

“Forgiveness at Home”

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Preacher: Joel Finck

[0 : 00] I met him last year. In fact, Joel's kind of a little bit part of the inspiration for this family conference. Joel has been organizing a family conference out in South Dakota, which is a beautiful part of the country, by the way, for, what is it, like 20 years?

21 this year. 21 years. And so, I think, what did you have, like 150 people or 200 people? We had 166 this year. 166 people out there, and it's on their farm, and so people set up campers and tents. It's a great time.

And so, we enjoyed that and learned a lot from that on how we're doing things here, so we appreciate that. All right. But I'll let you give us the word, brother. All right. Thank you. Good morning. Good morning. I promised to stay behind the pulpit so I don't have to wear that headgear stuff.

So, I don't wander too much when I'm preaching. And as far as the book table, unfortunately, we will have to pack it up pretty quickly after the service. So, if there's any books you need, please come by.

Either I or Linda should be out there, and if you need any help or have some questions. But thanks for the opportunity to put the books out. And you might have been ahead to take the offering before I preach.

[1 : 05] I'm not sure. It kind of depends how the message goes here. But you never know. But we're going to be talking about forgiveness. And I wanted to also thank Nathan for the suggested topics.

And he had a big, long list of topics, which was nice to be able to choose from a variety of things. I have been kind of centering in on the subject of forgiveness for about the last two years when I am asked to speak at different places and around our place and so forth.

And I've gotten some really good response to it. And so, when I saw forgiveness in the home on the list, I immediately contacted him and said, I claim that one and I got it.

So, we're looking forward to that. And what a wonderful topic. Obviously, it is too big to cover exhaustively. But we're centering in on forgiveness in the home.

But what I want to do to set the stage is look at forgiveness in the Bible in general. And we'll be hitting some specific verses.

[2 : 14] I appreciated Tim's Bible drills. You want to have your Bible ready because we're going to look up a number of subjects dealing with forgiveness. And actually, the first text we'll be going to is in Leviticus chapter 4.

So, you might want to just have your Bible ready in Leviticus chapter 4 as we talk about forgiveness. We're going to be giving you a few definitions. Don't want to bore you too much with technicalities.

But it's good to know when we talk about forgiveness what we're talking about. What is forgiveness? And the Bible has several different words for forgiveness that are translated forgiveness.

And then there are words that sort of relate to forgiveness as well. And the pattern we're going to follow in this message is we're going to look at how God gave forgiveness throughout the ages.

Now, I am unapologetically dispensational. And because of that principle of rightly dividing the word of truth, it's important, particularly with this subject of forgiveness, that we understand just how God forgave throughout the ages.

[3 : 24] And specifically, how he forgave us. Because one of the key verses we'll be getting to is in Ephesians 4, where it talks about the fact that we are to forgive others the same way that Christ forgave us.

So we want to be looking at how God meted out forgiveness in various times throughout history. And I want to propose that many times we offer forgiveness when we're willing to do that. We offer forgiveness to others sometimes the same way that it was done in the Old Testament. Sometimes we offer forgiveness the way that it was proclaimed during the time of Christ, for example.

We are told to forgive as Christ forgave us. And that would mean in this dispensation of grace. So that's why I want to show how forgiveness worked throughout the ages. Now, before we even look at that, though, I want to simply say forgiveness in any and every dispensation throughout history, past, present, future, is always based on the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness. There is no remission. So when we talk about how forgiveness worked in the Old Testament, we're not suggesting that the blood of Christ wasn't necessary for there to be forgiveness.

[4 : 46] Well, you might say, well, he hadn't died yet. Yes, and often theologians say, well, they were saved on credit back then because God knew that the bill was going to be paid because that was part of his foreknowledge that he had planned to do to send his son to pay for the price of our sins.

And so that's I just would like to preach about that. But we can't we can't cover absolutely everything. So let's go to Leviticus and let's point out some of the ways that God forgave. Leviticus, I told you to turn there. I didn't even turn there. Leviticus chapter four. And we'll start in verse 28. And what we will see here is that the first thing that we see in forgiveness under the law, that will be the first part of our message.

And we could include under the kingdom program in general, the Jewish plan God had for his people, Israel and those Gentiles who would come in among them. And the first thing we see about forgiveness under God's program for Israel is that one must do something in order to receive forgiveness.

And we're going to we're going to see that played out here in some pretty dramatic ways. And I'm going to read several verses. Follow along in Leviticus four, starting in verse 28. It says, We often think, oh, the priest, you know, that's their job.

[6 : 48] They're going to take that animal from me and lead it over to the altar. No, you were to kill it. And I think that tells us something about the idea of how serious sin is.

God wanted to impress on each individual who sinned the seriousness of what they had done by telling them, you've got to kill the animal.

