

## Put On Compassion

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Communion / Forgiveness; Conflict; Body of Christ / Colossians 3:12–14

Dwelling together with a family inevitably brings conflict after some time. There are no families without conflict. Yet, conflict does not have to lead to all out strife. This sermon is about the body dwelling together in compassion and forgiving love.

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Corrie Ten Boom and her family resisted the Nazis by hiding Jews in their home. They were ultimately discovered and sent to a concentration camp. Corrie barely survived until the end of the war; her family members died in captivity. Seared by this terrible trial by fire, Corrie's faith in God also survived, and she spent much of her time in the post-war years traveling in Germany and elsewhere in Europe, sharing her faith in Christ.

On one occasion in 1947, while speaking in a church in Munich, she noticed a balding man in a gray overcoat near the rear of the basement room. She had been speaking on the subject of God's forgiveness, but her heart froze within her when she recognized the man. She could picture him as she had seen him so many times before, in his blue Nazi uniform with the visored cap—the cruelest of the guards at the Ravensbruck Camp where Corrie had suffered the most horrible indignities, and where her own sister had died. Yet here he was, at the end of her talk, coming up the aisle toward her with his hand thrust out. “Thank you for your fine message,” he said. “How wonderful it is to know that all our sins are at the bottom of the sea!”

Yes, Corrie had said that. She had spoken so easily of God's forgiveness, but here was a man whom she despised and condemned with every fiber of her being. She couldn't take his hand! She couldn't extend forgiveness to this Nazi oppressor! She realized that this man didn't remember her—how could he remember one prisoner among thousands?

“You mentioned Ravensbruck,” the man continued, his hand still extended. “I was a guard there. I'm ashamed to admit it, but it's true. But since then, I've come to know Jesus as my Lord and Savior. It has been hard for me to forgive

myself for all the cruel things I did but I know that God has forgiven me. And please, if you would, I would like to hear from your lips too that God has forgiven me.” And Corrie recorded her response in her book:

I stood there—I whose sins had again and again been forgiven—and could not forgive. It could not have been many seconds that he stood there—hand held out—but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do. For I had to do it. I knew that. It was as simple and as horrible as that. And still I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. And so, woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, and sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes. “I forgive you, brother,” I cried. “With all my heart!”

For a long moment we grasped each other’s hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God’s love so intensely as I did then.

## Ought Against You

### **Matthew 5:23–24 ESV**

So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

- Communion
  - Offering on Altar
- Reconciliation

- Man first
  - God second
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- Seek to be Forgiven

## The Lord's Prayer

### **Matthew 6:12** ESV

and forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

- Key idea
- Jesus explains:

### **Matthew 6:14–15** ESV

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

- Condition?
- We are forgiven if...
  - we are forgiving...
- But how???

## Matt 18 Approach

- Jesus explains
  - process of reconciliation
  -

### **Matthew 18:15–18** ESV

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

- Steps
  - 1 on 1
  - 1 or 2 Elders
  - Church Ministers
  - Removed From Body
  
- Skipping First Steps
  - Pastor.. so-n-so did...
  
- I stopped coming to church because....
  
- Wrong is body
  - not left to fester
  - dealt with
    - 1 on 1
    - with elder
    - whole church
  
- Wrongs committed

- not private
- public issue
- effects whole church
- Those Unforgiven
  - Can't Function in Body...?

A young boy in Korea was a houseboy for some American soldiers. Sometimes they thought it was funny to play harmless jokes on him. They would tease him. They would tie his shoe strings together. They would lock him out of the house.

Eventually they realized that their practical jokes were not viewed as funny by the boy so they apologized. He said, "That's okay, I will stop spitting in your soup now."

## Parables on Forgiveness

### **Matthew 18:21-35 ESV**

Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

"Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to

him who owed him ten thousand talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

- Previously
  - Unforgiven don't enter
    - (Unrepentant)
  - Unforgiving don't enter
    - Grudge Holders)
- God's Church
  - requires reconciliation

Dr. John R. Rice, a great evangelist now with the Lord, was asked to conduct a revival meeting at a Baptist church in Woodbine, Texas. Divisions and strife had broken the heart of the pastor until he had resigned and left. The county missionary, hoping to see the church revived and God's work made prosperous, asked Dr. Rice to come and preach the revival services. He found the whole community divided. One or more deacons had had fist fights in the quarrel that had reached nearly every home. Many had taken a vow never to return to the little church.

Dr. Rice never did find out most of the details of the division. But with a burden in his soul, he preached against sin, urged God's people to clean up their lives, and pleaded with them to make peace with their neighbors. Night after night he preached. Those who had been angry at others were now angry with him.

One morning, a woman in the community started to make a telephone call to tell Dr. Rice just what she thought of all his meddling in their affairs. But her nineteen year old son stopped her and said, "Mother, you are wrong! I have just been out in the woods to pray. I know Brother Rice is right. If we Christians do not get right with each other, we can never have a revival. I for one am going to try to get right." His mother did not make the phone call.

In the next service, Dr. Rice called for a time of testimony. With tears streaming down her face, one woman rose to beg forgiveness of another woman with whom she had quarreled. The other woman swiftly rose and came to meet her. They put their arms around one another and wept in the aisle. Confessions came from all parts of the building. The deep moving of God was upon the people as they began to make restitution, ask forgiveness, and seek Christian fellowship again.

That afternoon the news went like wildfire. That night the little church building was crowded. People came to church who had not been there in months—some who had vowed they would never enter the building again. From the very beginning of the service the Holy Spirit was there. Dr. Rice preached the Gospel, and at the invitation men and women accepted Jesus as their Saviour with tears streaming down their faces. Dozens of people were saved, hundreds of Christians were revived, and people came from miles to fill



that little church for the rest of the meeting that lasted four weeks!

- We can't grow without it.

## False Concepts

A Sabbath School teacher had just concluded her lesson and wanted to make sure she had made her point. She said, "Can anyone tell me what you must do before you can obtain forgiveness of sin?"

There was a short pause and then, from the back of the room, a small boy spoke up. "Sin," he said.

### **Forgive and Forget**

### **Sins Recorded**

#### **Jeremiah 17:1 *ESV***

"The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; with a point of diamond it is engraved on the tablet of their heart, and on the horns of their altars,

### **Sins Covered**

### **Sins Blotted Out**

**Acts 3:19 ESV**

Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out,

- Condition?
  - Repentance

**Psalms 51:1-2 ESV**

Have mercy on me, O God,

according to your steadfast love;

according to your abundant mercy

blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,

and cleanse me from my sin!

- genuine repentance

**Sins or Name****Revelation 3:5 ESV**

The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

## **They Must Be Sorry**

### **Matthew 18:21–22** **ESV**

Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

- They really repentant?
  - no.
- Must be forgiven?
  - yes...
  - but not forgotten.

## **False Forgiveness**

- Stuffing it.

# True Forgiveness

- For Self
- Releasing Burden of Resentment

## Asking vs. Granting

- Some naturally ask
- Some naturally grant
- Some naturally both
- Some naturally neither

## Conclusion

### **Colossians 3:12-14 ESV**

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

There was a king who had suffered much from his rebellious subjects. But one day they surrendered their arms, threw themselves at his feet, and begged for mercy. He pardoned them all. One of his friends said to him, "Did you not say that every rebel should die?"

"Yes," replied the king, "but I see no rebels here."

# Appeal

- Seek to be forgiven
- Seek to give forgiveness
- Revel in God's forgiveness