

"Living out the Virtues of the Christian Life"

Part 3

Colossians 3:12-17

Introduction: Tonight, as we come back to our study of Colossians, we are going to look at two more virtues of the Christian Life and I would safely say that these two are the most difficult to live out in the life of the believer. So far, we have looked at 5 virtues of the Christian life.

1. Bowels of mercies
2. Kindness
3. Humbleness of mind
4. Meekness
5. Longsuffering

- The Virtues
- Part 3

Notice Colossians 3:13

- **Forbearing one another.**

Let us notice another way in which the word "forbear" is translated to help us to better grasp Paul's thought.

2 Thessalonians 1:4

⁴ *So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:*

2 Timothy 4:3

³ *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;*

Here in these two verses the word is translated "endure" and we can therefore understand that we are to "endure" others. This is to be patient with others. There are always going to be people in our lives that do not measure up to what we think they should be. As believers we are to help our brothers and sister to refine their walk. Let us remember what Jesus said to the friends of Lazarus when He called him from the grave.

John 11:43-44

⁴³ *And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.*

⁴⁴ And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

It was the responsibility of his friends to help get him free of the grave clothes. It is our responsibility to help our brothers and sisters in the Lord to get free from the old grave clothes of this life. Some people come along rather quickly in their walk and others struggle. It is for us to endure their struggles with them and do all we can to help them. The last thing they need is criticism but instead they need someone who will patiently walk with them.

Hebrews 10:24-25

²⁴ And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

²⁵ Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

The idea here is that we are to consider how we may encourage one another to do better. This requires forbearance with others and patience at times. Before we come down to hard on others let us not forget the forbearance that God has with us. We are far from perfect. How often do we do things that we know are sin and we look at them as "sins in good standing" when there are no such sins and we know it? In the midst of this God never gives up on us.

Philippians 1:6

⁶ Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

God continues to chip away at our lives making us more like Jesus all the time and He uses our failures in the process. Let us remember the failures of Peter and the forbearance of God as He never gave up on him. We can see the same in the life of Abram and the failures in his life. But God was always there to rescue him when he got into trouble. The examples are all through the Bible of the forbearance of God and since we are His children we should be manifesting the very same virtues.

Notice Colossians 3:13 again.

➤ **Forgiving one another.**

Paul gives an example for us to follow with this virtue, and the Example is Jesus and His forgiveness to us. Another example would be Joseph. Let us look at what Joseph went through.

❖ Sold into slavery.

Genesis 37:23-28

²³ And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him;

²⁴ And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.

²⁵ And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.

²⁶ And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?

²⁷ Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content.

²⁸ Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

❖ Falsely accused.

Genesis 39:1-2, 11-18

And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither.

² And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

¹¹ And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within.

¹² And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.

¹³ And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth,

¹⁴ That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice:

¹⁵ And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out.

¹⁶ And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home.

¹⁷ And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me:

¹⁸ And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out.

❖ **Forgotten in prison.**

Genesis 40:12-14, 21-23

¹² And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days:

¹³ Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler.

¹⁴ But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house:

²¹ And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand:

²² But he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them.

²³ Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.

Finally, Joseph was brought out of prison and made the Prime Minister of Egypt. How long did it take for all of this to transpire?

Genesis 37:2

² These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.

Genesis 41:46

⁴⁶ And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

From the time Joseph was sold by his brothers until he was promoted to Prime Minister, thirteen years elapsed. Thirteen years of his life were lost (humanly speaking) because of what his brothers had done. What was Joseph's response when he met his brothers after the thirteen years?

Genesis 45:4-8

⁴ And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

⁵ Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

⁶ For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.

⁷ And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

⁸ So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

Oh, to have this perspective on the uncomfortable events of life!! His brothers were accountable for what they had done but God used it for Joseph's and his brother's good and for God's glory. Because he had the proper insight Joseph could extend forgiveness to his brothers.

Forgiveness is so important for our own benefit. When we withhold forgiveness, it is like a cancer that eats away at us on the inside.

Matthew 18:21-22

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

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

Jesus was telling His disciples that forgiveness was to be unlimited. He then went on to give the parable of the unforgiving servant and Jesus then applied it to our lives.

Matthew 18:34-35

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

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

Conclusion:

What are the tormentors? The hidden tormentors of anger and bitterness that eat your insides out, the tormentors of frustration and malice that give you ulcers and high blood pressure and migraine headaches and lower back pain, the tormentors that make you lie awake at night on your bed stewing over every rotten thing that happens to you. The tormentors of an unforgiving heart who stalk your trail day and night, who never leave your side, who suck every bit of joy from your life.

Why? BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT FORGIVE FROM THE HEART. It is happening to you just as Jesus said because you refuse to forgive. Notice the words of a Bible teacher.

"So many of us need to give forgiveness. We've been living for years under the burden of remembered hurts. Some of the things that bother us go back to our childhood. Some of them involve people we haven't seen for a long time. It may be a brother or a sister, a close friend, a husband, or a wife, or perhaps someone who mistreated us at work.

What we need is to become great forgivers. Why? Because forgiveness will save your marriage when nothing else will. Forgiveness will restore your family when nothing else will. Forgiveness will repair a broken heart when nothing else will. Forgiveness is the key that can open a closed heart.

A great many of us ought to take a trip out to the Cemetery of Forgiveness, make a list of the faults, sins, and failures of those we love, dig a hole in the ground, and bury those faults forever. And never dig them up again.

When does revival come? It comes when husbands and wives on the brink of divorce forgive one another. It comes when teenagers who are filled with anger and parents who are exasperated forgive one another. It comes when Sunday School teachers who are jealous and church members who can't get along and elders who constantly criticize each

other learn to forgive one another. It comes when businessmen and housewives and students and singles and all God's children give up their anger, get rid of their bitterness, turn away from their resentment and forgive one another.

What is needed is a great revival of forgiveness. And it needs to begin this very moment. Many of us came this morning with unresolved hurts going back many years. We've been angry and bitter far too long. The hidden tormentors have done their work.

Now it's time to forgive."