You know, that might make you think twice about sinning. If you're, you know, if you were serious in your faith and you knew what was ahead for you, you might think twice about sinning.

So there's where there's where you start. Verse 30. Now the priest takes over. And the priest shall take of the blood thereof with his finger and put it upon the horns of the altar of the burnt offering and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar.

And he shall take away all the fat thereof as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace offerings. And the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savor unto the Lord.

[7 : 52] And the priest shall make an atonement for him. Now that's one of the related words, by the way. In the Old Testament, forgiveness involved atonement.

Atonement from the Hebrew word *kafar* literally means to cover. And that's an important doctrine and distinction of how forgiveness operated in the Old Testament versus how it operates under grace.

And that is, in the Old Testament times, sin was not taken away by the sacrifice. In fact, the author to the Hebrews says the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin.

Well, what did it do? It covered sin. And so it sort of was a stopgap measure, so to speak, to deal with sin, at least covering it up until such a time that Christ would come and actually pay for that sin. And so that's why we sometimes say they were saved on credit. But notice at the end of, and we've just read a few verses here, but you notice at the end of verse 31, And the priest shall make an atonement for him.

[9 : 07] That's the person that's gone through all of this to bring the sacrifice, kill it, bring it to the priest and all that. And it shall be, you see it? Forgiven him. Now you might say, well, that sounds kind of hard, right?

It was. It was very difficult. Now realize, all of this had to be done in faith. Because if they went through all of that, you know, I call it rigmarole.

And I don't mean, you know, to make light of it. But they went through all of that trouble. And if they didn't do it out of faith, believing that God, the God who told them, If you commit this sin, you bring this offering and I will forgive you.

If they believed God and did that, they got the forgiveness. But guess what? If they went through all of the motions and the actions, but didn't do it, believing that that was what God had told them and what God had promised if they would do that.

If they weren't doing it in faith, it didn't count. You're looking at me like, what? What are you talking about? I'm going to show you. Look at the book of Romans chapter 9. And the apostle Paul addresses this concerning Israel.

[10:18] Romans chapter 9 and verse 31. It says, But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

So, I was told not to pound the pulpit. Let me get that. The Israelites who followed that law of righteousness, they went through all of the trouble of bringing those sacrifices, of doing all of those ordinances, doing those things that God told them to do.

But it didn't help them attain righteousness to the law of righteousness. Verse 32. Wherefore? Why not? Because they sought it not by faith.

There it is. So, you had to have, you know, what does James say to the 12 tribes scattered abroad? Faith without works is dead. But did you know, and I learned this from studying the book of Hebrews, works without faith was dead too.

In Hebrews chapter 6, he says, You need to learn, you know, you should already know these doctrines about dead works. Do you ever wonder what dead works are? In the Hebrew program, dead works were those works you did just out of rote, you know, repetition, because that's just what you do, and Daddy did it, and Granddaddy did it, and that's how I worship.

[11:49] But you didn't have genuine personal faith. That's dead works. So, both sides are true. Under the Hebrew program, faith without works is dead, and works without faith was dead also.

And the writer of the Hebrews said, You guys ought to understand this stuff already. We need to move on to deeper things. Now, think about that Old Testament. Back to Leviticus. Think about that Old Testament system, where this is just one small snapshot of a particular offering where an individual comes in.

And in this case, let's see, it's described in verse 27. And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance. Any common people here? You know, it's probably going to cover most of us.

And what are they to do? They do somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning these things, which ought not to be done, and be guilty.

And then it says, Or if his sin, which he has sinned, come to his knowledge. Have you ever, now we're not going to have a confession here, but maybe. But, have you ever, like, sinned and didn't really realize it?

[13:03] And you're kind of like moving on down the road in life, and all of a sudden you think back. You know, and you think, oh man, you know, that was sin, actually. And so he's even covering that kind of situation.

If the sin which has sinned, come to his knowledge. So here the Old Testament person has sinned, but just hadn't really thought of it that way. And maybe through the reading of the law at some kind of a worship time, or his own personal whatever, he comes to realize that.

And so that's also for him. And then you had the sin offerings for the priest himself. The priesthood had to offer for himself.

And just an example, I'm going to read from Hebrews chapter 9 and verse 7. If you're wondering about all this Hebrew stuff, I've been teaching Hebrews at one of our Bible studies near Sioux City, Iowa.

And, hey, that's really good. And I've mentioned that at our conference, I wrote a book on Paul's Old Testament quotes. I went through all of Paul's epistles and in the book of Acts where he quotes.

[14:09] And then I said, I'm sure glad Paul didn't write Hebrews because it took me a whole other year to write this from all their Old Testament references and quotes here. And I personally don't believe Paul wrote Hebrews.

