

The Bitter Root

Sermon Title: **The Bitter Root**

Sermon Number: **5070**

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PASTOR NATHANIEL: And if you would upon this day, open your Bibles to the Book of Hebrews. That's in the New Testament, the Book of Hebrews, right behind Philemon, right behind Titus and right before James; the Book of Hebrews, the 12th chapter. When you get there, if you would, just say, "Amen upon this day."

When you get to that book, that 12th chapter of Hebrews, fold that, because I'll be coming back to that same spot. So keep it marked.

In the Book of Hebrews, the 12th chapter, the 14th and the 15th verses, reads as follows in the King James Version, Hebrews, Chapter, 12, Verses 14 and 15:

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled."

Let me also read that in the NIV Version: "Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many."

I was talking with another minister, dealing with a counseling case where I had actually referred a couple to another minister for many different reasons, and the minister called me to kind of let me know how the counseling session went. He said, "Actually, I referred and I told him to get a tape that was preached Dr. A. R. Bernard, and the tape was called 'The Roots of Bitterness.'" When he said that, I said, "Whoa!" and that was early in the week. I said, "That's what I've got to preach on Sunday!" It just sort of confirmed some things, that God had told me two weeks ago to preach on the subject, and the subject is simply taken from that 15th verse of Hebrews: "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." I speak to you today from the subject of The Bitter Root: "See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble, and defile many."

Reverend C. Elijah has been preaching recently on dealing with the types of soil and the seed of the Word that goes into the soil and how that verse talks about the four types of soil; and of the four types of soil, three out of the four of those types are bad, and they will not support the good seed. But yet, even though three out of the four of those soils are bad and won't support the good seed, they'll often support the bad seed. Sometimes, soil that you cannot grow good fruit in, you grow bad fruit in, because all of us produce fruit, the good and the bad. You just have some good, wholesome sweet fruit, and then you've got some rotten, bitter fruit. But all of us, whether we follow the laws of God or not, all of us produce fruit, some good and

some just weeds. Do you know weed is a fruit? That's the kind of thing that will spring up from the soil. So all of us produce fruit, good or bad.

God gives us fundamentally rules for relationships, and there are really only two types of relationships. Even with all of the commands of God, they will be divided up into these two types of relationships: there is the relationship between you and the relationship between God. That's our primary relationship, the relationship between God and you and you and God. The second type of relationship is the relationship between you and your neighbor. All of the rules that God gives you are going to fall into the category of dealing with you and God and you and your neighbor, and your neighbor simply encompasses other folks, anyone that's around you, even if the neighbor is next door or in the next city or laying next to you in bed as your spouse or even your children, all of those are the people that are next to you and count as your neighbor. God gives us the rules for basically the relationship between us and God and between us and folks. All of the rules of relationships, that's why Jesus boiled it all down. He said, "Upon these two, love the Lord thy God and love thy neighbor as thyself, upon these two hang all the laws of the prophets, you and God and you and other folks.

The bitter root, I have no doubt that some people here today, more than one, that are going to need this message. This message, if you take it within your soul and allow this seed of the Word to grow and to prosper, it will do some things, it will change some things within your life, because God wouldn't have had me preach this message if He didn't know the people needed it. There are some bitter roots, and you need to understand the bitter roots, and you need to understand what to do about the bitter root and how to handle the bitter root. You see, bitter root comes from bad seed, because the root is not the seed. You get bad seed, then you get bitter root, then you get bitter fruit. The seed is already there. We've got to deal with the root, because the root is producing some bitter fruit.

So, how do we deal with it? First of all, you've got to even recognize somehow how bad seed produces bitter roots, sometimes just between you and folks. Sometimes the seed is planted the minute you meet them. Have you ever heard people talk and use the phrase, "We just didn't hit it off"; "We got off on the wrong foot." There was something about it that the minute they met, they didn't like the other person and the other person didn't like them. It's nothing but a seed! Sometimes you can't even put your finger on a seed, and it's natural. This is the part of the flesh, and we have to deal with the part of the bad soil that's within all of us. Sometimes, people, it's just people that you just meet, and for some reason that you can't even put your finger on, you don't like them from the start. I'm telling you, all of us are like that. There are some folks you just like better. You can go into a store, and you'll see a bunch of salespeople there. There's one or two salespeople you just naturally gravitate towards and you say, "I want them to wait on me." You don't even know

them. It's something where the seed is planted just from contact of being around a person, and you like them or you push away from them just from the seed.

But, you see, those are seeds of the flesh, and oftentimes they have no real validity because you don't even know the person; but just because there's something about them that you see, it will plant a root in you. It will plant a seed that develops into a root. Oftentimes, we judge people just on things that have nothing to do with personality. They have nothing to do with spirit. They're just out of appearances of things. Sometimes it will be just the way people wear their hair. I used to hear people back in the days of the curl, they said they would never fool with anybody if they had a curl in their hair. They automatically from the minute they saw they had a curl in their hair, instantly they were off-limits just because of the way they styled their hair. So oftentimes a seed is planted just because of some external things, some things that have no real relevance in the spirit.

The same thing is true of skin color. Sometimes even within the African-American community, we will judge folks just on skin color, and if the skin color is too much one way or another, a seed causes it and it's planted, and then it develops into a root, and the root produces fruit. There is a bitter root that some of us have that we have judged and we have prejudged and we carry things from one thing or another, and sometimes a seed will be through an action of another person, simply because they may not speak to you. You walk into a place for some other reason, and for some reason you don't know why the person didn't speak to you. For all you know, things could be going on in their world.

