

Under fire by friendlies: Are you a Victim or a Victor?

Genesis 50:15-21

Intro.

Let me give you some idea of what the topic under fire by friendlies means to me. This is about war like in armed conflict. In February 2007, in Ramaldi, Iraq, two American soldiers were killed by friendly fire, according to military investigators.

They say that the reason was due to poor training. The military had informed the families that they were killed by friendly fire. In response to a freedom of information request, the truth came out that they had been killed by their own troops. In other words, Americans killing Americans in the war zone, killed by non-hostile fire.

The jet pilot hones in on the target from 175 miles away and lets the missile fly. When he is over the target in a matter of seconds, what he sees is not pleasant, he has killed the wrong enemy, his own friends. When working in haste, or pushing the wrong button, all it takes is one second, one mistake and one firing of the missile in the midst of war to inflict grave bodily harm. The missile cannot go back. The weapon is now headed for you, and the one who fired it is on your side. It is war and you are hit by friendly fire, by a friendly like Pat Tillman in Afghanistan.

However, this is not Iraq, the Battle of KeShan, or some other war zone, where shots are fired. What I am talking about are the many Christians that have been hit and wounded in the body of Jesus Christ. Those who have been hurt by the salvos of other believers, people who have been hit by the shots and betrayals of another Christian.

Have you ever been hit or hurt by another believer, someone who you respect? Someone who you love? Someone you would go the last mile? Well, this is no mistake. She meant to say those words. He meant to plot against you. They are meant to bring you down, and you will never be the same. You will suffer with this for the rest of your life. You will not ever go back to church again and will become bitter.

Have you ever been there? Does anyone know what I am talking about? Do you know anyone like that? Is this your story? Are you the victim of a wound inflicted by someone who you love? Do you still lick your wounds; are you still possessed by that experience? You can recover from the aches and pains of the situation. Let me explain what I mean.

When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said "It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him."

So they sent a message to him, saying, "Your father gave his command before he died," Say to Joseph; please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did you evil. And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants". But Joseph said to them," Do not fear, for I am in the place of God. As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear, I will Provide for you and your families." Thus he confronted them and spoke kindly to them (Gen.50: 15-21) Amen! Glory to God! The forgiveness of the Savior. Do you see it?

Some preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill. The latter do it out of love, knowing that they exist for the defense of the Gospel. However, the former proclaim Christ out of rivalry, not sincerely. Thinking "to afflict me in my imprisonment", what then? (Phil.1: 15-16)

Let us look back at Joseph as a young man. He was a cocky kid, too arrogant for his own good. He did not think it enough to be the favorite of his father, the child who received special attention and treatment, the son of Jacobs' old age. He had to rub it in the faces of his older brothers. He told them," God has revealed to me that one day I will lead this family", well that was just too much for them to bear. His father rebuked him to be quiet, but his brothers wanted revenge. Therefore, they dug a hole for him. Has anyone ever dug a hole for you? Has anyone ever sold you out? Early on in his life, he did not know how to work with others. He had no experience, wisdom or humility, but he did gain these attributes later in life. It took 23 years of his life to get to the forgiveness stage. He finally realized that God had directed his path to where he would end up. Therefore, at last Joseph could trace Gods' hand overall the years of his life. He began to understand the lord's long-term plan for his people. Joseph also realized that God had allowed him to help fulfill the plan by growing into the leader God had planned him to become, in a place to save his people from starvation and in a strange foreign land.

Before we continue, let me address another problem. First, I must ask a question. "Is favoritism ever a good idea"? We know that many of Joseph's problems stem from favoritism shown by his father (chapter 37). However, the text does not focus on the problem of favoritism, but rather, how one should respond to it. Is it possible for one to rise above the hurt feelings and rejoice with those who rejoice? (Rom 12:15)

Why should Joseph have ignored what his brothers had done to him? (Gen.45: 4-7) When Joseph's brothers realized that the one they had betrayed could now do with them whatever he wished, they became fearful. However, instead of retaliating, he blessed them and empowered them to complete the task, for which they had come, to secure food for their families. But what made Joseph such a forgiving person? Consider these factors:

1. A strong sense of security;" Please come near to me."
2. A strong sense of identity; "I am your brother."
3. A strong sense of empathy;" Do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves"
4. A strong sense of purpose; "For God sent me before you to preserve life."
5. A strong sense of perspective; There are still five years in which there will be neither plowing or nor harvesting. "God sent me before you to preserve a prosperity for you in the earth."

