but they do not always do so; though God gave them natures tending to be gentle and tender, they are not always so.
3. Remember Jezebel, Mrs. Job, and the odious woman to kill self-righteousness.
4. We don't care if you breast fed your babies and do their laundry. Hyenas suckle their young. How do you fulfill your husband and children with companionship, affection, kindness, encouragement, comfort, mercy, and pampering.
5. A nagging, criticizing, always-suggesting mother won't have Solomons (Pr 4:3).
6. Why did Solomon warn so often of men needing to get away from cruel wives?
7. No woman can call herself tender who does not practice I Cor 7:1-5 every day, for she is the cruelest of the species and will face the Man Jesus one day soon. And this and similar defrauding cuts deeper than Doeg's razor (Ps 52:2), which caused Solomon to believe that women were more bitter than death (Eccl 7:26).
8. Any woman holding on to bitterness for her husband's conduct has forgotten that she was created for him, not him for her (I Cor 11:9). She is a cruel rebel.

C. Fathers ought to pity their children, not drive them like soldiers (Ps 103:13; Col 3:21).
1. How do you show the tender bowels God shows you toward your own children?
2. What do you do to provoke your children to wrath that you should end (Ep 6:4)?
3. Tenderness does not negate discipline; it modifies it with pity, mercy, and love.

D. Children must be taught the brotherly kindness Scripture teaches (Heb 13:1; II Pet 1:7).
1. Sibling rivalry, both frequent and ferocious, gives parents a great opportunity.
2. If you will eradicate this hard spirit from your children now, you will save them.
3. The mean-spirited antagonism existing in Christian homes must be destroyed, as in teasing, jesting, cutting, emulation, sarcasm, name-calling, envy, despite, etc.

F. Negative thinking and talking shows a bitter spirit out of fellowship with God, at best; for sincere children of God will be thankful and positive, always.
1. God hates murmuring, and we have much for which to be thankful (Phil 2:14).
2. A child of God is joyful, by the Spirit, if you like it or not (Gal 5:22; Phil 4:4).

G. We must forgive whenever and wherever we can, as quickly and graciously as possible.
1. We have been forgiven by God quickly; and we want His quick forgiveness yet.
2. And we should remember, after all, their offence was against us, nobody at all.

H. Do you cover the sins and offences of others? This is our calling (Pro 10:12; 16:27-28).
1. Whispering, talebearing, and slander are horrible acts of murder on reputations.
2. Can you overlook the faults of others, remembering your own (Eccl 7:21-22)?

I. How do you speak and talk with others? Is it always with grace (Col 4:6; Prov 12:18)?
1. Sarcasm, harshness, and hardness should be a very minor part of our speech.
2. A tongue that is continually harsh, bitter, and cursing proves a devilish heart.

J. Let us rejoice with angels (Luke 15:7). Let us hate the prodigal's brother (15:25-32).
   1. Are you able to forgive/forget others' sins as readily and completely as David's?
   2. Does the idea of joy in another's iniquity bother you or tempt you (I Cor 13:6)?
   3. Are you glad to make greater ado over a repenting sinner than a faithful saint?

K. We will love, bless, serve, and pray for personal enemies, for this is God's will for us.

L. Are you a peacemaker? It is a high calling with wonderful blessings (Mat 5:9; Jas 3:17).
   1. It is not enough to be at peace; nor enough to be peaceful; you must make peace.
   2. Win the church member you are farthest from by pursuit with love and kindness.

Conclusion:

1. For more from the Lord on this subject, see the sermon outline titled, "Sons of God and Sons of Belial."
2. Let us purify our spirits by perfecting holiness in our treatment of others by grace (II Corinthians 7:1).
3. None of this is possible without the Spirit, so you must believe on Jesus Christ today for the strength.