

## HOW TO DESTROY YOUR ENEMIES

The War Between the States ends and the opportunistic scalawags are busy lording it over their fellow Southerners. A hot-blooded contingency of die-hard Rebels gain an audience with President Lincoln. His gentle, friendly manner soon thaws the ice, and the Southerners leave with a new respect for their old enemy. A Northern congressman approaches the President and criticizes him for “befriending the enemy,” suggesting that instead of befriending them he should have had them shot for the traitors they are. Lincoln smiled and replied, “Am I not destroying my enemies by making them my friends?”

Christ Jesus proclaims:

This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you (John 15:12-14).

Although many of us sometimes live as if we are sent into the world to compete with one another, to dispute with each other, or even unnecessarily to quarrel with one another. Jesus sends us out to love each other. It is even easy for a Gospel preacher to tell others from the pulpit or classroom podium to love one another, when his life is a demonstration that this is the last thing he does.

When someone makes a great demand of us, we almost instinctively ask: What right do you have to make this demand? If you ask the Lord: What right do you think you have to demand that we love one another? His heart-piercing, marvelous answer is: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (15:13). Jesus gave men a commandment that He Himself first fulfilled. John repeats his description of this love of Christ that, like the peace of God, “passeth all understanding” (Phi. 4:7) in declaring: “Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 John 3:16). Biblical, Jesus demonstrated love involves not doing what persons in the world do when they feel insulted.

Whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two (Mat. 5:39-41).

Paul shows by the Spirit (in Rom. 12:20) that such God-like response can serve an evangelistic purpose when he instructs: “But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head” (thus “blowing his mind” and causing him to be ashamed of himself to the point of possible interest in why we operate this way and not the world).

While still a young boy, a certain Christian formed the habit of praying beside his bed before he went to sleep. Later, when he joined the army he kept up this practice though he became the object of mockery and ridicule in the barracks. One night, as he knelt to silently pray after a long, weary march, one of his tormentors took off muddy boots and threw them at him one at a time, hitting him on each side of his head. The Christian said nothing, took the persecutor’s boots, put them beside the bed, and continued to pray. The next morning, when the other soldier woke up, he found his polished and shined boots sitting beside his bed. It so affected him that he asked for forgiveness and after a time became a Christian. Many of us wonder why our relatives and friends do not obey the Gospel. Could it just be, my brethren, that we have tried everything except Jesus’ own method?

For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (5:7-8), thus “Destroying his enemies by making them his friends!”

*Terry Hightower, Vega, TX*



**BELVEDERE BEACON**  
“Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14)  
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535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841-2574  
(Greater Augusta, GA area)  
SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

<b>SUNDAY:</b>		<b>WEDNESDAY:</b>	
Bible Classes for all ages	10:00 am.	Bible Classes for all ages	7:00 p.m.
Morning Worship	11:00 am.		
Evening Worship	6:00 p.m.		

EVANGELIST: Ken Chumbley – Tel. No. (803) -279-8663  
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## War of Independence

The war that won freedom for the United States of America was extremely hard and difficult for everyone who desired freedom. It was on July 4, 1776 that the Declaration of Independence was signed by representatives from the 13 colonies. Freedom was attained because the citizens of the 13 colonies were willing to shed their blood, give their life to gain the much-prized freedom. There could not have been any freedom without the shedding of blood. Freedom is never cheap.

There was a price to pay and the American soldiers were willing to pay the price. In every war since the American Revolution, citizens of this land of the free were willing to shed blood to keep the freedom won from Great Britain. Sadly, many Americans fail to appreciate the sacrifices of those early freedom fighters.

There was another war for freedom that many times people often fail to appreciate. It was the war between good and evil, between righteousness and wickedness. It is the war that Jesus fought to gain our freedom from sin. In the Gospel of John, Jesus said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Freedom from sins comes only from obeying the Gospel of Christ. The Gospel of Christ can be known by all who seek to be unshackled from the bonds of wickedness. This freedom was made possible because of the shedding of blood—the blood of Christ. It is written: “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22). The apostle Paul said, “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph. 1:7). Jesus fought the war for freedom from sin. The only way to attain the freedom that Jesus died for is complete obedience to the Gospel, not just a small portion of His teaching. Today could be your independence day from sin if you chose. Choose wisely.

*Paul Vaughn  
Lewisport, KY*

**FROM DISBELIEVERS TO DISCIPLES**

During the course of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, He not only faced hostility from the Jewish leaders of the day, but also from His own family. John's Gospel states:

*“After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him. Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come” (John 7:1-8).*

This text reveals that Jesus own siblings did not believe in Him during the course of his earthly ministry. It seems His brothers were not in conflict with the world, therefore they were of the world which hated Jesus. Whereas some might suppose that Jesus' brothers would have been proud of Him, it is far more likely that they were ashamed of Him. And yet, though they did not believe in Him during His earthly ministry, His brothers would later be found among the disciples in the upper room (Acts 1:13-14). What might account for their transition from disbelievers to disciples?

That which brought about the change in Jesus' brothers was, almost certainly, the same thing that turned Saul of Tarsus from a persecutor into a preacher (the apostle Paul): the resurrection! (I Corinthians 15:5-8; Acts 26: 12-23). Such radical changes, in those who had not previously been Jesus' disciples bear strong witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Barring some delusion or mental illness, what else might explain how these adversaries became advocates.

When the aforementioned texts are read together, we discuss a profound truth. The resurrection changes people! When an honest tender hearted sinner is confronted with the reality and the implications of the resurrection such cannot help but change. Sadly, we have a tendency to “write off” people too soon. We will make a judgment that they are “too far gone,” “stuck in their ways,” and are just lost causes and hopeless cases. As a result we don't proclaim to them the Gospel that has the power to change lives (Romans 1:16). We need to remember that it is not our task to judge the soil but to sow the seed far and wide knowing that God will give the increase (Luke 8:4-15; I Corinthians 3:6-7).

*Ken Chumbley*

**NEWS AND NOTES**

Keep in your prayers the following: Pam Gossett, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, Maomi Aaron's sister, Leann Rogers, who is having health problems, and Lanny Niver together with his daughter and son, and Tim Smith.

Jean Peebles daughter, Betty, continues to recuperate following her surgery in University hospital. The latest word was that they planned to release her on Saturday. Continue to keep her in prayer.

Tim Smith has finally learned, as of the first of the month, that his disability claim was approved. He thanks all for the prayers offered on behalf of his family and himself.

Tameka Key was in Florida on vacation last week.

Kathy Treadway is in Edisto for several weeks. The Arnolds are down there with her for a short vacation.

## It Is a Fact!

Take a leafy branch from a tree. Lay it carefully aside and watch. Slowly the color fades— the leaves go limp and brown, it curls up and finally it is dead.

Take a fish out of the lake, lay it carefully on the sand and watch. Frantically it twists, struggles, gradually weakens, moves its gills slower, then finally it is dead!

Take a church member, carefully allow him to separate himself from God in worship, fellowship, prayer, and active service. Gradually his conscience quivers as he misses the Lord's table. He frets at himself for missing the worship service as other activities begin to occupy his time. Soon he says, there are many hypocrites in the church, the church is always asking for money, and finally he will take a stand that opposes Christian living— **he is spiritually dead!** (Gal. 6:1).

*Author Unknown*