I'll give you an example of a situation that occurred. There was a man in New York. He had gotten on the subway, and he was riding on the subway. The car was virtually empty. It was very early in the morning. They made a stop at the subway, another man got on with his family, and he had four small children. The man sat down. The children just went to hopping around and making all kinds of noise and just jumping all up and all of that and just being a general nuisance and a disturbance. The man that was sitting there, he became very agitated and very irritated about the man. And he was saying within his mind, "What's wrong with this man? Doesn't this man know how to discipline his children? It's just horrible. I don't like this man." Finally he couldn't take it any more, and he asked him and said, "Look, can you control your kids?" The man looked up and said, "I'm so sorry. You see, we just came from the hospital, and their mother just died. And they don't know what to do, and to be honest, I don't know what to do myself."

You see, the man made a judgment; but once he saw that in a different eye, it changed his whole assessment of the situation. He was about to let an external seed plant a bitter root within his spirit. And sometimes we get seeds that are planted and they develop into bitter roots, and they are over things that we don't even understand, because someone doesn't speak to us or because someone doesn't smile

when they speak to us. As a result, we get a bitter root that they must be stuck up and they must be snooty, and all kinds of things go into our minds. As a result, the seed becomes a bitter root, and the bitter root produces bitter fruit.

We've got to learn how to deal with the bitter root. So many marriages are spoiled, because seeds develop into bitter roots. You see, they develop into these bitter roots, and sometimes we harbor a thing; and that's why forgiveness is so important in all relationships. What would it be like if God didn't forgive you? All of the sins that you had done, what would it be like if God didn't forgive you? If you had all of the mess and all of the folks -- and I'm not talking about the stuff that you did as a teenager; I'm talking about the stuff you did last week! I'm talking about all of the mess that ran through your mind, all of the evil that was there. Suppose God didn't forgive you. Suppose He let the seeds of all your mess fester in Him and produce roots and produce fruits, and He held it against you and wouldn't allow you forgiveness? That's why you have to understand the relationship between you and God. You've got to be like that to the other man, and if you won't forgive the fellow, then how do you expect God to forgive you?

So we deal with bitter roots that have formed within us. Even sometimes if you take the husband and wife or coworkers or family members, and you go and ask them, "What caused this thing?" And they go, "Wait a second. You see, it's the little thing that was a seed. Well, she thought she were more than I was. That's when it all started. It became a seed that grew into a root; and because of that, the whole relationship became foul. You see, God wants you see that you have to deal with the root, whereas we have been trying to deal with the fruit. And though it is good to deal with the fruit, you've got to deal with the root.

Let me give you an example. You've got a tiff or you've got a problem or you've got a real conflict with someone, and every time you get in each other's presence, you want to just, "Hmph!" You walk this way and they -- "Hmph!" -- walk that way and go forth. Then you wake up one morning and you say, "I'm going to change that. I'm going to start speaking to the person and smile when I speak. The next morning when you see them, you say, "How are you doing, my brother?" "How are you doing, my sister?" and you smile at them and nod your head and then go on. Then, you see, you have dealt with the fruit; but the problem is, the root is still there. You have consciously made an effort to change the way that you behave in one particular area, but the root is still there. You still don't like him. You still hold it against them what they did to you, what they said about you, the little act or whatever it was that caused the thing in the first place. The root is still there. You see, you have plucked the fruit; but you have left the root! And whenever you pluck the fruit and you leave the root, all the root is going to do, given time ... all it takes with a bitter root is time and circumstance, and the same fruit is going to come up all over again. Too often we deal with plucking bad fruit, and we leave the bitter root.

God wants you to know and He wants you to understand that you've got to get that root out! You've got to get to the real cause of the problem. That's why whenever I'm talking to people, whether it's in a counseling for spiritual stuff or whether it's business stuff, my primary goal is always to get to the real root of the problem.

My daddy used to put it like this. He'd say, "Folks will often give you a good reason; but usually the good reason is not the real reason." I was talking with someone the other day, and I was counseling him. I said, "Look, you need to go to church." They were telling me, "Well, Reverend Bronner, I'm reading my Bible." I said, "That's good. That's what you ought to do; but you need to go to church!" You see, the Bible is an instructional book. And I gave them an example. "Whenever you want to do something or whenever you've got something complicated," I said, "you're try to live lightly and you're trying to get yourself out of the pit. You've got a whole lot of mess going around in your world. The Bible is the right book; but you need a guide, you need some instruction. It's like when I wanted to fly a plane, I didn't just go get the book "How to Fly a Plane in 30 Days", read the book and take off! When I wanted to learn how to swim, I didn't just go get a book on how to swim; I needed an instructor! So whatever you have to do, you need the Book. This is the manual, this is the guide," I said. "But you need to be in church!" Then they said, "Well, Pastor Bronner, one of the problems I have, I don't have a car. I begged people to take me to church, and I just got tired of having to depend on people to take me to church, so I'm just stopped going." I said, "Look, that's a good reason; but that isn't the real reason." I said, "There's nowhere in this city I know where there's not a church within ten minutes' walking distance. So if you really wanted to go to church, you would get up and walk and get yourself there!" I said, "That's a good reason. It sounds good that you don't have a car, that you have to get somebody to take you there." I said, "It sounds good, but that's not the real reason!" And they said, "Reverend Bronner, you are sure right, because there's a church five minutes away. There's one right around the corner."

That's why you've got to get to the root of things. See, a person that was trying to fix the fruit would have thought, "Let me see if I can try and get them a car." That wasn't the problem! If you had gotten them a car, the car would still be sitting there in the driveway come Sunday morning, because that wasn't the root of the problem.

