

What Response?

There is a line between revenge and justice which is blurred or forgotten these days. In fact, these two concepts are not the same, though many people seem to think they are. Revenge repays a wrong with more wrong – sometimes a greater wrong than was done in the first place – especially when those harmed in the name of revenge are innocent. . . . Revenge allows emotions to take over judgment. This means the ability to review and evaluate a situation and the ability to consider the consequences of the actions taken is lost. It means putting “me and my feelings” first and not thinking of anyone or anything else. Vigilante lynching, or mob attacks, are often revenge driven. A SWAT team ‘take down’, a law requiring ‘swift punishment’ for ‘convicted’ persons, or a military action can also be revenge driven and have nothing to do with justice. Saying I’ll stop when you stop also has nothing to do with justice. It is generally an attempt to transfer the responsibility and guilt for your actions onto the other. . . . Meeting violence with violence – whether it is a mob or government authorities doing so, means those responding with violence are imitating the violence they agree was wrong rather than demonstrating something better. Two wrongs do not make a right.

Violence does not solve problems. Violence does not stop violence long term. Violence does not justify violence. Violence does not bring justice. Violence does not restore; it only postpones dealing with the source of the problem, or destroys. . . .

We are taught a different way than revenge and violence. *“You have heard it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”* (Matthew 5:43-48) In dealing with violence, start with prayer and calm your fears so you can use your voice and actions for peace.

This week, remember in prayer:

- **The Palestinians and Israelis living with the current conflict**
- **People who live with the ugliness of racism**, bigotry, or prejudice. We see every day that we have not learned the lessons Jesus taught about how to treat each other, or the lessons from our past about the destructive power of fear & hate. Pray for those who live with the reality of racism & those who do not understand or acknowledge that they play a role in continuing it.
- **People dealing with COVID-19**. Remember all who have been touched by COVID, worldwide; especially places like India & Venezuela where the healthcare systems are overwhelmed. Many Brethren in both countries have or have had COVID including the Venezuelan church’s president & relatives in India of the licensed minister at the Naperville, ILL. Church.
- **Children’s Disaster Services (CDS)** has had a team working with children along the US/Mexico border in Texas. An average of 40 to 45 children per day have been served in the CDS center. Remember the CDS workers, the children & their families. Though the number has slowed, remember those still fleeing their homes.
- **The people of Haiti**. Political unrest, kidnapping for ransom & human rights abuses are rampant there. Even so, since February more than 1,400 people seeking asylum in the U.S., have been deported back to Haiti. Most are families; hundreds are infants & other minors. There is real reason to be concerned for their safety.



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