But, wow, is it fascinating and interesting. And look at Hebrews chapter 9 and verse 7. Verse 6 says, Now, when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle. Now, you know the tabernacle, right? The first tabernacle was sort of the first room, the holy place in the tabernacle. And then there was a veil. And then there was the holy of holies. And that's where the actual Ark of the Covenant was and where the priest, high priest went in. It says in verse 7, But into the second, that is that second room of the tabernacle, went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people.

And you can just put a cross reference there, Leviticus chapter 16. And we just can't take time to look at all of that. But there it describes in detail what that priest has to do and make sure he does it right.

[15:20] Now, there is a tradition, maybe a legend. I don't find it in the Bible. But the legend and the tradition is that the priest, the high priest, when he went in with that robe that had bells and pomegranates on the hem so that when he was moving about, you could hear.

And, you know, as long as you heard those noises, you know he's still alive, right? Because he hasn't done something wrong. Guess what happens if he does something wrong? He could die in there.

And so the tradition was that they would tie a rope to his leg just in case he messed up in the Holy of Holies and dies. Who's going to go in there after him, right?

So you want to pull him out. And I had a little taste of that. We've been doing some remodeling at our house. Not remodeling. We're adding a heating system. I'm tired of doing it. We've done firewood for 40 years exclusively heating our home with firewood.

And I broke down. I'm going to put in a gas furnace this year to supplement. We're still going to do wood. I like doing that. And we have a crawl space center, part of a house. I needed to go and change the duct work.

[16:26] And Linda said, tie a rope on your leg. Just think about that. Fortunately, I got out. I had wished I had built that crawl space a little higher.

But I managed to squeeze in and out of there. But again, they went through a lot, didn't they, to experience forgiveness.

All right? So let's look at a second aspect of forgiveness under the law. And that is, they were required to perform a ritual to prove their sincerity.

And I'll just give you some very common examples of that from the Gospels. Mark chapter, excuse me, 1 and verse 4. Here's talking about John the baptizer, the Baptist.

It says in verse 3, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

[17:39] And that's not an isolated teaching in the period of the Gospels, which was still under the law. Remember, when Christ was here on the earth, he said, I came not to destroy the law or the prophets, came to fulfill.

Over in the other end of Mark, it says, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. Peter echoed that truth in Acts chapter 2 at Pentecost, verse 38.

Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. I know that modern preaching reverses that, either wittingly or unwittingly.

He that repents and is saved should be baptized. But that's not what it says, is it? Believe and be baptized. Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.

Now, I often get this question, sometimes even an argument. Well, are you saying that the Old Testament people were saved by their works? Well, yes and no.

[18:36] As we've just explained, they weren't saved by just doing the work if they didn't have faith, right? Dead works, Hebrews chapter 6. They, but they were not saved.

Faith without works is dead. So they worked in tandem. And that was part of what God required of Israel. And by the way, this is why we rightly, this is one of the many reasons we rightly divide word of truth.

How many, you know, what percentage of Christendom, and let's be generous and include Catholic and Protestant, what percentage of Christendom teaches in some manner or form that you must be water baptized to be saved?

90%? 90%? It's more than we'd like to admit. What if it's 50%? What if it was 10%? That's not true in this dispensation.

Today, we're saved by grace through faith without the deeds of the law. By putting our trust in the gospel, Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again, according to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. [19:43] But under the law, in order to get forgiveness, you need to prove your sincerity by performing a ritual. Number three, and I'm going to read these.

I've got them in my notes. If you want to, you can look them up, but jot them down if you're taking notes. A third requirement of forgiveness under the law, the Jewish program, was the confession of sin.

The confession of sin. Psalm 32, verse 5. David writing, I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgave us the iniquity of my sin.

How many of you grew up in a 1 John 1-9 church? How many of you know what 1 John 1-9 says? Yeah, if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And we heard that week after week after week after week after week after week after week after week.

Because the teaching was, well, yeah, you get forgiven when you're saved. But then you have to ask for forgiveness after that by confessing your sins.

[20:58] And as one of my pastors used to say, and you want to keep a short account. What he meant by that was, you want your list of sins to be short when you show up at the judgment seat of Christ.

So you don't have to answer for them. That was the teaching. That was the doctrine. And so according to that belief, 1 John 1-9, if you confess your sins, you know, maybe your list was that long.

You confess your sins, oh, you got that list back down. But then the next day, you know, it starts growing. Oh, you want to confess it, get that list back up there. And you want to make sure you die right after you confessed your sins, right?

So that that list is gone. Aren't you glad that the Apostle Paul says, he hath forgiven us all trespasses. Do you believe that?

That's what he said. We're going to see that here in a moment. But that was another requirement, the confession of sins. Oh, but then, oh, there's more, right?