So when I brought that out to them and they saw it, I exposed the root. They saw the root, and the root, the real thing, really wasn't that they didn't have a car! I said, "So what's the problem that you won't go to church? You read the Word, but you won't go to church. So what's the problem?" And they said, "Well, I just have a fear of church folks, because some of the church folks are not right!" I said, "You've got a fear of folks not being right?"

Brother Ivan, this was a person that was in the music business, the R&B business. I said, "You're worried about church folks not being right." I said, "I have been in the

music world. You go in the studio on a regular basis where folks are rappers, there's cussing and using drugs. You've been in all that world. You aren't scared of those folks. You're not worried about these folks not being right, so you're in there in the midst of all those messy folks, and you're worried about coming to church?" I said, "Yeah, there are going to be some folks that are not right in the church. But they're trying to get right!" I said, "That's the point. You are in a world right now where the folks are not right, and they're not thinking about even trying to get right! At least if you get to church, you are going to be in the midst of some folks that are right and the rest of the folks trying to get right; so where do you want to be?"

So I had to go and really dig and get the real root causes of things. That's where you always need to be. You've got to get the real reasons, because folks will give you the good reason; but that's not the real reason. That's why whenever you have a problem with somebody, you have to go back and you have to get that root! And oftentimes, what you will find is that the root of your real problem with the other person is in you, because oftentimes you don't like in someone else what you see in yourself. Sometimes the root is right there and not even the other person. That root is within you, and you've got to understand, you've got to go and you've got to deal with the root, not just the fruit.

"See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many." You see, the Bible says bitter roots grow and cause trouble, and they defile, meaning they mess up a whole lot of folks. When you have a bitter root within you, it doesn't just mess up you and the one person around you that have the bitter root; it messes up a whole pile of folks! If you've got a bitter root with your husband or with your wife, do you know that thing messes up a whole pile of folks, because you come out of the house with that bitter root in you. You come out of the house, and if you walk out of the house mad with your wife -- I mean, if I walked out of the house mad with Puddin', do you know it make's a difference? If I walk out mad than if I walk out with Puddin' just loving me to no end, and I walk out with a big smile? Do you know it make's a difference with how I deal everyone else? That's why men who kiss their wives have a 35% less chance of having a car wreck, because when you walk out of the house mad at your wife, you're liable to smash into somebody else's car because you're mad! It doesn't just affect you and the other person; it affects everybody around you! You walk in the door at work and you're mad, and a coworker speaks to you. Now, you're angry because you're still carrying the bitterness that you left home with; so whenever you have a bitter root within you with anybody, the thing does not just affect you and it does not just affect them; it defiles many, because you've got that mad, mean spirit!

Husbands and wives, do you know if your wife has had a problem with someone else and comes home, she isn't sweet to you. Do you know that if your husband has had a real rough day on the job and he comes home, he's not loving and sweet to you. See, it brings the bitterness right in to everybody. It's to just you and them. It will

translate to everyone else. It will translate to your children! If you've got a problem between husband and wife, it defiles the children, because the children see it and they feel it. They see their mama and daddy fussing and fighting, and what goes into them, you see, what they see is a seed. The seed goes into them on a subconscious level, and it says, "Since daddy's fussing at mama, then this must be the way I'm supposed to talk to my wife when I get married." It doesn't just defile you; it defiles everybody that's under your influence. And one root produces a whole bunch of fruit. You see, that's the thing about nature. If you have a seed, it will produce and grow into a root, and that root will produce a whole lot of fruit. So it defiles many. So it's not even just for you; it's for you, it's for the other person, it's for everybody that's around you when you have the root of bitterness in you.

Do you know, if you even just look at the people that you know and if you think of people that have problems with other folks, it isn't just one? Do you know that, it's not just one? And if you think about people that have a loving spirit, they have virtually no enemies anywhere. There's something about them. You see, it's a root.

Let me tell you something. Any time you're in a midst of a bunch of folks, you are always trying finding someone. If you have a bitter root in you, you've got somebody who's going to water that root. That's the law of just probabilities: if you got a bitter root, rest assured, you will find someone that will put water on that root. You've got to learn how to, first of all, not let the seed take the root; but for many of you, the thing is already rooted, and you've got to learn how to get the bitter root out of you.

But the first thing you've got to recognize is that it is a root and it's not a fruit; and that you see the thing and say, "This is what's causing this fruit and this behavior, and I need to get this thing out of my life" ... the bitter root.

You see, roots are different tremendously from seeds, because roots have to be pulled up. Have you ever gone out in a garden to pull up a root? The root will go deep, and it will spread out its tendrils on all directions, and you have to yank and pull. You see, bitter roots take a lot of work to get out. When you've got a bitter root with somebody, that thing isn't easy to come out of there, because they have often, first of all, plunged a shovel into the dirt of your soul. We shoveled and dropped the seed in, covered it back up and left the thing to fester and to grow. And now the root is there, and now you recognize that you need to get it out; but the thing is all rooted, and do you know it's not easy to pull a root out with someone you've got a bitterness with. That thing is not easy! I'm not going to sit here and tell you that it is. It's not easy!

You've got all kinds of history. The thing has kept you up at night. It has got your blood pressure raised. It is not easy! The thing about it, they could have been dead-wrong. They did you wrong. They were unfair; they talked about you unjustly; it

was their fault, and they rammed this shovel into you and planted that seed and now it's festered; but the thing is growing in you. The thing is messing you up.

Do you know sometimes some folks get a joy out of planting bitter seeds and watering them in you, and they sleep better when they've done some mess? Do you know that? I have seen people that the minute they could get somebody and they make them start crying and they just break them all down, they walk away with a smile on their faces. Some folks get a pleasure out of that! So when you react and when you let the seed of bitterness grow into the root that manifests in the fruit and the thing that's gotten all in you, it's messing you up; but sometimes it's in their territory, and because of their spirit, they get a joy in taking your joy!

