

Sermon  SNAPSHOTS



FORGIVENESS

There is a sad truth that sometimes Christ's followers don't act much like Christ. Sometimes the Lord's army has been inflicted with friendly fire. We see examples of this through the New Testament (1 Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 4:2; 2 Timothy 4:10, 14, 16; Luke 15:25-32).

Why does this happen? It will happen when our walk doesn't match our talk. Jesus said that we are the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13). Salt is an enhancement, it gives flavor to our food. We as Christ's followers are to enhance the world around us through the way we live, showing a higher, holy way of living. But when salt has lost its saltiness it is good for nothing. So too it is when Christians have lost the good natured loving kindness we have become useless.

Paul's warning rings true today – Galatians 5:15. We can fight against one another till there's nothing left. Yet Jesus said that others will know we are His disciples by the way we love each other (John 13:35). Things shouldn't be this way. What should we do when we have been wounded by friendly fire? What are the next steps we can take towards forgiveness?

1. Remember What God Has Done for You

- a. Regardless of what wrongs others do to you, our focus must remain on the grace we have received from God (Ephesians 4:32).
- b. In the story of the prodigal son, the older brother was consumed with what his younger brother had done. His negative thinking affected his heart and words.
- c. The longer we focus on what others have done to us the more upset, angry, and bitter we'll become.
- d. The key to maintaining a good attitude when others have hurt you is to stop thinking about what they've done and focus on what God has done for you (1 Peter 1:13).

2. Release Resentment

- a. What words would you use to describe the older brother? Bitter? Hateful? Spiteful?
 - i. Even though the younger brother came home seeking forgiveness, the older brother wouldn't have it.
 - ii. He stood outside in rage, unwilling to forgive.
- b. This situation is similar to the story of Cain and Abel.
 - i. In Genesis 4:6-7 God told Cain to master his anger, or his anger would master him.
 - ii. It is the same for us – every time we are hurt we must choose to overcome our anger or be overcome by our anger.
- c. A Christian does not hold grudges (Matthew 18:35; James 2:13; Ephesians 4:31-32; Colossians 3:12-13).
 - i. Let those hurtful attitudes and thoughts go. Be merciful and gracious like our Lord.

3. Refuse to Retaliate

- a. Paul reminds us we are not to seek our own revenge (Romans 12:19).
- b. The older brother refused to go inside the party. Some today refuse to speak to others, or lash out against others. This is wrong.
- c. Notice – Matthew 5:7-9; Romans 12:14; 1 Peter 3:8-9.
 - i. We are to be those who overcome evil with good, rather than doing further evil
- d. To help us with this:

Find positive ways to handle your anger (Ephesians 4:26)

Do good for others (Matthew 25:34-40)

Pray (Matthew 5:44)

Are you Ready to take the Next Steps to forgiveness?

-Jordan Shouse

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