

**"The Need of Forgiveness"**

**Part 2**

**2 Corinthians 2:5-11**

**Introduction:** Last week in our study of 2 Corinthians we were in 2:5-11, and it is in this text that we are looking at the subject of FORGIVENESS. Before we get into our text for tonight, I want to refresh your mind on a few thoughts, which we looked at in our last study.

We must remember that as believers we are to live our lives in a way that others see Jesus Christ in us. There are many ways in which Jesus can be seen in us but probably the greatest way is when we show forgiveness to those who have somehow offended us. We as believers have received the greatest forgiveness known to man and that is the forgiveness of sin. Therefore, you and I have absolutely no right to place boundaries on grace and forgiveness. Let us consider the words of Jesus in Matthew 18.

**Matthew 18:21-35,**

*<sup>21</sup> Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?*

*<sup>22</sup> Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.*

*<sup>23</sup> Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.*

*<sup>24</sup> And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.*

*<sup>25</sup> But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.*

*<sup>26</sup> The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.*

*<sup>27</sup> Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.*

*<sup>28</sup> But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.*

*<sup>29</sup> And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.*

<sup>30</sup> *And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.*

<sup>31</sup> *So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.*

<sup>32</sup> *Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:*

<sup>33</sup> *Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?*

<sup>34</sup> *And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.*

<sup>35</sup> *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.*

Then in Luke we read the words of Jesus again on the subject of FORGIVENESS.

#### **Luke 17:3-4**

<sup>3</sup> *Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.*

<sup>4</sup> *And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.*

In all of this we see that as believers we are to place absolutely no boundaries/barriers on forgiveness. Let me get you back to the thought of you and me manifesting Jesus Christ through our lives. Forgiveness is one of the characteristics of God which we can see throughout the entire Bible. There is something which is written in Isaiah that I want to take the time to look at because I believe it will be a blessing to all of us.

#### **Isaiah 42:1-3**

*Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.*

<sup>2</sup> *He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.*

<sup>3</sup> **A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench:** *he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.*

We can see in verses 1-2 that Isaiah is writing about Jesus Christ therefore Jesus is the Subject here. Then Isaiah makes a beautiful statement in verse 3. He tells us Jesus will not break a bruised reed nor will He quench smoking flax. This speaks of the tender mercy and forgiveness of our Lord and Savior. Let me explain:

- ✓ **The bruised reed** - The reed was a hollow stem that was often used as a musical instrument. They would cut holes in the reed and then use their fingers over the holes to make different musical notes. It would be the same as a flute operates today. So as they played the music through the reed, the saliva would gather in the reed; and therefore it would become soft/bruised. They would often then take the reed, snap it in half, and cast it away. They could then cut a new reed and continue on.

**Application:**

There are times in our lives when we are "out of tune". Sin gets in and it distorts the melody, which God desires within our lives. When this happens our Lord does not "break" us and cast us away. But instead He comforts and strengthens us. He shows grace and mercy to sinners such as you and me.

- ✓ **The smoking flax** - The flax was used as a wick in an oil lamp. When it began, it was good for nothing and it would be snuffed out and replaced.

**Application:**

There are times in our life that we do not shine as brightly as we should. Let us remember that Jesus said that we are the light of the world. So when our light is not what God desires for it to be and we are nothing more than a smoldering coal, our Lord does not snuff us out. But instead He fans the flame and He works with us until we are again a bright burning light.

In all of this we can see the patience, grace, mercy, and forgiveness of our Lord. This is the very character that we as believers are to display within our lives. Now let us get to back to 2 Corinthians. Last week we started into the text that is before us and we looked at:

I. **Paul's Appeal**

**Notice 2 Corinthians 2:5-6**

The man whom Paul refers to here had caused much grief in the church at Corinth. Now last week I told you that I believed this was the man who Paul wrote about in 1 Corinthians 5, but I have a different view now. Let me give you something to consider. In chapter 1 Paul was defending himself against the critics. They had accused him of suffering because of sin, and they had accused him of not being true to his word when he had delayed his

visit. As we moved into chapter 2 Paul was explaining why he had delayed his visit. Then we come to the verses which are before us and it seems so strange that Paul would shift to speaking of the man in 1 Corinthians 5. As I look at this and I consider the text, I believe this is about the man who had spearheaded the attacks against Paul within the church. That thought fits the text so much better.

So this man had bought into the lies which were told concerning Paul, and he then did all he could to bring the church against Paul. The church, however, had exercised church discipline against him, and now the man had repented.

### **Notice 2 Corinthians 2:7-8**

Now Paul tells them stop the discipline and begin to show love toward the man. The discipline had accomplished what it was intended for and now the man had repented and so now the church was to welcome him back into the fold with open arms of love. They were NOT to set any boundaries upon their love and their grace, but they were now to affirm their love for this brother in the Lord. Paul was concerned he would be overwhelmed with sorrow.

We see the same thought in Hebrews 12.

### **Hebrews 12:11-13**

<sup>11</sup> *Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

<sup>12</sup> **Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;**

<sup>13</sup> **And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.**

**Notice 2 Corinthians 2:8 again.**

The word "love" here is "AGAPE". This is the unconditional love which Paul spoke of in 1 Corinthians 13. This LOVE is shown by a determination of the will. It is not a feeling, but it is a choice.

So discipline within the church is so very important **but so is forgiveness and love.**

### **John 13:34-35**

<sup>34</sup> *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

<sup>35</sup> *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

## II. The Test

### Notice 2 Corinthians 2:9

There is something here that is very important to see. One of the reasons why Paul delayed his visit was because he desired to see if they would be obedient in ALL things. Now it is easy to be obedient to God in many things. It is easy to exercise our spiritual gifts, and it is easy to praise God. But the most difficult obedience of all is to exercise discipline toward sin within the church.

When Paul tells them it was to this end that he wrote to them, this is most likely a reference to the sharp/pointed letter which has been lost. Apparently Paul had urged them to discipline the man, and then he stepped back to see if they would be obedient. This was a test to see how far they had come in spiritual maturity.

### Application:

This is without a doubt the most difficult part of the ministry for God. But there is something which we must always keep in mind when it comes to church discipline.

### Matthew 18:15-20

<sup>15</sup> *Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*

<sup>16</sup> *But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*

<sup>17</sup> *And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*

<sup>18</sup> *Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

<sup>19</sup> *Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.*

<sup>20</sup> *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

Here we see that our Lord is ever present when discipline is carried out within the body of Christ. This is the context of Matthew 18:20.

III. The Danger

**Notice 2 Corinthians 2:10-11**

The withholding of forgiveness and love within the church opens the door for Satan to get in and tear apart that which God desires to build up.

**Conclusion:**

Satan desires to tear apart the church. Without love and forgiveness he will be successful at his mission. Let us be sure to exercise church discipline, and then let us be sure to forgive and show forth the love of Jesus Christ. Let me show you the words of one Bible teacher:

*"There is nothing more dangerous than to give Satan a chance of reducing a sinner to despair. Whenever we fail to comfort those that are moved to a sincere confession of their sin, we play into Satan's hands."*