[22:00] Wait, there's more. Look at Matthew 6 and verse 14. How many of you grew up in a church that recited the Lord's Prayer every Sunday?

I did. It was a Baptist church. But we recited the Lord's Prayer every Sunday. Not many of you, you must all have grown up in grace families or something.

What's the matter with you? And you know it. I'm sure you've heard it. Verse 9, Matthew 6, 9. Did you ever pray that?

I used to pray it all the time? You know what you're asking when you say that? You're asking God to forgive you to the same degree that you forgive other people. How many of you want that?

[23:05] Huh? No, I don't want that. I'm not always the best at forgiving. And just in case we think we read that wrong and misunderstood, look at verse 14.

For if ye forgive their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Well, that's exactly what he meant. And I remember not too long ago, you know, when our kids were little, we used to listen to Uncle Charlie. Anybody listen to Uncle Charlie Children's Bible Hour? And I don't know, we were driving somewhere and I turned on the Christian radio and here's Uncle Charlie.

And I was, you're screaming at the radio? And their study that week was on this passage of Scripture. And at the end it was, hey boys and girls, you need to forgive your little brothers and sisters and friends.

Because if you don't, your father won't forgive you. Uncle Charlie! You ought to know better than that. That's how it was under the law.

[24:12] Let's go on to grace here. Yeah, amen for sure. And let's see how forgiveness operates under grace. Number one, it's based on Christ's blood and his grace.

Now I said I was going to give some definitions of forgiveness. Actually, the Old Testament word, most common word for forgiveness, means to bear or carry. And like a burden.

And that's very graphic and gives us a good idea. You know, even when John the baptizer came along, what did he say? Behold the Lamb of God that does what? Bears away, carries away the sin of the world.

And that's a wonderful and beautiful aspect of forgiveness. God's going to carry it away. Another word, you go to the New Testament, two major Greek words, charizomai and ephiomai.

Charizomai actually is based on the root word charis, which means grace. That's what forgiveness is. It's a manifestation of the grace of God.

[25 : 20] Ephiomai means to release. In other words, you become released from your sin. Not only is it God giving you grace through the sacrifice of Christ, but he has released you from sin's grip.

Okay? So we want to see how that works under grace. So let's talk, first of all, the fact that forgiveness under God's program for today is based on Christ's blood and on his grace.

Ephesians chapter 1, verses 6 and 7. And here we really see a couple of things together. Now, it's interesting that when you go from the Greek, and I'm not a Greek scholar.

I've studied it a little bit. I'm one of those guys that knows enough Greek to be dangerous. That's kind of the level I'm at. But you can see, there's so many resources today.

You can check this out. And some of you probably have your phone on right now checking it out.

That's how easy it is to look up these words. And I recommend you do it.

[26 : 30] Ephesians, but the reason I say that is sometimes there are Greek words that are translated many different ways. And sometimes there are many different words that are all translated by one English word.

So that's why I think it's important we sometimes have to go in and dig these out. In Ephesians 1, verses 6 and 7, it says, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Now there, the word accepted is based on the same root word as the word that's often translated forgiveness. But it's basically, he's made us graced in the beloved. In verse 7, we have Ephesus, or the other word to release, In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

So there you have the idea of forgiveness because of the blood of Christ. Colossians 1.14, I'll just mention it as the parallel passage, In whom Christ, in whom, that is Christ, we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

A second thing about forgiveness under God's program of grace is that God provides complete forgiveness. Colossians 2.13, Colossians 2.13, And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together.

[27 : 57] Quickened means made alive. With him, having charizomai, having forgiven you all trespasses, having graced you.

That's the word for forgiveness there. And it's all trespasses. Past, present, and future.

And that's been argued, well, yeah, my past sins, they're forgiven when I believe. But what about my future sins? And I'll never forget, I hope I never forget. Paul Sadler, years ago, I heard a message where he was addressing this question.

Well, what about our future sins? And the way he put it was this. How many of your sins were future when Christ died for them? Yeah, all of them were future at that point.

Did Christ only die for the sins that you were going to commit up to the point you were saved? Oh, no, obviously he died for all sin, right?

[29 : 00] And there's so many scriptures that repeat that principle. Forgiveness under God's program for today provides complete forgiveness.

Thirdly, forgiveness under God's program for today, God is not counting sin against us. Let's just look at a few passages.

Romans chapter 5 and verse 13. Romans 5 and verse 13. For until the law, sin was in the world. But sin is not imputed when there is no law. Now, are we under the law today? Romans chapter 6 and verse 14.

For sin shall not have dominion over you. For ye are not under the law, but under grace. 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 19.

[30 : 04] Which, by the way, is our great commission. At least it's part of it. 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 19. To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

God was in Christ. Now, that's not talking about Christ's earthly ministry as far as healing the sick, raising the dead, feeding the masses, and so forth.

