

# Why Forgiveness Is Difficult

Luke 17:1-10

Pastor David Ax

Wednesday, February 6, 2019

MEDIA REFERENCE NUMBER GSX663

**I don't like to admit that there are impossibilities in life, but there are.**

- Reading with your eyes closed
- Round square or a square circle
- Popping bubble wrap

## **Offences and the Offender (1-2)**

*It is impossible that no offences come*

**Offences are not differences...** this passage doesn't give an excuse for being "thin skinned."

If you like cats and someone else likes dogs

If you have a Ford and someone likes Chevrolet –

That is NOT an attack on who you are, it's a statement of personality and preferences.

*"That's hurtful," was it really?*

## **Did you ever set up traps when you were a kid?**

Tied my sister's door closed with a jump rope

Taped a balloon and safety pin to the back of my door

**Offences:** stumbling block/rock, the movable stick or trigger of a trap, a person or thing by which one is entrapped drawn into error or sin.

## **It sparks the flesh - flint**

(the trap of bitterness, resentment and ultimately unforgiveness)

**It can be something vindictive and intentional**

- Cold shoulder
- Death stare
- Leaving someone out
- Spreading slander/gossip,
- Lying, manipulation and deceit.
- Vandalizing property, etc.

**Offense:**

- enticed to sin, (Not drinking, drugs or sexual immorality)
- cause to fall – tied their shoes together or kick their feet when they are walking
- To act in anger, frustration, jealousy/envy
- To cause someone to judge another unfairly, (gossip does to the listener)
- Fall away from fellowship – Crows kill their own

The primary focus of this passage isn't on what the offense was, the focus is on what it does to the person that was offended.

**It can also be something innocent but wrong, hence the danger of sarcasm**

**Ephesians 4:29** Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

This isn't a get out of jail free card for the offender, there is a great warning that we can pass over if we are not careful.

*(1-2) But woe to him through whom they do come!*

**(Caution, danger, heads up)**

*Better to have a millstone hung around your neck, and were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones to be offended.*

**Millstone: 1,500 to 3,000 lbs.**

*The burden that falls on the one doing the offending is greater than you could imagine.*

*But woe to him through whom they do come!*

**Overall... restoration is hard work**

The knot that can't be undone

Fishing pole that explodes

**Galatians 6:7** Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

*"When you have done the offending you'll also do the reaping."*

- Well they should forgive me

- Probably, but you will have to wait while the Lord works that into their life.

**Romans 14:13** Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in *our* brother's way.

**1 John 2:10** He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

**The primary focus** of this passage isn't on what the offense was, the focus is on what it does to the person that was offended and how they are to handle it.

When someone does something that "sparks the flesh, the sin nature," take heed to yourself!

### **TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES.**

**Luke 17:3-4**

**To pay attention and to apply yourself.**

- Requires some intentionality and integrity (it's hard to admit you have been offended)

To bring near. **(Boxer stance)**

**Sometimes translated, beware...**

**Luke 21:34** "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, *and cares of this life*, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.

### **Why take heed?**

When people wrong you, it's within our nature to write them off, to be "done with them."

**Galatians 5:9** A little leaven leavens the whole lump

**Poison in the well**

#### **Dr. Kathy Marshack**

The mind and body connection is very real and very powerful. Our emotions affect our bodies and can cause many physical health problems. Perhaps it's not surprising that new research from Concordia University suggests that feelings of bitterness can have a negative impact on a person's physical health.

*According to Dr. Carsten, "Persistent bitterness may result in global feelings of anger and hostility that, when strong enough, could affect a person's physical health. When harbored for a long time bitterness may forecast patterns of biological dysregulation (a physiological impairment that can affect metabolism, immune response or organ function) and physical disease."*

**Anger is only one letter short of danger**

**Stephen Diamond, Ph.D.**, defines bitterness as "a chronic and pervasive state of smoldering resentment," and deservedly regards it as "one of the most destructive and toxic of human emotions." ... we'll end up becoming victims not so much of anyone else but, principally, of ourselves.

