

Expel Resentment

Love Like Jesus, Message #02

INTRODUCTION

Love Like Jesus. That represents the name of a series we began Sunday evening, and it flows from our vision for 2023 to grow to love God and love others better. We want to define and demonstrate God's love so we can detail how we can reflect His love by giving Him space to love others through us.

Growing in love necessitates that we build some positive character in our lives. Still, it also means that we need to get rid of some things that will hinder love, or - more definitively - we need to yield to the Spirit so that He can remove some things that will hinder love. Let me show you a clear biblical example in 1 John 4. For those of you who have not been with us, our adult small group has been diving into the love of God in 1 John 4 for a couple of weeks now, and we'll continue to do so for several more weeks. We would love for you to join us! Look at 1 John 4:18.

BIBLE

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

1 John 4:18 KJV

<https://bible.com/bible/1/1jn.4.18.KJV>

INTRODUCTION

Fear and God's love cannot exist in the same place.

Similarly, Jesus's parable in Matthew 18 teaches something else that cannot exist alongside God's love.

Jesus showed His disciples His desire and design for them and later His church to live in forgiveness. Three times as the Rabbis taught and seven times as Peter suggested were insufficient to meet what God wants for His children today. In truth, He does not desire us to account for forgiveness but to live it. He illustrated this with the parable in our text. Through it, He first showed the depth of man's sin through the servant's debt, followed by the greatness of God's love through the forgiveness of the King. As we return to Matthew 18, let's read verses 28-30, followed by verse 33.

BIBLE

“But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?”

Matthew 18:28-30, 33 KJV

<https://bible.com/bible/1/mat.18.28-33.KJV>

EXPLANATION

After vividly illustrating the depth of my sin and the greatness of God’s love and forgiveness, Jesus identified the still-fallen and still-flawed character of the servant. This servant, who had been forgiven so great, did not respond to his fellow servant the way his King responded to him.

APPLICATION

Can I pause for just a moment and remind you of this biblical truth...forgiven does not equal flawless. If you are a child of God and a follower of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven despite the reality that you are flawed. The righteousness of Christ has been applied to your account. You are justified, declared righteous, by God in heaven’s courtroom. He sees you through the veil of the righteousness of Christ. However, right here - you are still prone to sin, and so am I.

EXPLANATION

There are characteristics in this parable that we need to see before we dig into the applications.

The unforgiven servant the forgiven servant confronted and cast into prison was a fellow servant. This is noteworthy because it identifies a servant of the same King. Carrying out the picture would indicate that both are believers meaning that one believer was indebted to another. Ultimately, this is not about financial indebtedness but of action through having committed a wrong. This is further indicated by the context of the parable earlier in Matthew chapter 18.

While not even comparable to the debt owed by the forgiven servant to the King, it still represents a significant debt equal to one-third of the average annual income. Sometimes, the hurts that we experience at the hands of others are substantial, profound, and life-changing. At the same time, just as we minimize our sins, we maximize our hurts.

The forgiven servant treated the unforgiving servant legally. Throwing him in debtors prison until he should pay everything he was owed was his legal right. Yet, his legal right did not justify his behavior.

What produced this response from the forgiven servant?

Through the teaching of Jesus in this parable, let's discover four practical activities that will help us expel resentment.

Resentment is "a feeling of indignant displeasure or persistent ill will at something regarded as a wrong, insult, or injury" (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/resentment>). It has also been explained as a complex, multilayered emotion that has been described as a mixture of disappointment, disgust, anger, and fear that is often elicited in the face of insult and injury (previously found this explanation, but did not record where).

ILLUSTRATION

WebMD, a health site that aims to provide accurate and helpful medical information, produced an article on resentment. In the article, seven signs of resentment are provided. They are 1) Recurring Negative Feelings, 2) Inability to Stop Thinking About the Event, 3) Inability to Stop Thinking About the Event, 4) Fear or Avoidance, 5) A Tense Relationship, 6) Feeling Invisible or Inadequate, and 7) Inability to Let Go of Anger (<https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/signs-resentment>).

EXPLANATION

Every time we experience hurt, we have the opportunity to develop resentment.

ILLUSTRATION

I have seen on Sunday mornings that we have many coffee drinkers. I love coffee! Hot, cold, iced, with different flavors of syrups or creamers, with cold foam or whipped cream...I love it. However, I have no desire to drink bitter coffee. I know some people think all coffee is bitter, but those who are coffee snobs know the difference between good smooth coffee and bitter coffee.

