



While riding through downtown Fort Payne one Saturday in June, I notice the streets were barricaded and traffic was diverted away from the court house by armed men in SWAT uniforms. The Police seemed too calm for there to be a true emergency like a hostage situation or an armed standoff, so I am very curious. We ask one of the people directing traffic what was going on and he refused to say; now I am really curious.

Since we were only going a few of blocks past the road block, I grab my camera and ask to be let out so I can inquire further as to this strange scene. I walk up to another check point and ask, "What's going on?" They tell me that it is a Klan Rally. I ask if it is possible to get closer and they ask me if I am for or against this group. I tell them I am definitely against them. They ask about my camera bag, I show them its contents; he asks what I intend to do, so I tell them I hope to produce something to oppose them on my web site. He smiles with a big smile and then says, "If I was you I would want to stand here, to get the best shots." So here I stand, the only protestor at a KKK Rally in Fort Payne. Later, I was joined by a black man and his son, and then we were three.

Many things about this awful day I will never forget. The hatred and revulsion that consumed each one that stood to speak; the arrogance and disgust in their voices; the look of self-importance and superiority in their faces all added to my unbelief that someone could honestly believe what they were saying. I was ashamed to be so close to them and be a white man; afraid someone would think I could be like these men.

Of all the things I saw and heard on this terrible day, perhaps the most disturbing was when one speaker stood and held up a Bible and cursed all the preachers in this area who preached, "This red, yellow, black and white crap" and to hear all their members raise their outstretched hands and chant, "White Power". It broke my heart to see so many people consumed and enslaved by hatred. Prejudice like an awful drug had addicted them and made them its slave.

Hatred always does that to any person who allows it a place in his heart. To carry a grudge, to nurse resentment and allow animosity a place in our lives turns into a horrible burden to carry. It destroys us from the inside and poisons every relationship in our lives, even the one with our creator. Let us examine our hearts and lives today, is there a grudge? Are we resentful over something someone has said or done and we are refusing to let it go? Do you have a friend (Matthew 5:23-26) you no longer speak to because of a grudge? Why don't we let it go and find freedom? Pick up the phone, write the letter or go to your friend and break the chains that are holding you down. Find Forgiveness; What have you got to lose?

**Something to think about:**

- There is no torment like the inner torment of an unforgiving spirit. It refuses to be soothed, it refuses to be healed, it refuses to forget.
- Hatred is like burning down your own house to get rid of a rat.
- Hell is where no one has anything in common with anybody else except the fact that they all hate one another and cannot get away from one another and from themselves.
- Love makes everything lovely; hate concentrates itself on the one thing hated.
- Hatred is the coward's revenge for being intimidated.
- Skin color does not matter to God, for he is looking upon the heart. . . . When men are standing at the foot of the cross, there are no racial barriers.
- Jesus has a family in an interracial neighborhood called heaven.

Enjoying my freedom

Rickey Moore

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