



Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day

11. No Blood on Our Boots

Understanding the necessity of creature to creature relationship in business dealings during the six working days.

Janice had taken her car to be repaired, but it was returned mechanically unsatisfactory. So she had refused payment until the mechanic corrected his repair job.

The mechanic, on the other hand, refused to do anything more to the car until she paid him for what he had already done. Years had passed, and the feud continued—Janice refusing to pay and he refusing to do any more work.

Then the Holy Spirit spoke to Janice's heart. Said she, "I am going to pay him for the work regardless, but more than this, I shall pay him 6 percent interest [the going rate at that time] for the time I have withheld the money."

I do not know the details of the misunderstanding, but that is not the point, Janice practiced the golden rule, full and running over. The spiritual muscle and sinew required to make such a decision comes from our Lord. "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Philippians 2:13.

And who is this God who offers us the strength to do right? It is the Creator, He who is brought to view in the fourth commandment of the Decalogue. "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:11.

There are other ways of practicing the golden rule besides paying a mechanic for his questionable due. When at a Sabbath-keeping camp meeting, we older ones pass through the cafeteria line and are tempted to be short with those who serve, to administer a bit of scolding for what we consider their neglect, let us put ourselves in their place. Let us compliment them for their kindness in serving us.

We have witnessed Sabbath-keeping Christians doing this more than once. How beautiful. We are then practicing the golden rule. It goes like this: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is all the law and the prophets." Matthew 7:12.

Years ago we were developing some land in connection with a missionary project. We told the salesman our plan. We explained that when people came to look at the land, the salesman should first try to ascertain what kind of land the prospective customers were looking for and then try to help them find that particular land. We added, "Show them our land only if you think this is the kind of property for which they are looking."

"I observed an expression of surprise registered on the faces of the salesman. They did not seem to understand that this is the Christian way to do business. It never occurred to me that our attitude was

Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day

particularly commendable. We I recognized it only as part of true religion. Should a person be commended for practicing the golden rule? Not if it's a duty. The Lord commands, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." He also said, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do." Luke 17:10.

Somewhere, I do not recall now where, I read of a black man who found a bundle of money lost by an armored truck. He returned it immediately; but when the word got around, children in the public school made fun of the man's children. How could anyone be so foolish as to turn in the huge sum of money that might have made him and his family comfortable? The man was practicing the golden rule.

His family might well have quoted the apostle Paul when he said, "We are fools for Christ's sake . . . ; we are weak . . . ; we are despised. Even unto the present hour we both hunger, and thirst. and are naked. and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labour, working with our hands: being reviled, we bless: being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day." 1 Corinthians 4:10-13.

Another black man was once passing the scene of an accident. Someone was pinned inside a car. While a crowd was forming, with almost superhuman strength he forced the door wide open. When the onlookers turned in his direction to thank him, he was gone.

Judgment awaits many of all nations who have failed to practice the golden rule in their relations between races. And what a reward will be theirs who helped a child of another race of whom others were thoughtlessly making fun!

Recently a mother came to us for counsel. Her little seven-year-old boy was having difficulties with his young buddies. "For some reason," she said, "they all shy away from him." When they returned from summer vacation, two or three were together one day in the hallway of the school building. When the little seven-year-old came up to where the three were visiting, they all sped away, leaving the little fellow all alone.

Children can be "innocently cruel," but they can be taught to be kind to one another. We have had the privilege of helping some school groups who had made fun of one of their number to change in a single hour. Let's teach our children to befriend any unfortunate child or grown-up.

This mother's little boy had a cleft palate, but the repair job was so well done that it could scarcely be detected. He lisped slightly however. In endeavoring to learn whether it was any fault of his that the children shied away from him we could learn of nothing. It could have been merely the slight lisp.

Surely one of the important lessons parents should teach their children is that of the golden rule. It is to put ourselves in the place of another. If we will do this, the practice can change our attitude toward those who may have some handicap or are of a different race, creed, or color.

The manner in which some of us react to those who on the surface appear different, gives the impression that we think these people chose to have a cleft palate or a broken arm. One black minister who was a good friend of ours explained the color question this way. Said he, "I did not choose to be black. Had I chosen the color of my skin it would not have been black. Neither would it have been white. It would have been a ruddy color like that of Adam, the father of the human race."

Years ago at the home of professed Christians we heard two ladies discussing black people. I could scarcely credit what I heard as coming from those who profess Christ, His law, His golden rule.

But the same lady who seemed to lead out in this belittling conversation "shoved her weight around" also in her white church. She was noted for her efforts to influence the conference officials to move the pastors who were in charge of the church if they did not recognize her "superior" talents. Yet this did not

Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day

bring her happiness. In the same church the overwhelming majority were unselfish, wholesome, and humble followers of the Lord Jesus.

The "good Samaritan" of Christ's parable followed the golden rule, although the teachers of Israel disregarded it. The priest and the Levite were teaching theories while the Samaritan practiced the philosophy. Let each one of us be on the look out to bless the unfortunate, to bring comfort to the bereaved, and hope to the discouraged.

Did you ever actually sit down and ask yourself the question, How would I want the other man to relate to me, were our circumstances reversed? We have observed that such an approach can, through Christ, build in us right attitudes and actions. They will be Christlike attitudes because Christ is living in us.

And how about practicing the golden rule as regards our relationship with the Lord Himself? When the ten lepers were cleansed by Jesus, only one returned to give Him thanks. Had they paused to inquire what they would have desired were the conditions reversed, how differently might have been their response!