- Anxiety and depression
- Angry or violent acts
- Distrust and a lack of joy

**And all this while the one who offended you is having a great day.**

**So then... Biblically, when someone sets off the sin nature in us, how are we to respond?**

***If your brother sins against you, rebuke him... if he repents forgive him (3)***

(don't just pack up and go home)

***"Rebuke is different than going on an emotionally charged rant."***

**Rebuke:** burdened with fault, to admonish or charge sharply, to show honor

**2 Timothy 4:2** Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

**Godly rebuke carries with it a loving respect,**

It is not driven by self-justification, it is moved along by a desire to bring someone closer to Christ

(Thief on the cross)

**Luke 23:40** But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?"

Fire down from heaven

**Luke 9:55** But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of."

***"Your enemy will stab you in the back, your friend will stab you in the front."***

**Proverbs 27:6** Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful.

- Husbands listening to their wives: they are your help mate, you know.
- Wives, it's generally true... he loves you and it took a long time to bring something up.
- Your friends, they have better things to do than confront you with uncomfortable truth.
- Those older in the Lord, they see things you may not see... give it a listen

***Confrontation isn't a time for self-defense but seeking godly discernment.***

Sammy's Perspective: I must have done something to make them think that.

**If he repents, forgive him (3)**

Sweeping something under the rug is not the same as cleaning it up.

***In order for there to be restoration there must be repentance.***

**Repent:** to change one's mind, for the better, to amend, to abhor your past sins.

**"I repent"**- repentance is a part of the recipe here... it's not a get out of jail free card.

- acknowledgment
- ownership
- commitment to remove it from their life.

Permissions to personal devices

Access to bank account

Freedom to talk you down in the moment of hostility

If they repent, forgive them...

**What does forgiveness look like?**

- Doesn't look like holy conversations behind their back
- Doesn't look like keeping them at arms length because of past sins

**Forgive:** to let go, send away, to leave behind...

Flying off the back of your car – plastic picnic table by fisher price

Take out the trash

It looks like realizing they are a sinner, just like you. And while you may have done what they did, you have done other things to other people and most importantly you have sinned and at times still do sin against a holy God, yet through Christ you are forgiven.

Here is the kicker, this sent the disciples over the top.

***And if he sins against you seven times and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, I repent, you shall forgive him.***

Increase our faith!!! (The only place they requested it)

Sometimes, when faith is lacking... it's an issue of obedience

### **Less faith, mustard seeds and mulberry trees**

**Luke 17:6**

**Jesus is not giving tips on gardening...**

Pulled up by the roots... if the roots are not gone, it will grow back!

**Hebrews 12:15** Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

### **Mustard seeds and mulberry trees**

- The enemy can't keep you from forgiving
- The only person that can keep you from forgiving someone is you
- If you are praying for faith it's possible you need to step out in obedience

***God's people are to cast unforgiveness into the sea rather than put a millstone around our brothers neck and push him into it.***

The greatest hinderance to obedience isn't a lack of faith but an increase in pride.

### More Humility

Luke 17:7-10

The master doesn't take care of the servant, the servant takes care of the master

- The servant isn't thanked for doing his job. It was his job.

You come home from work and make dinner, you don't get the medal of honor for it.

Your kids don't get a party every time they do their homework

Imagine walking into the break room at lunch time and seeing your boss sitting at the table. You don't pull up a seat and expect them to jump to their feet and start cooking and preparing your meal, do you?

### Which you are commanded...

**Matthew 5:24** "leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

**But... we are to be like Christ**

**We want to be like Jesus...**

- In power
- In word
- In holiness
- In forgiving?

**Romans 5:8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (the unmerciful servant in Matthew 18)

**Unprofitable Servants**, we have done what was our **duty** to do

**Church:** just doing what God told you to do

**Life:** just doing what God told you to do.

*It was simply the days assignment given to us by our heavenly Father.*

- Sometimes we are given tasks we are intimidated by.
- Sometimes we are given tasks we look forward to.
- Other time we are given tasks we would rather not be involved in.

When we stand upon the *Pedestal of Pride* rather than sit upon the *Footstool of Humility* we can be certain of one thing, we have put on pause what God is wanting to do in our lives.

Too many servants thinking they are the master

**The key to forgiveness is not so much faith as much as it is humility.**

- We love that we were not on the cross,
- We must embrace that we are not the one on the throne.

**1. Offenses are unavoidable**

**2. Do all that you can not to be the offender, the burden is great**

**3. Rebuke and Forgive – humility is the key!**