You ought not to give them the pleasure of taking your joy, because some spirits, whenever they operate under a demonic spirit, that's what the devil wants to do is to steal your joy. So you think you are getting even with them by getting in a fight, but they go away just smiling, "I stole that joy." They all look sick, they can't sleep, they can't eat, they're walking around with a frown. "Oh, I got them this time." And you don't understand that the root of bitterness is growing inside of you, and you're going to have to struggle to pull that thing loose.

You see, when you pull a root loose and you pull it out of the ground, the root never comes up just by itself; it always brings dirt with it. You ever pulled up a root? It always brings dirt! So whenever you pull a root out, there's always some dirty stuff that is always attached. And when you really get down to the real root of bitterness, it's always surrounded by some dirt, and when you pull it up and pull it out of the ground, sometimes you've got to, first of all, get a root going before you can pull it out. See, if you can ever get it going, when you raise it ... all of you must have been reared in the city. It looks like none of you have ever even been in a garden. But if you ever go to pull a root, it won't move at first. And you've got to like put your feet down, and then you've got to moan with the thing. When you've really got it, you've got to "Argghh!" You've got to moan and you've got to groan with the thing. Sometimes, people, to get this stuff out of our systems, this stiff isn't easy because it's been there a long time. If it was a baby root, you can pull it out quickly. But some of these roots, people, we have been carrying around in us for decades. Some of us have roots of bitterness even against our mothers and against our fathers. And, yeah, they did some wrong things; yeah, they were not right; yeah, there were some things that they did that they should have done better, that they hurt, that they wounded, that they scarred. And we've got this stuff in us, and as a result it is coloring every relationship we've got because of the bitter root.

You've got to cleanse your feet silent on that Word and grab ahold of the thing and pull and groan. At first, that root won't move! But if you can ever get it to where it breaks and if you can ever get it where it starts moving, you can pull it on out.

The bitter root exists in so many of our lives, and God wants us to get those things pulled up and pulled out.

Now, also in that book of Hebrews, turn back to that 12th chapter, to the verses that I first read. When I saw this revelation, it amazed me. It says in Hebrews, Chapter 12, Verse 14: “Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” When I saw that, I said, “Whoa! It says ‘Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord!’” Now, did it say “Follow peace with some men?” It’s hard to follow peace with all men, because all men are not peaceful. See, it didn’t say, “Follow peace with all peaceful men.” It said, “Follow peace with all men.” People, that ‘s a hard thing to do, I’m going to be straight with you on that. I’m not going to sit here and tell you some sugarcoated thing like it’s just easy. It’s hard to love some people, because all people are not loveable! It’s hard!

But when I read this verse, it said, “Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” It’s talking here about peace with all men and holiness and that you need those two things to see the Lord, because how are you going to see God? That’s why even Jesus said: “Even when you bring your offering, if you have ought in your heart , it’s got a root of bitterness against your brother. Leave your offering at the altar; go and reconcile with your brother, then come back.” Jesus said, “Don’t even leave your money.” I’ve got to mention, you won’t hear many preachers preaching that, because the collection will go down too low.

(Laughter.)

PASTOR NATHANIEL: If ministers just said, “Look, we’re not going to deposit your check in the bank until you get all your relationships clear and get all the roots.” Lord, have mercy, the lights would be out in a lot of your churches. But that’s what Jesus said. He said, “Leave your offering at the altar.” He told you bring it; but He said leave it there until you go and reconcile with your brother, until you get the root of bitterness out. That’s a deep thing. But when I saw that you can’t even see the Lord unless you have peace with all men, I said, “Whoa!”

Now, let me give you a worldly example of this thing to bring it to some elementary understanding. Let’s just say that you were walking on the street and you saw a Ferrari parked on the street with a flat tire, and behind the Ferrari was a Rolls Royce. There was a young man standing outside of the Ferrari, looking down at the tire. An older gentleman got out of the Rolls Royce. He saw you walking on the other side of the street, and he beckoned for you to come and you went. And the old man said, “The young man driving the Ferrari is my son. That’s my child. But he doesn’t know how to change his tire. I bought him the Ferrari. I bought this Rolls Royce. If you will just take a few minutes of your time and help him change his tire, I’ll pay \$10,000.”

Now, raise your hand, mean. How many of you would help change that tire for \$10,000?

(Laughter.)

PASTOR NATHANIEL: God just showed me this illustration to make it clear. So as you walked over to the Ferrari with the flat tire to help the man change his tire, the man looked at you and said, “You’re ugly, and your breath stinks.” You stop, and you’re taken aback; it is an affront that he just made against you. He called you ugly, and he said your breath stinks.

See, first of all, people, both of those statements, even if he said it, both of those are opinionated. Beauty is on the eye of the beholder, and what’s beautiful to one is not to another; so who’s has anybody got a right to call you ugly or beautiful? For that matter, that’s an opinionated matter, and you could have just said, “Well, I eat a lot of garlic sometimes, and to some people that stinks. To me, it smells good. That’s a matter of opinion.” But the key is this: the man has made a personal affront against you. Any normal person, unless you are just super-spiritually elevated -- I mean super, you’ve got to be so high in the Spirit to where you are not offended by that, you’ve got to be real high in the Spirit. Most folks, even most preachers, would be offended if the man said, “You’re ugly, and your breath stinks.”

But, you see, the father offered you \$10,000 to change the tire. So with the \$10,000 in mind, even though the man told you that you’re ugly and your breath stinks, you would say, “Where’s your lug wrench?”

(Laughter.)