It's talking about his death. That's what he's really pointing to. Actually, the context is set in verse 14 of 2 Corinthians 5. For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then we're all dead.

Or then all were dead. It's the same meaning. How many were dead? Huh? How many did he die for?

Okay. Christ died for all. And that, verse 15, and that he died for all, that they which live.

[31 : 22] Now he's singled out a group who's alive. Who's alive? The ones that have put their trust in Christ. Should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died and rose again.

And because of that, God actually now was able to save the world. Because Christ already paid for the sin.

Not imputing their trespasses unto them. Now let's think about forgiving one another. And we're talking about family forgiveness. Which is just a microcosm, a very important microcosm, of life in general.

We are to forgive within our family. We are to forgive out in the world in general. Now I mentioned earlier, and I even saw a few eyebrows raised.

When I said sometimes when we forgive one another, we do so on an Old Testament basis. What did I mean by that?

[32 : 29] And by the way, even though it was hard, and there was a lot of rigmarole to go through under the Old Testament to receive forgiveness, it was still forgiveness. And it was better than not having forgiveness.

Right? And that was a wonderful thing. You know, we kind of looked down in the Old Testament times and how bad it was and how hard it was. But the fact is, they still could get forgiveness and they could get righteousness given to them by faith.

As long as they were faithfully obeying that covenant that God had given them. So, any forgiveness is better than no forgiveness. And so, again, the reason I say that, I suppose we could argue that, well, any forgiveness within the context of the family or our relationships in the church or in the world, any forgiveness is better than no forgiveness.

But what do I mean when I say some people offer forgiveness on an Old Testament basis? Well, back to our outline of forgiveness throughout the Old Testament under God's program for Israel. Well, forgiveness required that someone make a sacrifice. I'll forgive them if they'll pay. They're going to pay.

[33 : 46] But I'll forgive them. Does that ever happen, do you suppose? Oh, I'm afraid it happens a lot.

How about, I'll forgive them if they prove their sincerity. Now, under the law, that meant you performed a ritual or whatever God required as the way of ordinances and so forth.

But do we ever, on a personal basis, if we don't say the words, manifest the attitude, I'll forgive them if they are sincere in their apology.

And I am afraid there are people who forgive on that basis. How about this one? A third aspect of forgiveness under the Jewish program was the requirement to confess the sin.

I'll forgive them if they will admit that they were wrong. Again, maybe you don't tell them that, or maybe you do. But if that's your attitude, well, I suppose any forgiveness is better than no forgiveness, but that's really not the kind of forgiveness that we're talking about, is it?

[35 : 10] Or how about, under the law, Christ taught, if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses.

I'll forgive them. I know I've done wrong. I'll forgive them if they forgive me. How about that? Well, again, I suppose that would be better than no forgiveness, but it kind of defeats the purpose in many instances.

So think about that the next time someone wrongs you. By the way, I was going to ask at the outset, has anyone ever had someone do something to you and you needed to forgive them?

Have you ever had that happen? You know, there's a saying, the thing about history is, there'll be more of it tomorrow. And that's kind of how it is with forgiveness. You can forgive somebody today, but there's probably going to be more requirement and need for it tomorrow. And it goes both ways.

[36 : 21] Are there people that you maybe think should forgive you, but they haven't. And we're going to talk about that here in a little bit. Well, let's move back up to grace.

And let's see if we're practicing forgiveness, not on the basis of the law, but on the basis of grace. And let's look at our key verse that I referred to, but we haven't looked at yet.

Ephesians chapter 4. Starting in verse 30, it says, And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.

Do you see now why it's so important to rightly divide the word of truth, to understand how forgiveness operated in the Old Testament versus how it operates today, in order to obey this verse.

[37 : 31] You've got to know how Christ forgave you in order to extend that to others. And that's why I took quite a bit of time explaining how forgiveness worked under the Old Testament and how many times people used those principles as the basis of their forgiveness.

But let me ask you, were you forgiven by Christ because you made a sacrifice? Huh? Anybody? No! Were you forgiven because you performed a ritual?

A lot of people think that's how they're forgiven. That's not true today. Were you forgiven by Christ because you confessed your sin? Now some of you might think yet that that's how it happened. That's not how it is today. Did Christ forgive you because you forgave everybody else that you needed to forgive? Is that how you received forgiveness?

No. So we are to forgive as Christ hath forgiven us. How did Christ forgive us? Well, he shed his blood. He provides complete forgiveness.

[38 : 40] You know, you ever hear the expression, bury the hatchet? Some people bury the hatchet, but they leave the handle sticking out just in case they might need to grab it again.

And burying the hatchet does not mean in the back of your opponent's skull. Okay? Bury the hatchet. Complete forgiveness. You know, that would be a step up as far as our obedience to forgive because Christ forgave us.

