The High Cost Of “Getting Even.”
1 Peter 3:8-17

Introduction:
A. How often have we heard, “It is just not fair?” How often, “Life is not fair?”
B. How often have we applied, “I don’t get angry, I just get even.”
1. May be done as in response to practical joke.
2. Must not be done in matters of serious consequence.
C. We must learn to live with injustice in many forms from many sources.
1. Bodily harm and suffering. (Jesus and Stephen).
2. Slander, reviling (abusive words), unjust criticism (Matt. 5:10-12).
3. From oppressive governments and societies.
5. From honest, but mistaken people. (John 16:2; Gal. 1:13; 1 Tim. 1:13).
6. In and out of the church. (2 Cor. 11:26).
D. We must learn to live without retaliation for injustice. (Rom. 12:17-21).
E. We must learn to not retaliate for five reasons given in our text:

Discussion:
I. Retaliation Is Beyond Our Calling. (v. 9).
A. Called to give and receive blessing. (V. 9; Mt. 5:44; Rom. 12:20,21)
B. Not Called to take vengeance on injustice.
1. Can only administer limited correction - not vengeance.
2. Cannot retaliate in word or deed. (V. 9).
C. God keeps vengeance for himself — relieves us of responsibility. (Rom. 12:19).
1. Civil government is God’s agent for vengeance (Rom. 13:1-5) - Christians can appeal to it.
2. Christ will return as God’s final agent for vengeance. (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

II. Retaliation Destroys Our Happiness. (v. 10)
A. May give some temporary satisfaction.
B. But, it will ultimately destroy peace of mind - keeps us agitated.

III. Retaliation Hinders Our Prayers. (vv. 11, 12).
A. Need ears open for forgiveness. (1 John 1:8).
B. Need ears open for protection. (Matt. 6:9-13).

IV. Retaliation Is Unnecessary To Our Welfare.
A. Because no lasting harm can come to us. (V. 13; Rom. 8:35-39).
B. Because we have a better defense (vv. 14-16).

V. Retaliation Nullifies To Our Innocence. (v. 17).
A. Retaliation invites retaliation - Christian should break cycle.
C. No longer following Christ - “just for unjust” (v. 18).

Conclusion:
A. Remember: Life is not “fair.”
B. Remember: God neither expects nor allows Christians to mete out justice for mistreatment.
C. Remember: God has reserved vengeance for himself.