PASTOR NATHANIEL: “Where’s the jack? Let me get the owner’s manual out, so I make sure that I put the jack just right under the car to make sure I don’t scratch your car.” You see, even though the man has called you ugly and said your breath stinks, he has planted a seed within your spirit; but when you have a different goal in mind, you understand that your real goal had nothing to do with him; had nothing to do with what he said, had nothing to do with what he thought. Your goal in that instance is what the father has promised you. And if you get mad and say, “You don’t have the right to call me that. I won’t stand for it! And you and your son, your rude son, you can tell your rude son and that flat tire and your \$10,000 what they can do” and you walk away. Now, you got a satisfaction, because you just told him off; but you haven’t got that \$10,000.

(Laughter and applause.)

PASTOR NATHANIEL: And the thing that it has cost you is far greater than the thing you got all upset over. The Bible said, "If you don't have peace with all men and the holiness, you won't see the Lord." It's like the tire and the \$10,000. You see, if you've got a bitter root and if you've got ought with men and you've got strife and stress and all the evil and all the hate that you're holding in towards your brother, your sister, your wife, your family or your coworker, if you've got all this stuff, that stuff is keeping you from seeing the Lord! You heard about the fellow that called you ugly with stinking breath, and you have missed the \$10,000. The reward is so much greater than the insult; but we focus on the seed that allows it to become a root, and that root blocks us from all of our beautiful fruit.

When I saw that thing, it made me change even my mentality. I had to think, "What is it that anyone could do to me that's worth me missing Heaven for? What is it that anybody could say to me as I was going up changing that tire that would make me not spend 5 minutes for that \$10,000?" What is it?" There should be nothing. You see, the \$10,000, that's just a monetary thing. The eternal life and bliss of Heaven outweighs that by countless measure. But yet we have let an insult, we have let a little thing that was a bad seed, a bitter seed, cause a bitter root; and it's causing you to miss Heaven in the beyond and right now. Jesus said, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within"; but there is no Kingdom of Heaven where bitter roots reside.

When I looked at that, I even began to see what Jesus meant, because I always knew that was a rough verse to digest. You don't have to turn there, because you've this so many times. Matthew, Chapter 5, beginning at Verse 43: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Don't you know, folks, those folks have planted a bitter seed in you? That's the enemy? They're despitefully using you, they persecute you. It said here the other man is wrong or the other woman is wrong. Yeah, the young man had no business calling you ugly and saying you had stinky breath when you were coming to help. Yeah, he was all wrong! But he was not the point. The point was the reward that the Father promised you! And we're getting sidetracked off these little seeds and losing our reward, taking our Heaven right here on Earth, because we have a root growing up; we're mad because "Somebody said this about me," and we can't even sleep or get along with our family or our children, all because this root has grown, and it flavors everything that you do! Do you know something? Bitter will flavor something a lot more than something sweet? It takes only a little bitter stuff to mess up something, and it's flavoring our whole lives.

Then in Verse 45: "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust, for if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do

not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans sow?" Jesus is saying, "Look, if you just treat the other folks well and just love the folks that love you and treat you well, what difference is that from a drug dealer? Drug dealers love everybody that treats them good and loves them. What difference is that from a pimp? What difference is that from someone that has no idea about the Word and Will of God?" It is natural human flesh that if somebody loves you and treats you well, you're going to love them. You may not treat them well, but at least you don't hate them.

So Jesus is saying, "If you just love those who love you, what distinguishes you as a Christian? The only thing that distinguishes you as a Christian is when you get that enemy. That's what distinguishes your Christianity. Your Christianity is more determined by how you react to enemies than how you react to friends. That's what Jesus said. Friends react well to friends; it's the enemies that are the problem. But He said fundamentally the same thing that Hebrew says: "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven." And that's the key that we need to learn about that bitter root. And we need to understand that even when we change and pull out the root, it's not for the other person; it's for you, because that root is making your life bitter. That root is messing you up. That root is transferring and filling your household and your world. The root is messing you up, and it's not for the other person!

See, that's why one of the blocks to healing is unforgiveness. This stuff is in you; the root is in you! We have to struggle to pull it out, and it's going to take some muscle and some groaning and some grunting to get it out. But God wants the bitter roots out, because there is a reward. He says you've got to be at peace with all men ... all of them. Look at your neighbors and say, "All!" All, that means everybody. We sometimes like to have a buffet with God's Word. We want to walk by and pick this up and leave that. He said all men. We want to be at peace with the good folks, but we don't want to be at peace with those enemies. No, no. We want to get a sword and chop those enemies' heads off.

All men. There is a great reward, people, and we've got to learn to focus on the reward, not the insult; on the thing that God has promised. And just as that father who would have been in that Rolls Royce, He represents the supplier of all. And just as the Father made you, He also made your enemy; do you know that? That's His child, too. That's His creation, too. He made both of you! So God says, "How dare you disrespect and look down and hold evil against one of my creations? That's My child, just as you are."

Sometimes, people, the people that you think are enemies unto you, just like the man on the subway, you don't know what they're going through. You don't know what happened in their lives. You don't know what kind of things are on their shoulders and on their backs and the things that keep them up in torment at night.

You don't know! And you judge them out of your knowledge, which is incomplete at best. You don't know the history. You don't know the background. You don't know the terrors and the turmoil that people are going through. And because they come into work one day or come into church one day and don't speak to you, you let a seed of bitterness enter into the soil of your soul and cause a root.