Did Christ forgive you just a little or did he forgive you a lot? He forgave me a lot. I mean, a real lot. And because he's forgiven me a lot, think about what other people have done to you that you feel you should forgive them.

Was that incident worse than what Christ forgave you for? Or was it less?

Well, Christ forgave you of a whole ton of sins, right? Past, present, future. This is just one thing, right? That you probably have in your mind that the person did to you and you need to forgive them or want to forgive them.

[40 : 06] It probably pales in comparison to what Christ forgave you. And how about taking it to the level that God did when God was in Christ reconciling the world and himself not imputing their trespasses unto them?

Have you been able to come to the point in your life where you're willing to forgive people to this depth that you consider them as though they hadn't even offended you?

They didn't even do it. Are you able to do that? I don't think we're able without the Holy Spirit. And I don't think we're able to without understanding how Christ forgave us. That's why he says, be forgiving one to another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us.

Now, I'm going to give you some practical pointers here, hopefully, that would be helpful to you on how do you implement this? What does this look like to have forgiveness in this way?

And first of all, I want to point out that when, let's say you're the one that's been wronged. It's the other person that has obviously offended and done the wrong thing.

[41 : 15] Maybe sinned against you or said something. And you're the one who feels that you need to be doing the forgiving. Depending on the person, don't go up to them and say, oh, I forgive you for what you did.

Now, why don't you do that? Because many times, they don't feel they've done anything wrong. And if you come with that attitude, well, I forgive you for what you did, they will probably get even angrier over the situation.

Now, if someone comes to you and says, yeah, man, I really blew it. I did this wrong. Will you forgive me? Of course, yes, I will forgive you. You can talk about it and you can relate to them about it.

But if they, if you perceive that they don't think they did anything wrong, you can forgive them without saying or to them. And you should.

Because there's a principle that I found as I've studied this for the past couple of years is that forgiveness is not so much for that person that offended you as it is for you.

[42 : 36] Because what happens when you don't forgive, got the hint of it right here in our context, in verse 31, let all bitterness. What happens when we fail to forgive?

That breeds bitterness and the Bible has a way of describing it. Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 15. Hebrews chapter 12.

Let me find it here. Verse 15. Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God. And by the way, this is the book of Hebrews. Not grace. There's grace in every dispensation, but there's only one dispensation of grace.

Under the Hebrew program, you can fail of the grace of God. But he says, don't fail of the grace of God. Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you and thereby many be defiled.

bitterness is described as a root or a plant or may I say a weed that springs up.

[43 : 44] You know, when you're out trying to take care of your lawn, what plants are the tallest when you go out to mow? The weeds, right? And the dandelions and the thistles and the dandelions particularly have learned to duck when you come over them with the mower, right?

And when you thought, I got all those yellow heads, right? Nope, they're still there. A few of them are still there. But that's just what we see, that bitterness we see up on top.

What happens below the surface of the ground? You've got roots growing and those roots can get pretty big and so the writer to the Hebrews is saying, don't let that seed of bitterness get started because it's going to grow some, yeah, it's going to spring up above but it's going to grow some roots and you might try to whack away at the top but guess what?

It's coming back because there's a root. You don't want to have that and so that's why I say forgiveness is almost more for you, for your benefit than it is for the person who has committed the wrong.

I came across something, I have no idea about this group. You know, you see things on the internet. It's like my son told me, here's a good quote, don't believe everything that you see online.

[45 : 12] Abraham Lincoln. No, he didn't really say that. But I came across this thing and I tried to find out its source and I really couldn't but it was called Seven Phrases Bitter People Use and it seemed to ring true so I'm going to share it with you.

Number one, whatever. Now what does whatever communicate? Indifference and disappointment and that's one of the signs of bitterness.

How about it must be nice? That's when you're envious perhaps or resentful that someone else has prospered in some way, gotten a raise, able to go buy a new car, they're able to, you know, oh that must be nice.

That can be a form of bitterness. How about I'm not surprised? Well, sometimes when good things happen to people, saying something like that shows that you're unable to enter into someone else's joy and what does Paul tell us in Romans 12?

Rejoice with those that rejoice. Don't be bitter about it just because somebody else is doing good. How about it figures? Lack of faith and positive outcomes?

[46 : 30] If only you're trapped in past regrets. Here's a common one. I guess that's life. We could talk about a whole other subject here.

I guess that's resigned to giving up or being able to change or improve a situation. It's just what will be, what will be, what will be, what will be.

Little shades of Calvinism in there. Or here's one and this is particularly important for husbands and wives to be careful about.

You always or you never because that also expresses some unresolved conflict that may exist in your heart.

those are not words of forgiveness. All right? So what do we do when family, perhaps friends, won't forgive us?

