

Hatfields And McCoys (Forgiveness) (Troublemakers) (Satan)

*If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, **4** they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions I Timothy 6:3-4*

The Basic Bible Truth

To live at peace in this world, requires the ability to forgive others. That is very difficult, if not impossible, to do without God being involved. We may think we are forgiving, but are we able to forget as well, and never remember the thing again?

The Object

A Re-enactment Of The Famous Feud
A Small Sign Labeled “Hatfields”
A Small Sign Labeled “McCoys”
Some Blue Paper
A Trash Bag Full Of Rolls Of Toilet Paper



Typically, I split the classroom in half. I place half of the chairs on one side of the room, and the other half on the other side. They are set up facing each other, usually about 10 feet apart. Using the blue paper, I cut a somewhat meandering “creek” between the two families. Students are allowed to sit anywhere they like. The two sides of the “river” are clearly marked as Hatfield or McCoy.

The Lesson

This lesson requires some effort on the presenter’s part. I start by grabbing an empty chair, setting it up to the side of the Hatfields group, facing them, and then sit down and talk to the group. Just basic chit chat. For example, “Hi, how’re you? I’m fine. I like you people. You’re good people. Kinda peaceful over

here on this side of the river. Well, I just wanted to stop in and say hi. I'm gonna go across the river now and see that other group over there. Bye". I then go and talk to the McCoys in the very same manner. But during this whole ordeal, I act totally like the other group isn't listening in on our conversation. For the next 15 minutes, I constantly go back and forth between the two groups, talking, but very, very gradually introducing issues of contention. For example, on one visit I might add that I "heard" something bad about the other group, and I'm going to go check it out. Of course I tell the other group the same thing. Then it becomes "I'm pretty sure its all true", then "It is true", then "How can you trust people like that?", then "They are bad people, you can tell by their eyes.", then "Never trust a Hatfield (or McCoy)", then "They are truly despicable people, horrible people. You've heard all the rumors, well, they're true!"

I begin each new conversation with each group with the same phrase, "Hi. How're you?" The repetition gets really old and funny as you go along. The key to this is to gradually escalate your bad opinion about the other group, taking little steps here and there to increase your repugnance towards the other group. And of course, treat both sides the same. When you have sufficiently berated the other group to the point of total disdain, sneakily pass out to the back row a roll of toilet paper to each person, agreeing that on command, they are to throw it toward that offensive group across the river. Do the same with the other group. Now both groups are probably into the idea that they are the superior group and the other are despicable, and you have successfully armed both groups for a confrontation. On command, they start throwing TP around. It can get pretty chaotic in a very big hurry. When the war has gone on long enough, call a truce and tell the real story of the Hatfields and the McCoys and their stupid feud that raged for many years.

The Hatfield and McCoy Feud

1. The Hatfields, led by "Devil Anse" Hatfield, were of English descent, rich, and lived on the east side of the Tug Fork of the Big Sandy River.
2. The McCoys, led by Randolph McCoy, were of Irish descent and anything but wealthy. They lived on the west side of the river.
3. Asa McCoy fought for the Union, and in 1865, Vance Hatfield killed him. Everyone thought he deserved it, by the way.
4. A hog. In 1878 an argument about who owned a hog ensued. Floyd Hatfield said it was his, and Randolph McCoy also claimed ownership. Bill Staton, who was related to both families, agreed that it was Floyd's animal. Judge Anderson Hatfield awarded ownership to Floyd.
5. In 1880, Sam and Paris McCoy killed Staton, but are acquitted on grounds of self-defense.
6. Later that year, Roseanna McCoy fell in love with Devil Anse' Hatfield's son, Johnse, and she moved to the east side of the river. A short time later, she reconsidered her decision and moved back home, but Johnse promptly followed.
7. Johnse then got arrested for bootlegging. Roseanna rode through the night to get word to Devil Anse Hatfield about what had just happened, and he organized a rescue party and rode back that same night on a rescue mission.
8. Shortly thereafter, Roseanna announced that she was pregnant, but Johnse decided he didn't want her after all and married her cousin Nancy in 1881.
9. Roseanna's brothers, Tolbert, Pharmer, and Bud were outraged at their sister's treatment and attacked Devil Anse' brother Ellison. They shot him at least once and stabbed him 36 times.
10. Devil Anse got the family together and arrested the three brothers and then, 20 Hatfields joined in the execution. In total, the three brothers were shot 50 times.
11. They are indicted by a court of law for their actions, but never caught. This angered the McCoys and they convinced Perry Cline who was married to Martha McCoy, to add rewards for their capture. Cline hated the Hatfields due to a completely unrelated lawsuit years previous in which he had lost 1,000's of acres of timber.
12. The reward money offer infuriated the Hatfields.

13. In 1886, Jeff McCoy killed a mail carrier, and was pursued by the constable at the time, Cap Hatfield. Cap shot him while he was running down the banks of the river.
14. The peak of the feud was the 1888 New Year's Night Massacre. Cap Hatfield and Jim Vance led a group of the Hatfields to surround the McCoy cabin and they opened fire on the sleeping family. They then promptly set fire to the cabin. As the McCoys tried to escape, two children were shot and the wife was beaten severely. The remaining McCoys then all moved away.
15. During the 11 years of the feud, more than a dozen people died and 10 were wounded, all in the name of revenge.

As Christians, we may be tempted to seek revenge at times. When someone wrongs us, our natural instinct is to get even. But Jesus taught to turn the other cheek, and go the extra mile. Love does not hurt others—ever. So what are we to do? One of the names of Jesus, a title really, is the term Redeemer. That word carries within itself an Old Testament thought that we would do well to remember.

Israel had bid farewell to the oppression of Egypt and was traveling through the desert. God was leading them day by day, by way of a cloud. A group of probably millions, with no government or laws to order their new society by, relied upon God absolutely. With Moses as their leader, challenged by a multi-faceted social structure with many types of personalities, success would be a miracle. Remember, most of these people were Israelites, but few had been followers of God until witnessing the judgment of the mighty hand of God upon Egypt. At Mt. Sinai, they received from God a complete set of laws to live by, simply known to them as “The Law”. This set of laws governed every aspect of their normal lives, and especially, their worship of God. Through the Law, they would learn right from wrong, good from bad, and live accordingly.

Jesus said in the New Testament that He had come to fulfill the Law, not do away with it. That statement reinforces the idea that much of the Law pointed to, or foreshadowed, the coming Messiah, our Redeemer, Jesus. To a Hebrew, the New Testament term of redeemer would be more accurately defined as kinsman-redeemer. The Old Testament law of the kinsman-redeemer provides some interesting insights into the concept of calling Jesus our Redeemer.

The kinsman-redeemer was a respected individual family member, specifically appointed by each family to their position of responsibility. In the event of someone in the family falling into trouble of any kind, it was the duty of the kinsman-redeemer to exact justice. Remember, there were no acting, law enforcement officials in the entire nation of Israel. Say, for example, a family member was murdered. It was the kinsman-redeemer's responsibility to solve the crime, track down the perpetrator, and exact justice.

If we call Jesus our Redeemer, that name takes us directly to this Old Testament law. It is the basis for what Jesus said about “turning the other cheek”. It is not our job to retaliate. We do not have the authority to punish. It is the kinsman-redeemer's obligation to take care of that for us. God has said, “Vengeance is mine.” We should understand that extends directly toward our circumstances. God will take care of enforcing His rules. We need only to sit back and let Him fulfill His duty.