If you were the Creator, how would you want humanity to respond to your beneficence, your generosity, your mercies? But our Lord's reason for instructing us to express appreciation for His goodness is not selfish. It is that others may come to Him for similar blessings. It is to spread abroad His goodness. It is to expand His gratuities. When one hears of God's goodness, His mercies, His answers to prayer, he too may be encouraged to seek similar help in his helplessness, similar strength in his weakness, and victory in his defeat.

The golden rule, if practiced, would place what people say and do in the best light, rather than the worst. We should ask ourselves the question, How would I wish others to interpret what I say and do?

"Honour all men," 1 Peter 2:17, the golden rule cries out. "Speak evil of no man." Titus 3:2. "Let each esteem other better than themselves." Philippians 2:3. Practicing the golden rule would forever silence the talebearers and the gossipers. Golden-rule Christians will think of the scripture which commands. "Whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Philippians 4:8.

Yet, we should not demand that others have no qualms about our conduct, if we forget the Bible injunction to "abstain from all appearance of evil." 1 Thessalonians 5:22. There is a proper balance between being suspicious and merely protective. For example, a teen-ager accuses his mother and father of not trusting him when he is refused permission to go out unchaperoned. The parent may rightfully reply. "I trust you; but knowing the frailty of human nature, I must protect you."

God knows our frailty too, and this is why He has taught us not to run into temptation. "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals and his feet not be burned?" Proverbs 6:27, 28.

First Peter 2:20 makes clear that we are not to assume a "martyr" attitude when we are engaging in questionable conduct. "For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."

The golden rule suggests fair play in all areas of life. We have attended many a church picnic where scores of Christian believers have given someone a lift who had no means of transportation. Few are like Mr. and Mrs. Frank who had a new station wagon. But rather than take their new car to the picnic, they walked to the church where all the cars had assembled. Then they opened the door of a car owned by another member while the driver was at the wheel. Proceeding to climb right in without invitation, they cheerily announced, "We are going with you to the picnic."

Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day

There was a poor family a mile from where Mr. and Mrs. Frank lived. This family had no way to get to the picnic unless someone would take them. Several church members had previously discussed how to make it possible to take various poor families. It was absolutely beautiful how different ones volunteered to go, in some cases, far out of their way to pick up those who had no transportation! Thus the poorer families could receive the benefit of the fellowship on this particular occasion. But when someone had suggested that Mr. and Mrs. Frank pick up the family near them, they stated that they could not afford the extra gasoline.

They could afford a lovely new station wagon. They could afford to have excellent furniture and a lovely home. It would have been a beautiful act of Christianity were they to put themselves in the place of the poorer families in the church as all the rest had done!

How would we want others to respond to our needs were we in the position of those without this world's goods? Those generous souls who went out of their way to supply both transportation and food for the poverty-stricken ones were happy. Their faces reflected it. Their voices echoed it. There is true happiness in observing the golden rule. But while some love and follow the golden rule, others are thinking selfishly and in some cases murderously.

The story is told of a wife and a daughter who were found murdered in their home in the southeastern part of the United States. The fact that the husband and father was not to be found aroused suspicion. The authorities gave out an all-points bulletin for the man who had apparently left his home. He was found several hundred miles distant, in fact, in the state of Florida, where he was arrested, extradited, tried, and convicted. The police had found on his clothes and his shoes blood which matched that of the murdered victims.

When Jesus our Lord comes again, may He not find the blood of selfishness on our garments, but may we be washed in the blood of the Lamb. Our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, offers to set us free from the selfishness that ignores the golden rule. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John 8:36.

And He is powerful enough to deliver us, for He it is "who made the world." John 1:2, 10. He is still in the business of making new hearts, unselfish hearts, generous hearts. He declares, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Matthew 28:18.

If you, dear one, have not yet found the security in Him that reflects this generous Lord, why not ask Him to come into your heart, bringing His own love that shares with others His character, His gifts, and His graciousness?

Dear Lord, may our day-by-day business reveal the character of Jesus. May a sense of divine mission follow each of us throughout the entire week. The Bible says, "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Philippians 2:13. We ask believingly that our work week shall be as conspicuously unselfish as our Sabbath day's worship. We thank Thee triumphantly for having heard our prayer in dear Jesus' name. Amen.

STANDING TALL
Standing tall with Jesus
And His golden rule-
Measurement of heaven.
Oft men ridicule
Those who humbly follow
Christ, the truth, the way;
Still His faithful children
Trust Him and obey.

Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day

Reflection: May we suggest that your prayer circle review the texts following and then see if you can reconstruct any of the experiences related here.

Seven Great Bible Facts:

1. The Ten Commandments are based on love to God and love to our fellowman. "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Matthew 22:37-40.
2. It is inconsistent for one to profess to keep the Sabbath day holy without keeping "his hand from doing any evil" "Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil. " Isaiah 56:2.
3. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is all the law and the prophets" Matthew 7:12.
4. We must be careful not to overlook any known duty on the basis of having done something else commanded by the Lord. "For he that said, Do not commit adultery. said also, Do not kill, Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." James 2:11.
5. Our only hope for practicing the golden rule is in God, who promises to work in us "both to will and to do of his good pleasure" Philippians 2:13.
6. If we follow our Lord's commands. we are still to say, "We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" Luke 17:10.
7. Keeping one commandment does not justify us in breaking another commandment. For "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" and "the wages of sin is death" Romans 3:20: 6:23.