God wants those roots pulled and plucked, but you are going to have to do the pulling. If you're not strong enough and you just start struggling, God will strength in you and He'll give you the extra might. But oftentimes, you see, people, we have become so comfortable with our bitter roots that we don't even want to leave them. It's like developing a taste for things. And do you know if you start drinking something bitter that you will not like it when you start drinking it; but if you drink bitter stuff long enough, the bitter stuff will start tasting good? Some of us have been in that bitterness so long that even though it's killing us and killing relationships, the bitterness starts tasting good, because we've been in it so long, we have lost the taste-bud sensitivity to even distinguish bitter from sweet.

God wants the bitter root out of your lives. He sent this message upon this day, because He knows there are people within the sound of my voice and that will see this on television or hear it on a tape and you've got a bitter root, and it's poisoning your world and it's blocking you from the Kingdom of Heaven. You missed your \$10,000 because of an insult, and God says, "Wake up and see the Truth and get the bitter root out of your soul."

If there is anyone at this time, I'm led today not to even ask for salvation, but simply the anointing for the removal of the bitter root. I'm going to ask my mother to come up and do the anointing for this, not even the ministers on the pulpit. Do you know why? Because my mother has always had a gift of removing bitter roots. Whenever she has had a situation or a problem with anyone, she'll go to the person, and then she will pull and get that thing out of her system. She'll go and say, "I'm sorry! I have this thing in me; I've got to get it out, or it will poison my world." She has that ability in anointing better than anyone that I know. And anointing flows from the anointed. She has the anointing to do that. I have seen her do it several times. I even saw her as she spoke at a church, and she had a bitter root with the pastor. She told the pastor, she said, "I have to stand here and I have to publicly say I'm sorry, because I've said some things about you that I shouldn't have said, and I want to apologize publicly." And do you know when she got through with that speech, the pastor called her back, and the pastor said when she got through speaking, a whole ton of folks came to the pastor with bitter root that they had to get them out.

The anointing falls on people, and she's got it more than anyone I know. Some of you within this very place, you've got bitter roots. God wants to put a special touch upon you this day to give you the strength and the power to get them out.

Don't be ashamed to come up. If you know you've got the root, come on up and get the touch, as she lays hands or she prays or whatever she's led to do.

MRS. ROBBIE BRONNER: I just want to share that I don't care how much good you do; God is looking on the heart. It's on the inside. It's not on the outside. I use the expression that it was like opening up the Earth and putting my faith down in the ground to go to do some things that God had told me I had to do. I said, "God, for you, I'll do it." I don't care about man. I don't care what man thinks. That was a hindrance to me. It was a hindrance to my prayer. I have gotten down on my knees, and God has shut of His ears for me. And I said, "Lord, what is this?" He said, "Go next door to your neighbor, and tell your neighbor that you will pay for a plumbing bill that you had told her you would not pay. Then, come back and pray."

You can't fool God. God knows our hearts. And it's the heart. That's why He says the pure in heart are going to see Him. In some things, the root is so painful that you don't want anybody to know it. God has sent me to two women to tell them, "I'm jealous of you." Who would go to somebody and tell them that you are jealous of them and ask for forgiveness?

I want you hear what I'm saying that's the only way you're going to get your healing. That's the only way you're going to get deliverance. When you have heard the message about the bitter root, if you fail to get it out now, the inner root will carry it deeper, and you will begin to miss what God is doing.

God is doing a new thing now. I said Friday night God sent me up into a mountain. In fact, I went up there. God had to set me for me to go. But I went to the mountain, and I went to the mountain to write on a book that God has told me I had to write. Now, I told God, "I don't even know how to write a book. I'm not an English major. I don't even know how to write a book." But if God said write it, I can do it.

He knows that I have a message that even couples need to hear. I had a marriage that God taught me how to be the wife as a little girl. But God knew where my destiny would lead me. I had the type of a husband that I had to be submissive. You know, the Bible tells the women to be submissive to their husbands. I had that type of husband that I had better be submissive to. And I knew it, but I knew my destiny. God prepared me from a little girl.

I saw my mother and I saw my father, and I saw their reaction in marriage and I said, "Lord I don't want to be like that." And then God began to teach me to keep my mouth shut. My mother opened up her mouth and she went toe-to-toe and head-to-head with daddy. And I said as a little girl, "If my mother would learn to keep her mouth shut, daddy wouldn't have to hit her." That was a part of my growing up. It was like every Friday night, I could see my daddy hitting my mother. And that

could have been a bitter root. But I said, "No, I'm not going to be like that when I marry. I'm going to keep my mouth shut." And I learned to keep my mouth shut. And I call it the silent tongue. Ever my husband would get in a rage, I would just look at him, and underneath I'd repeat the Blood of Jesus, and I would demand the defiled spirit to leave in Jesus' name. He would never know it. He would calm right down, go on to his room and be at peace.

Listen to what he told me. He said, "When you don't say anything back to me, it's like a dagger that goes straight into my heart." He said, "It's worse than a dagger going straight to my heart." That was something God taught him.

Keep a silent tongue. Let God fight your battles. God said the battle belongs to Him. And that's the way He wants to do. Don't be ashamed to go back to the person. That's the quickest route to get it up, because the devil is going to tell you, "Don't go back. You're going to be ashamed."

I went. He told me -- I even went to a pastor of a church and told him what I said about him; I talked about him behind his back. So with the Love of God, I went to him to his face and said, "I talked about you." I told him exactly what I said. That same day, another man had walked off of his job. He had an argument with his boss, and he felt bad. He said he heard my message on the television, and he said he went back and told that boss, "I'm sorry."

