

Bitter

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[0 : 00] A pastor's reflections, bitter, Exodus 1, 13 and 14. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor, and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick and in all manner of service in the field.

Romans 12, 14. Bless them which persecute you. Bless and curse not. Ephesians 4, 31. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice. This fallen world is filled with the bitterness that has resulted from a sin-filled people. There are experiences and circumstances that will not be pleasant or enjoyable, but in fact quite bitter. Being unjustly taken advantage of or unjustly wronged is a very bitter experience. And in a world filled with sin, these experiences are unfortunately unavoidable.

At some point, we will each face the pain and heartache of a bitter experience. In Exodus chapter 1, the people of Israel have just entered into a very bitter season of life within the nation of Egypt.

[1 : 19] From Israel's perspective, the behavior they are experiencing from the Egyptians is completely uncalled for. It's unjust and unforgivable. Israel is under the heavy bondage and bitter treatment of the Egyptians.

And yet, no matter how bitter the situation, God's heart is that the hearts of His people would not reflect the bitterness of the circumstances, but would instead reflect His heart of grace and forgiveness.

Matthew 5, 44-45. 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, that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.

In a bitter situation, it is much easier to allow our hearts to reflect the bitterness of the situation than the forgiveness of God's heart. As fallen people in a fallen world, it is easy to respond with our old nature, bitterness, instead of our new nature, grace.

However, as unforgivable as circumstances may be, that does not alleviate the responsibility of God's people from acting like God's people. Romans 5, 20.

[2 : 40] But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Only the new nature of Christ can react to sin with love. Only a new heart of grace can have the capacity to reflect forgiveness instead of bitterness.

And only the Holy Spirit can heal my wounded spirit when the bitterness of this world is trying to bring me into the bondage of bitterness. Today, remember who your Heavenly Father is and that He doesn't leave His children alone to respond to bitterness in their own efforts.

He is right there alongside us. and within us to ensure that our hearts reflect His heart. Father, thank you for enabling me by your grace to escape the bitterness of sin.

Thank you that through Jesus, I not only escape the bitter penalty of sin, but also the bitter response to sin. Help me today in every bitter circumstance to reflect your heart of grace.

Amen.