

Ridin' High Cowboy Church

8771 FM 35

Union Valley/Royse City, TX

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July 10, 2016 – Choose to Forgive

A story of anger and revenge known all over the world...William Anderson Hatfield from West Virginia and Randolph McCoy from Kentucky. Two families that began to dislike/distrust each other during the Civil War when a local confederate militia murdered a Union soldier in 1865. The Hatfield's thought ALL McCoy's were traitors and ALL McCoy's thought the Hatfield's were killers.

The hatred grew and things heated up over the next 13 years when in 1878 Randolph McCoy accused Floyd Hatfield of stealing a pig. The trial took place in McCoy territory but the judge was a Hatfield cousin. The star witness was Bill Staton, a McCoy relative who was married to a Hatfield. He testified in favor of Floyd Hatfield who was cleared of the charges. This infuriated the McCoy's who murdered Bill Staton two years later. There was another trial and the McCoy's were cleared of all charges.

For the next 30 years, 24 people were killed, some burned to death, a woman was beaten to death with a club, hanged, shot and dozens sent to prison over this feud, many family members didn't even know what started it!

The images and pictures we have seen on TV and the Internet this week can be summed up by a country that has held on to unforgiveness, anger and revenge.

The longer you hold on to anger, the longer the anger has a hold on you.

Matthew 18:21-35 (Peter remembered someone who had wronged him)
21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?"

(Peter assumed that the person who had done wrong benefited from the forgiveness, like we think) There is always the thought that they owe you a debt, you say, "They owe me!" Jewish practice and Rabbi's taught 3 times was enough. Peter doubled that plus one, surely this will impress Jesus.

Ways we handle people who offend us ...

Imaginary conversations where we put them in their place in front of others!

Anybody ever told you, “You shouldn’t feel that way!” ... that only leads to suppressing the issue and then anger grows...some use prayer requests to get even!

22 Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times –
Countless times...

Jesus was great at taking a straight question and turning it into a story about the question...they must have rolled their eyes!

23 Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents (a talent was the highest currency in the economy. 10,000 was the highest number in 1st Century arithmetic. The highest number of the highest currency. Literally speaking 10,000 Talents = approximately 10 million dollars adjusted for today!) **was brought to him. 25 Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. 26 “At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘ and I will pay back everything** (at this point everybody laughed cause there was no way to pay it back) **27 The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.** (amazing...Peter is probably saying ok what does this have to do with anything, I’m not a king and I don’t have any servants)

28 “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

29 “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

30 “But he refused. (three key words in the story)

Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. 31 When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

32 “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said. ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. 33 Shouldn’t you had had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ 34 IN anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. Peter realizes at this point that God is the King and that he is the wicked servant.

35 “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.” Peter is sorry he even brought up the subject.

The main reason God can come after you for not forgiving is because he knows that to refuse to forgive is pushing the self-destruct button in your life.

Forgiveness works better than holding on to anger.

Romans 12:17-21 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil (often I /we say but you don't know what they did to me, the bible agrees it was wrong it was even evil) in other words you have a right to be angry. **Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.** (this is a way of saying you are the example of a Christian here on earth)

18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone (he does not say live in partnership, he says, peace-whatever you have to do ... do it peacefully) **19 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge: I will repay," says the Lord.** (based on this verse – Whose job is it to avenge You? When you avenge yourself whose job are you doing? We are terrible at doing God's job. Nobody gets off the hook, God saw what was done to you and he did nothing for now, but he will avenge you.

20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him: If he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

21 Do not be overcome by evil, (in holding a grudge you are overcome by the evil, you are the one who suffers, not the one who did you wrong **but overcome evil with good.**

Back to our story...

William Anderson Hatfield was saved and Baptized in 1911 at the age of 73.

Four Things...

1. Embrace God's forgiveness of you (remember the story of the King. For some the greatest need is to forgive yourself.
2. Identify the wrong. Deal with it, don't deny it.
3. Let God avenge you.
4. Overcome Evil with Good.