Religion is as religion does. You don't have to learn a whole lot of principles, one to twenty; you don't need it. God gave us only two things to do: love God, then love your neighbor as yourself. You see me out here riding in a van, putting down my Mercedes Benz, putting down my Navigator -- Halleluia! -- to do the Will of God. That's what it's about. The wisest man who ever lived said, "It's not about things, not about anything materialistic, not about the clothes you wear, not about your hairstyles; it's what's in the heart." That's where He abides. The Kingdom of Heaven is within you. He can't abide on anything that's filthy and dirty on the inside; it has to be cleansed. That's why He said, "Leave everything there, and go back and get that relationship right. Then, come back to me."

That's what God wants to do today. Pastor Charles taught Friday night, and this is why it's important to come even on Friday nights; you can't get it all in one setting. He talked about the seed. He said, "Seed-dom will come immediately; it's natural." He said, "What will become immediately?" That's the beginning of it all. That's the beginning of your growth. He'll snatch it. God was showing me something with that. In all of my praying, He was showing me, "You have to pray the seed." Pray the seed. I had often used this in my praying, "Lord, I place Your Bloodline around whatever situation it is; I place this Bloodline, and I dare Satan to come across that Bloodline." This is what He had to reveal to me. He said, "It's like sheep. We have

all gone astray. But now, we have returned to the Shepherd and the Bishop of our souls.

So you've got to be in the sheepfold to be covered by the Blood (laughing). When you've gone astray, you're outside of your protection. In the sheepfold is where you have the Shepherd and the Bishop of your souls, do you understand that? So when you place the Blood of Jesus around it, there's a covering. And the devil in Hell cannot penetrate the Blood of Jesus. He can't do anything with that seed unless you give him that permission to do something with that seed..

God said, "The Kingdom of Heaven is nigh." It's in your mouth. It's in your mouth. Watch what you say. That's how Satan comes in. He'll take what you said and take it and run with it, because he knows when fear is there. He knows when faith is there. He operates through the faith of it. The Kingdom is nigh you; it's in your mouth. It's what comes out of your mouth.

In our home, nothing negative could be spoken. Everything had to be positive in our home. Our children were brought up that way. Satan didn't have anything to snatch, according to what was coming out of their mouths. But Satan had plenty bitter roots and plenty bad seed, okay? We've all got them. There's no difference between me and you, me and you, me and you. No different. Jesus makes the difference. We're all one: one God, one faith, one baptism, one people. Do we understand that?

As I look here and I look at the black men, because I had all men, all boys, and I saw the fight and the struggle of men, the devil knows that the strength of their family is through the men. If he can destroy the man, if the devil can take the woman and place the woman over the man, he has victory, because it's out of order.

God has given the men a special anointing. That's why He told the women to submit. Submit, there's power in it. One thing my husband told me. Listen to this, men. When we married, he said this: "All I want is one other person to think as I think. We could turn the world upside down and nothing could hinder us, because we would be on one accord, two becoming one." That's power. That's what Satan knows. And if he can separate you, he's doing his job.

Women, build your men up. I spent my life building my man. You can't have a king without a queen. Build. Tell them when they do a good job. And if there are weaknesses, strengthen them. Don't come against them; strengthen it. There's a way that you can do it to uplift.

That's why my husband loved me so. I built, I strengthened, I under-girded my husband. I was the wind beneath his wings.

Let me hear all the women say that: "I'm going to be the wind beneath my husband's wings."

You got power in the black man. The black man has power. You've got, power, you've got so much power. You've got so much power. The devil knows it. He says, "If I can rob you, if I can make you think you don't have it, if I can show you something false about yourself, I'll use it against you."

You understand what I'm trying to say to you? Strengthen the brethren. Strengthen the brethren. Strengthen the brethren, strengthen the brethren, strengthen the brethren. That's where the power is. Strengthen the brethren. Stop talking about our black men; strengthen them, strengthen them, strengthen them, strengthen them, strengthen them! Strengthen them.

God placed everything in order: "In the beginning, God ..." You need not go farther than that: "In the beginning, God ..." "And what did He do? He created. He created. He created. And where did He place man? "In the beginning, God ... and He made man. He said, "Now, you rule and you have dominion over the fowl of the air, the fish of the sea." Rule. Power. Dominion. Rule! Everything will be subject unto you. And we let the devil fool us; get us out of order, get us out of order; the bitter root, the bitter root, the bitter root.

Bow your heads.

Father, we just established Your Word first, God. And Your Word says, God, that you have created us in Your Image, in Your Likeness. And You have made all things good and very good. Thank You that You created man. And, God, You gave him dominion, and You gave him power. And You created woman to be his helpmate. So help him. Help us if we just only get those prayers for us today. So put it all in order, for "In the beginning, God In the beginning, God ... and He created."

We thank You today, Father, for just opening us up to the bitter root; opening us up to seeds, and these seeds are so powerful. But, God, You blessed man, and You blessed woman: "Go there. Be fruitful. Multiply. Replenish the Earth."

And You've given us offspring. You've given us beautiful offspring. Bring them up; teach them. When You lie down, when You rise, when You walk along the way, teach them. It's generational.

We thank You that even Your entire Bible is a history book of the Jews, your Chosen People. And you placed the genealogies there for a reason. This one beget that one, and that one beget that one. You're dealing with families, and you're dealing with generation; and the devil will want to destroy it and interrupt it and disconnect the generations. We come against the enemy right now in the name of

Jesus. He will want to disconnect families first. He'll want to disconnect husbands from wives. He wants to disconnect the children from the parents. We come against it right now in the name of Jesus, and we put the Bloodline down around the families, and we plead the Blood of Jesus over every household; and that the man will rise up to be the prophet, the priest and the king in his own. God, give him that power, renewed, strengthened, to leave this place today with the newness that "I have the power of the living God to rule, to have dominion, power over my home, and to be a covering over my beautiful wife and over my children."