Joseph could have stopped the clock to reflect when his brothers put him in the hole. He could have stopped the clock when he was taken from the hole and placed into slavery. He could have stopped the clock for 23 years and planned his revenge upon his brothers, but he saw the greater good, the presence of God in his life and he refused to be a victim. What about you? Are you a Victim?

The pain of friendly fire can stop the clock. This often happens to Christians when they are hurt by fellow Christians and others who fail to identify their pain with Jesus Christ. The clock stops and they go through life day after day, week after week, month after month and finally year after year. Perhaps even church after church not realizing that the clock stopped for them back when they were first hurt. The only problem is that today it is popular to be the victim; yes, a victim can always say "It wasn't my fault" or " It was someone else's fault" But being a victim is not a good way to live, because life cannot go forward when the clock is stopped at the point of the last betrayal." Do you hear me"? Yet I think it aloud, how many here today are living their lives with the clock stopped from a hurt? There is an answer to this problem. Do you want to hear it? First, you take up the cross." That I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from his death." Philippians 3:10-11.

In your moment of sudden intuitive understanding, flash of insight or your epiphany. You must realize every sorrow; every treachery and every betrayal is a point of identification to Jesus Christ, because through these things Jesus Christ is the resurrection. Joseph was given a cross to bear. His cross was imprisonment, because of betrayal and treachery by people that should have loved him, people that should

have encouraged him. "I want you to know brothers, what happened to me was for the good of our people. Thank God for that. Amen." You must take up your cross, if you are to be a victor that is what Christ meant when he said, "take up your cross and follow me to the hurts, disappointments and betrayals." The cross bearing should mean to us and for us an act of betrayal.

The context of the cross is the pain of being hurt by those close to us. To follow Jesus Christ, is to embrace the cross and be a victor through Jesus Christ.

Think about what God is teaching in Genesis 50:19-20 "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. Jesus was killed by friendly fire for our good.

The second step is to take off your crown; it belongs to Jesus Christ. He died for it, you did not, so stop pretending as if you are sovereign and confess the truth, that God is sovereign. If you are in control, then your crucifixion has no meaning. You must hold hostage in your heart that person who is perpetrating this injustice upon you. You cannot forgive because you have been wronged; only Jesus Christ can. Nevertheless, if God is sovereign, then the one who brought your cross is Jesus Christ, himself, the intercessor, Lord of Lords, King of Kings. Grasping God's sovereignty, not as a theological concept, but as an act of utter submission and child-like faith will move you from the status of victim to a victor. Do you want to be a victor? Take off your crown and give it back to Jesus Christ.

Become what God has planned for you; let your light be his light. Lastly, like Jesus Christ you must go to Gethsemane. Gethsemane is the place where like Jesus Christ, as if Joseph and us today come face to face with our crucifixion and with the fact that God is in control. If there is to be a new life, there must be a resurrection. A new life must come from the pains, the betrayal and the hurtful words of a fruition. If there is a crucifixion by the Father for the good of many then there must be a Gethsemane moment when we say, "not my will but your will be done Father."

There must be a moment when you say, even when the shadows of pain is falling over you "they meant it for evil, but God meant it for good." You must show the world that you walk after Jesus by his example and not by your own example. When you have done these things, you will know why Jesus Christ died, suffered and took so much for you. There used to be a song, "Let them talk if they want to, Talk don't bother me. We have the kind of love that is so strong; we will be together from now on. Only with and in Jesus Christ is this true.

