

Summary

This sermon is part of a series called "Don't Take the Bait," which explores the traps of offense that can derail our lives. Pastor Jason focuses specifically on the trap of revenge, explaining that while it is natural and even understandable to desire justice when we have been wronged, taking revenge is never the answer. Drawing from Romans 12 and the teachings of Jesus in Luke 6, the message makes clear that revenge does not heal wounds. It only reopens and aggravates them, keeping bitterness alive in our hearts. Pastor Jason challenges listeners to resist the cultural and instinctive pull toward retaliation by instead "tagging God in" to fight on their behalf. Citing both Scripture and modern research, the sermon argues that God is better equipped to bring justice than we are, and that our role is to release our right to revenge, trust God with the outcome, and redirect our energy toward doing good. The call to action is practical: name who you want revenge against, surrender that desire to God, and invest your energy into something life-giving instead.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You today as a group of people who have all experienced hurt, disappointment, and the temptation to hold onto offense. As we open Your Word and discuss what it means to release our right to revenge, we ask that You soften our hearts and open our minds. Help us not to simply hear these truths but to truly receive what You want each of us to take away from this time together. Do the work only You can do in us today. In Jesus' name, amen.

Ice Breaker

What is a movie or TV show that features a revenge storyline, and did you find yourself rooting for the person seeking revenge? Why or why not?

Key Verses

- Luke 6:27-28
- Romans 12:2

- Romans 12:17
- Romans 12:19
- Romans 12:21
- Genesis 4:23

Questions

- Pastor Jason said that 'avoiding offense is impossible, but living offended is a choice.' Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not?
- The sermon described revenge as a trap. Have you ever pursued revenge or seen someone else pursue it? What was the outcome?
- Pastor Jason drew a distinction between wanting justice and taking revenge, saying it is right to want justice but wrong to take revenge. How do you personally distinguish between those two things in your own life?
- Romans 12:19 tells us to 'leave room for God's wrath' and trust that vengeance belongs to Him. What makes it difficult to trust God with justice rather than handling it ourselves?
- Pastor Jason used the image of tag team wrestling to describe what it looks like to 'tag God in.' What does that actually look like in a practical, day-to-day situation where you feel wronged?
- Research cited in the sermon showed that people who took revenge were not able to move past their bitterness, while those who did not take revenge actually healed more effectively. Does that surprise you? How does it change the way you think about revenge?
- The sermon challenged us to redirect our energy toward something good rather than toward getting even. What is one area of your life (marriage, parenting, career, friendships) where you could invest that energy instead?
- Pastor Jason mentioned that doing good to an enemy gives them a choice about what to do with that kindness. How does thinking about it that way change how you feel about showing kindness to someone who has hurt you?

Life Application

This week, take the three-part challenge from the sermon. First, write down the name of a person or situation where you are holding onto a desire for revenge. Be honest with yourself. Second, pray specifically and intentionally to "tag God in," releasing your right to revenge and asking Him to handle justice in His way and His timing. Third, identify one concrete way you can

redirect your energy toward something good, whether that is investing in a relationship, a personal goal, or even an act of kindness toward the person who hurt you.

Key Takeaways

- Avoiding offense is impossible, but choosing to live offended is a decision we make. The trap of revenge is one of the most dangerous places that offense can lead us.
- It is right to want justice, but it is wrong to take revenge. God is a just God who sees everything, and He has reserved vengeance for Himself because He is better at it than we are.
- Modern research confirms what Jesus taught all along: revenge does not heal wounds. It reopens and aggravates them, keeping bitterness alive far longer than if we had let go.
- When we take revenge, we leave God out of the situation. Leaving room for God means actively inviting Him into the space and trusting Him to act on our behalf, like tagging a partner into a wrestling match.
- We are called to overcome evil with good, not with more evil. Redirecting our energy toward something life-giving breaks the cycle of bitterness and opens the door to genuine freedom.

Ending Prayer

Lord, we are grateful for the time we have had together today to wrestle with these truths. We acknowledge that releasing our right to revenge is not easy, and that for some of us, the wounds are deep and the pain is real. We ask that You meet each person in this room exactly where they are. Give us the courage to name what we have been holding onto, the faith to tag You in and trust You with the outcome, and the wisdom to redirect our energy toward what is good. Remind us that Your plans for our lives are too important to be wasted in the trap of bitterness. We trust You with the justice we cannot deliver ourselves. In Jesus' name, amen.