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord. And now, Lord, for those of us who have the bitter root embedded, God, we pray right now and thank You by their presence and by their coming, that it represents, that they're leaving their offerings at the altar; and through the anointing and the laying-on of hands of the oil, they will go forth to make every crooked place straight, to pull up the bitter root and the thing that has kept them bound. Father, Your People will be loosed today. They will be loosed in their hearts, in their minds and in their spirits to do the Will of the Father and to put their lives in order with You.

It's the inside. It's the inside that matters, not the outside. It's not the outside, it's the inside. All of the jealousy, the anger, all of the things that we have used, the hatred, coming against the brethren, God, we ask that You would give us that anointing this day to clear it, to make it right. We ask this in the precious name of Jesus and under His Blood, amen.

I'm going to form the cross; that will be your power. Just the cross to be your power. It's under the cross. Jesus said bring everything under the cross. It's under the cross.

PASTOR C. ELIJAH: Let us all stand.

Lord, we thank You for the Word that was delivered today, Lord, for, Lord, You even demonstrated this seed principle today, oh, Father, for it was a mother that did the anointing; but it was her seed that brought the Word, oh, Father, that planted the seed. We thank You, oh, Lord, for using a seed to bring a seed, oh, Father. And, Lord, many came, oh, Father, expecting the gift of deliverance with a touch, oh, Father. But, Lord, I pray that You'll open the spiritual eyes and spiritual ears today, oh, Lord; to know that deliverance, oh, Father, for most would not come by that touch; that the words that she spoke this day, oh, Lord, and the actions that they take over those words, oh, Lord. Therein will lie their deliverance, Our Father. Therein will be the uprooting of that seed of bitterness, oh, Father. We thank You, oh, Lord, for every word that was spoken this day, oh Lord, that it may go in, oh, Father, and by the Power of Your Holy Spirit and by our own actions, oh, Lord, uproot those seeds of bitterness in us.

Lord, we pray again over every marriage, oh, Lord, represented here today, Our Father. For, Lord, this is our closest neighbor, oh, Father. This is the neighbor that we spend the most time with, oh, Father. Lord, and even the covenant that we make with You, oh, Lord, that was represented by communion today, oh, Lord. Most marriages today, the covenant of marriage is broken in most marriages. Even in the Church, oh, Lord, and so it is in the Church, oh, Lord. Most of the people in church are not in covenant with You, oh, Lord; with what You've asked them to do, oh, Father. So, Lord, I pray even as we begin to build the covenant whole, oh, Lord, I pray, oh, Lord, that the covenant that Your people have taken with You, oh, Lord, that it will be restored, oh, Father; that they would return unto covenant with You, oh, Lord, not only in their marriages, oh, Lord, but in their marriage with Christ, oh, Father; that their covenant of giving of tithes would be restored from this day forward, oh, Father, with the covenant of love, oh, Father, that you've commended us to partake in with each of our brethren, oh, Lord; that it would be restored this day, oh, Father; that it shall no longer be broken, oh, Father.

And before we leave this place today, as the pastor talked about obedience at one time, I want to give you one thing to do before we leave today. For all of us, no matter whether we came down front or not, all of us with our mates, at some point we've said things against them or at some point we've done things against them that have hurt them. I want every husband and every wife, as soon as we end this service, to go and find your other half, for God has joined us as one. And I want you to embrace them and just say, "Honey, I'm sorry for every negative word that I've ever spoken against you." I want you to say, "Honey, forgive me for every action that I've done against you that has hurt you at some point. Honey, forgive me for every thought that I've even thought about you negatively. Forgive me right now." I want every husband and every wife, as soon as we finish, to go and embrace your spouse this day, for that is the beginning of restoration. How can one go out and love his neighbor when he has ought against his heart against his own spouse? How can you go over to China and minister to those you've never seen before when he or she whom you're sleeping with every day, there's hope there. So at the end of this service, we want the healing to begin, for this is not an end; it's a beginning. And we pray that every seed of bitterness shall be uprooted from this day forward. And we seal it with the Blood of Jesus, in Jesus' name we pray this day, amen and amen.

MRS. ROBBIE BRONNER: I wanted to leave this with you. I had a bitter root of hatred with my husband. And it had gotten so bad until I treated him so awful that he said he could not even live with me. I had to have a tooth extracted because of this hatred.

Finally, I got on my knees and I asked God to take it away. God said, "Get your Bible. Open it up to 1st Corinthians, the 13th chapter." He said, "Now, read it."

I read it. I said, "I have read it." He said, "Read it again." I said, "I have read it. I know what it says." He said, "Read it again!"

I read it a third time. I said, "Lord, I've read it; I've even memorized it. I know what it says." He said, "Read it again!"

I read it a fourth time. I said, "Lord, I told you I had read it and I know what it says." He said, "Read it again!"

And it was the fifth time when I finished reading 1st Corinthians, the 13th chapter, five times, something burst inside of me; it shot like a pistol, I'm telling you. I said, "Oh, God, somebody has shot me." It was the bitterness, the hatred, the end evolved. And in came a river of Living Water of nothing but Love.

At that time my husband was out of town, and when he got home, I ran to the car and got him out. I said, "Oh, I love you! I love you!" and I told him what God had done for me. And he said, "Well, I'm glad God has changed you, because you were becoming too evil to live with."

Take the Word, that was the seed: 1st Corinthians, 13th chapter, that is your love chapter. Love eradicates hate. That was what God was teaching me. You had to have the seed; I had to have a seed. And I kept doing it until He made me read it five times. The seed! You've got to have the Word; the Seed is the Word of God.

So whatever your bitter root is, find the Scripture, okay? Read it and memorize it day-in and day-out until you get your deliverance.