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3-23-2021
THE BITTER OLD MAN

Years ago, I taught youth at Christian Retreat. In the room there was a plaque with a poem on it. I don't remember it exactly, but it was about a bitter old man. The poem spoke of how the bitter old man was young once and was bitter when he was young too.

We have all met that kind of person, you know the ones, that always have a chip on their shoulder. They dare people to knock it off. Yet, these very ones were not born that way. Something happened in their lives to change them. A hurt, a loss, a failed marriage, a failed business, or so many other things could have happened. When these trials came these persons made the choice to not forgive. I have seen this happen with both Christians and non-Christians.

When we don't forgive, then eventually it grows into bitterness. It doesn't happen overnight. It starts with a seed just like everything else does. Yet, if not pulled out, it surrounds the heart until it becomes hard, and squeezes all love out of it. I have seen so many in this state. You can counsel them, and some will see their error and repent, but many never do. The lines of bitterness are in their faces but are also in their hearts. Bitterness knows no boundaries.

Sin always brings death, but through repentance there is hope. In Ezekiel 11:19 a promise is given to those that turn back to God. It says, ***“And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh...”*** Ezekiel 36:26 repeats it. God has a way of taking the stony hard heart and making it soft as flesh when we ask him to. We don't have to be like that bitter old man. We can have a new heart, soft as flesh through Jesus Christ.

If you find yourself in the gall of bitterness, I suggest you have a little talk with yourself. Is it worth it? Is it making your life any happier? Then confess it as sin and ask the Lord to give you a new fleshly heart that can forgive and love.