[47 : 37] Well, as I've said, we can forgive without them even knowing about it if that's what's appropriate, if it's okay, if they bring it up and want to ask forgiveness, fine. but there's an example in the Old Testament that just has really, I guess, caught my attention and ministered to me personally and I'll share it with you, might or might not resonate with you, but 2 Samuel chapter 16 starting in verse 6.

2 Samuel 16 and verse 6. And here's a context where David has been at war with the family of Saul or I should say they've been at war with him, but because of that, David was accused of killing off a lot of David's family, or David was accused of killing off a lot of Saul's family.

So, here's an incident that took place that is just again, it just really has ministered to me personally. 2 Samuel 16 verse 5. And when King David came to Bahurim, now that's a nice Mideast sounding name, isn't it?

Bahurim. Behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gerah. He came forth and cursed still as he came, and he cast stones at David, and all the servants of King David, and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left, and thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, thou man of Belial.

The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned. And the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom, thy son.

[49 : 33] And behold, thou art taken in thy mischief because thou art a bloody man. Wow, what a bold accusation this Shimei throws at David and even brings up that unfortunate family matter where his own son Absalom is out to try and kill David.

And he's blaming him and saying, you deserve this, this has come on you, the blood of the house of Saul, and so forth. And one of David's servants, verse 9, then said Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, unto the king, why should this dead dog curse my lord the king?

Let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head. Is that how you deal with situations like this?

Well, if you're the king, you could, but most of us probably better not try that.

But what I love about it is David's response. verse 10, and the king said, what have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah?

So let him curse, because the Lord has said unto him, curse David, who shall then say, wherefore hast thou done so? And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, behold my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life.

[50 : 57] Talking about Absalom, and David's just looking at it rather maturely, I was going to say philosophically, but he's looking at it from this perspective.

My own son wants to come out and kill me, and here's Shimei throwing rocks at me, and I guess I can't really blame him. My own son seeketh my life, verse 11, how much more now may this Benjamite do it?

Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him. But then we get to verse 12, which to me is just the attitude we all need to take.

I've had to take it, I've gladly taken it various times in my life. Verse 12, it may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day.

And it's just take the attitude, you know, I probably deserved what so-and-so did and said. I probably deserved that and more.

[52 : 05] If I'm not in the wrong, I'll just trust the Lord to reward me for it. And if he doesn't, that's fine too. But I'm just going to take the attitude.

I probably deserved it. Maybe the Lord will reward me for it, for having taken this false accusation. Wow, what a, do you see why David's the man after God's own heart?

And I know we often emphasize all the bad things David did, but there are so many cases like this, where there's just this little snippet of truth and history that show that heart of God coming out in David's responses and how he's working with others.

When others won't accept your apology, that's another difficult thing. Oh, you weren't sincere. Well, they've just become the judge, jury, and executioner.

They're the ones who need to deal with that. You know in your heart before the Lord whether you were sincere or not when you ask someone for forgiveness.

[53 : 18] So that's really, again, you know, it's like Romans 12 once more, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

And I really believe that God through Paul gave us that little bit of information to remind us. Sometimes it isn't going to work out so good on the human level.

Sometimes it doesn't, but make sure that it's not for your part. As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. And if there's a problem, let it be between them and the Lord and leave it there.

I want to give some quotes here that have just, again, just have helped me a lot through the years. When it comes to this matter of willingness to forgive and looking at circumstances and kind of just really feeling down because of it.

And one of them comes from, you know, I'm to that age where I'm starting to listen to my children. It's kind of interesting. And Jason came up with this one, our oldest son, Jason.

[54 : 26] I don't remember what we were talking about, but he made this statement and he may have heard it somewhere else, but he said, Dad, I don't always need to be right. And I kind of reacted to that and say, but we want to be right, right?

I mean, we want to be according to truth. And he said, no, no, I don't mean that we ignore what's right and wrong and so forth. He said, when it comes to disagreements with other people, I think what he was really saying is, I don't have to have the last word.

I can just make my case and just leave it there. I don't need to always come away while I was right. Just, and you know, that's going to go a long ways towards this matter of forgiveness and how we treat others.

Here's another one and this is from a good friend of ours. How many of you, have you been out to Cope? You've been to Cope, right? Colorado? Dave Shedd. You remember Dave?

Dave has an expression when something kind of contentious comes up and you're with him or a small group of people. Dave would say, it doesn't matter.

[55 : 41] It doesn't matter. And again, that's another way of saying another expression I've heard over the years. Is this issue going to matter a hundred years from now?

Hmm? Probably not. You know, maybe someone said some unkind words to you. Maybe they cheated you financially. Maybe they hurt you in some way.

Is it going to matter in a hundred years? And I think that's Dave Shedd's outlook. Let's bring that back to the present. You know, it doesn't matter.