EXPLANATION

In life, there are times when our fellow man offers us a bitter cup. Anytime we experience hurt, there is an opportunity to develop resentment. It's like we are being offered a bitter cup. We know we shouldn't take that cup, we shouldn't drink it, but sometimes we do, and when we do, resentment and bitterness poison our lives. We need to determine to expel bitterness.

How?

1. REMEMBER THAT GOD KNOWS ALL ABOUT IT.

APPLICATION

When dealing with hurt, it can be discouraging when we feel that others do not know the whole story. We've been hurt and suffering, and no one knows what we are going through. No one else knows what someone else has said or done. It feels like a burden we carry ourselves, all by ourselves.

There is One Who knows all about it. God knows the whole story. He sees it all. He feels it all. Even if no one else does, God does.

Psalm 38 reveals a man whose heart was broken. While experiencing a broken heart, he spoke of his solitude. His enemies set traps for him and talked about him behind his back to hurt him (see Ps. 38:12). Not only that, those who loved him, friends and family alike, distanced themselves from him (see Ps. 38:11). This same man knew that God knew his pain (see Ps. 38:9), heard his cry (see Ps. 38:15), became his hope (see Ps. 38:15), came near to him (see Ps. 38:21), and stood as his deliverer (see Ps. 38:22).

Whatever you have faced, are facing, or will face, God knows all about it. Resort to Him, run to Him, rest in Him.

2. RECOGNIZE THAT WE WILL ALL STAND BEFORE GOD.

APPLICATION

I want you to think about two Scriptures: Romans 14:10-12 and 1 Peter 1:21-24.

BIBLE

“But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, And every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

Romans 14:10-12 KJV

<https://bible.com/bible/1/rom.14.10-12.KJV>

BIBLE

“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”

1 Peter 2:21-24 KJV

<https://bible.com/bible/1/1pe.2.21-24.KJV>

APPLICATION

These passages reveal that everyone will stand before God and that God will judge righteously, putting all right that has been wrong.

What does this have to do with my hurt and the bitter cup?

You and I have to be able to trust God with our hurts. We need to commit it to God, believing He will put right what is wrong. It may be when we stand before Him that He does this. Can we trust Him with that?

3. REFLECT ON THE FORGIVENESS YOU HAVE THROUGH CHRIST.

ILLUSTRATION

Corrie Ten Boom worked against the Nazis in World War Two, hiding Jews in her home. When she was caught, she was sent to a concentration camp where she was stripped of her dignity, saw her father and her sister (Betsie) die, and suffered more at other people's hands than we could imagine. This is precisely why her encounter with forgiveness is so memorable:

“It was at a church service in Munich that I saw him, the former S.S. man who had stood guard at the shower door in the processing center at Ravensbruck. He was the first of our actual jailers that I had seen since that time. And suddenly, it was all there – the roomful of mocking men, the heaps of clothing, Betsie’s pain-blanching face.”

He came up to me as the church was emptying, beaming and bowing. 'How grateful I am for your message, Fraulein.' He said. 'To think that, as you say, He has washed my sins away!'

His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who preached so often to the people in Bloemendaal the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side.

Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him.

I tried to smile, I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed a silent prayer. Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me your forgiveness.

As I took his hand the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me.

And so I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world's healing hinges, but on His. When He tells us to love our enemies, He gives, along with the command, the love itself."

Forgiveness can be challenging, but it is not in our forgiveness "that the world's healing hinges, but on his." With our forgiveness, we can participate in the love that Jesus extends to the world.

APPLICATION

Why reflect on the forgiveness you have through Christ? Because it is the power of Christ to forgive you, that will enable you to forgive another. You won't do it through your goodness or the power of your love. But you "can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth" you.

Look at the question of Matthew 18:33 again.

BIBLE

"shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?"

Matthew 18:33 KJV

<https://bible.com/bible/1/mat.18.33.KJV>

“Compassion” and “pity” are the same original word. God forgave you everything. He loves you through everything. He supplies grace for everything. Now reflect to others what you have received from Him.

4. REFUSE TO DRINK THE BITTER CUP.

APPLICATION

When someone offers you the bitter cup, determine beforehand that you will not drink it.

CONCLUSION

If you are holding on to resentment from some past hurt or find yourself prone to resentment when you experience hurt, determine to expel resentment. Remember... Recognize...Reflect...Refuse.

Christ Follower

Expel resentment towards others through reflecting compassion to others, just as you have received compassion from Jesus. He forgave you everything. He loves you through everything. He supplies grace for everything. Reflect what you receive to all around you.

Christ Seeker

Jesus forgives everything. You are not and cannot be too bad for His forgiveness and salvation. Believe in Him, and He will save you.