

Shalom, child of God! Welcome. Let's dive into Scripture today and, by God's grace, learn how to save souls.

Jesus said, "I did not come to destroy people's lives but to save them" (Luke 9:56, NIV).

He said this after His disciples asked Him to call down fire to consume some Samaritans who refused to receive Him. But why did Jesus say He came to save, not destroy? Because He had the power to destroy, but chose not to. Instead, He sought a way to bring salvation, not death.

Sometimes, we might have weapons whether in our hands or on our tongues that God has legitimately given us to confront those opposing us. But without the wisdom Jesus had, we risk destroying souls instead of saving them.

Think about Moses. When the Israelites sinned against God in the wilderness, God told Moses to separate himself from the people so He could destroy them and He promised to make Moses into a great nation, giving him offspring to inherit the land. If we were

Moses, we might have thanked God for defending us against those who opposed us. But Moses pleaded for his people, asking God for forgiveness on their behalf, seeking reconciliation. God listened and relented.

Imagine if Moses had obeyed and separated himself. Would that have been wrong? No. God truly would have destroyed them and fulfilled His promise to Moses. But Moses showed wisdom. Had he not interceded, he wouldn't have been the leader God exalted.

Here's the passage from Exodus 32:9-14 (NIV):

9 "I have seen these people," the LORD said to Moses, "and they are a stiff-necked people.

10 Now leave me alone so my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation."

11 But Moses sought the favor of the LORD his God. "LORD," he said, "why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand?

12 Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to

wipe them off the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people.

13 Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.'"

14 Then the LORD relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.

This teaches us that not every opportunity or authority God gives us should be used impulsively. God didn't create us as robots who just obey without thinking. That would be slavery. We are His children, meant to speak with Him, to consult with Him. God wants us to talk to Him, reason with Him, and exchange counsel.

Isaiah 1:18 says it beautifully:

"Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD.

"Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;

though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."

(ESV)

That's why Moses reasoned with God and his people's sins, as scarlet as they were, became as white as snow. Hallelujah!

God can put someone in your hands who hates you or has wronged you deeply. It might seem that God gave you the power to finish them off. Think of how David had Saul in his hands but refused to harm him. That moment wasn't for destruction, but for mercy and salvation.

Likewise, when you're given such an opportunity, don't use it to destroy but to save. Turn that moment over to Christ. Pray for forgiveness and mercy. When you do, God's anger turns to love, and He will exalt you more than ever.

You might say, "That's Old Testament stuff. What about the New Testament?" The same principles apply.

Take Paul and Silas in prison (Acts 16). After casting out a spirit, they were beaten and jailed. But God sent an earthquake that opened the prison doors and loosened their chains. The angel's purpose was clear: they were free to leave.

Yet Paul and Silas stayed, thinking carefully. If they left, the jailer, who would have been executed for their escape, would die. Instead, they stayed and shared the gospel with him and his household — all were saved and baptized.

Here's the account from Acts 16:22-36 (NIV):

22 The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods.

23 After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully.

24 When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening.

26 Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose.

27 The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped.

28 But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

29 The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas.

30 He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."

32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.

33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized.

34 The jailer brought them into his home and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

35 When it was daylight, the magistrates sent the police with the order to let Paul and Silas go.

36 The jailer told Paul, "The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace."

If Paul and Silas had left immediately, they would have lost the jailer and his family, which was the whole purpose of their mission. They chose to save rather than just escape.

So, brothers and sisters, not every chance to strike your enemy is

God's will. Not every door God opens should be used without wisdom. The person who insulted, humiliated, hurt, or stole from you—if God puts them in your hands, that's not the time to destroy. Use that opportunity to save a soul, not to destroy. That's what God wants to see in us.

There's a story of a preacher who was also a prophet. Once, while preaching, an angel told him to look at the back of the church. He saw a man and a woman committing a sinful act in the middle of the service. Angry, the preacher was about to confront them, but the angel said, "Say a word and I will execute it immediately." Meaning he could have called for their instant judgment.

But something changed in his heart—compassion rose up and he said, "I forgive you." After the service, he heard an inner voice say, "That's what I wanted to hear from you." Because of that forgiveness, those people later repented and turned to God sincerely.

See? Avoid preaching a gospel of vengeance and destruction. If you refuse to forgive, one day you might offend God, and He won't forgive you.

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