It doesn't matter. And then when I got way back in Bible Institute, this was back when I was going to school in California. It was an Acts 2 school, very dispensationally oriented.

I mean, they talked about dispensations and rightly dividing and so forth. But they were Acts 2. Actually, how I came to the Grace Message was by noticing a lot of contradictions in the Acts 2 presentation of dispensations and just seeing how this doesn't quite square.

[56 : 46] But one professor, his name was Gary Code. He was a National Guard chaplain as well as a teacher in our Bible Institute. And it was kind of funny.

During the time we were in school, I was there three years, and he was promoted to captain. And so he was Captain Code. And that was before the superhero age. And so when they announced Captain Code, they said, now he's not a comic book hero or anything like that, but now he's Captain Code.

So here's what Captain Code said. And this was just in the course of one of his classes. I don't even remember which class it was. but making an application of a biblical principle.

He said, next time someone wrongs you, don't tell anyone. And I've thought of that many, many, many times from back in, it would have been about 1976.

That just Captain Code saying has come back to me so many times. next time someone wrongs you, don't tell anyone. Of course you can tell the Lord. Of course if you're married, you've got your spouse who can be taken into your confidence and so forth.

[57 : 59] But why do we want to tell someone else when someone has offended us? Why do we want to do that?

we probably want to bring them down in the eyes of others and kind of get them down so that they aren't held up so high and we kind of want to make ourselves the big guy.

And I've found that very helpful. And then one more saying that a very dear friend and co-laborer in the gospel and in my writing ministry shared with me one time.

And his name was Roger. Some of you might have heard me talk about Roger. Some of you at our family conference, he actually spoke one year. And Roger helped me, actually he was a supporter of ours and he did a lot of my proofreading.

Roger tragically died, well I think he was still in his 40s. He was very athletic, he was out jogging one winter day, came home, slipped on some ice by his door and hit his head and got a blood clot. [59 : 13] And he died, which was a terrible shock. I went to his funeral in Wisconsin. But Roger told me this once and I had a hard time even putting my mind around this.

And he wasn't saying it out of pride, you have to know Roger to really appreciate it. And I don't even know what we were talking about but he said, Joel, God has grown me to the point.

I think I had said something and I said, oh I hope that doesn't offend you. And Roger said, God has grown me to the point, I don't get offended anymore. Oh wow.

is there anybody here that can say that? Roger, and Roger was saying it matter of fact. He wasn't bragging, he wasn't saying well look how good I, it wasn't out of pride whatsoever.

I didn't get that at all from Roger. Roger just said God has grown me to the point I don't get offended anymore. Wow. And I've often thought about that when people say things or do things or you know that bother me or whatever.

[60 : 18] and I guess my message to all of us is let's stop being offended so easily. It's really going to solve a lot of problems in our lives if we just stop being offended so easily.

And if you're the offender, why don't you stop offending people? I mean it just makes it so much easier for all of us. I mean there's times we can't do it. The Apostle Paul says Christ is a stumbling block and an offense, right?

So yes, if you're trying to work your way to heaven thinking you can earn your salvation through your good deeds and your religious activities and some little old preacher comes along and says sorry but none of that counts.

In fact it's working against you. You need to put your trust in Christ and in Christ alone. That offends them because they've got their little suitcase of good works and deeds that they've built up over the years and they're going to take it on with them to heaven someday they're hoping and show what they all did.

I've got my confirmation and I've got my church membership and I've got my baptism and I've got all of these things. How did Paul say it?

[61 : 34] For his past religious life. All these things I count as dung that I may win Christ. That's offensive, right? So it's okay to offend at times but even when we witness and share we can do so in as non-offensive a way as possible.

Jude points that out in his little book. He says on some save snatching them from the fire.

Save with fear. And then he says and on some have compassion. Making a difference. And you've got to know the person you're witnessing to.

And some of the people you've got to preach some fire and brimstone to them to get their attention and other people are hurting so bad you put your arm around them and you save them by giving them the gospel with compassion.

So again we can tailor our messages and not be offensive but we all need to learn not to be offended so easily.

[62 : 40] And how important all of this is. In the context of the family forgiveness is truly a wonderful gift that I think is under appreciated by many believers and God gives and I found this in scripture.

God is slow to anger but he's quick to forgive. You ever thought about that? forgive and aren't we supposed to be like that? Be slow to anger, be quick to forgive and emulate that image of God that has been given to us.

Let's pray. Shall we? Father thank you for your character, your love, how you have just shown yourself faithful and forgiving and you simply ask us to extend that very forgiveness that we've received.

so thank you for this topic that was suggested and that I've appreciated so much the past few years especially. Thank you for giving us that capability through the spirit to exercise these things in our relationships with family members and those outside of our families as well.

We pray all this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.