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Making Things Right

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Making Things Right

“So then, if you bring your gift to the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First, go and be reconciled to your brother and then come and present your gift. Reach agreement quickly with your accuser while on the way to court, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the warden, and you will be thrown into prison. I tell you the truth, you will never get out of there until you have paid the last penny!” —Matthew 5:23-26

Jesus tells us that when we find ourselves faced with troubles and conflict concerning fellow believers, or even our foes and adversaries, it is part of our calling and privilege to do our best to make things right. Harmony with others may not always be achievable, yet as Christians, we should not be the ones responsible for the lack of relationship or peace.

Paul tells us: “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all people” (Romans 12:18).

We are to bring peace, love, and forgiveness into all our relationships in spite of all of our differences, no matter how difficult they may be! It is simply not about us! This is part of the dying to self. It behooves us to remember that forgiveness is for the forgiver. When we harbor ill will for another it does nothing but poison us. Forgiveness on the other hand breathes life into our souls. Sin always destroys while obedience brings life in abundance.

“Forgiveness saves us the expense of anger, the cost of hatred, the waste of spirits.”
—Hannah More

We are to work toward reconciliation whenever a breach has occurred in any relationship, but particularly with fellow believers. I cannot believe God applauds any division in His Body, the Church. In our verses for today, Jesus states that we are unfit for communion with God when we harbor ill will against our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Love and forgiveness are better than burnt offerings; our humble attempts at reconciliation will always be a sweet-smelling sacrifice to our heavenly Father. It is God’s desire for us to be a quickly forgiving people; those who are slow to become

angry and quick to forgive. We are not to be a people who harbor, smolder, and seethe, seeking revenge rather than forgiveness. It is the way our Lord demonstrated, even as He hung on the cross:

“So when they came to the place that is called ‘The Skull,’ they crucified him there, along with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. [But Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.’] Then they threw dice to divide his clothes.” —Luke 23:33-34

Do we find ourselves in the unenviable position whereby we are being mistreated? It is both the teaching and example of Jesus that we are to forgive, difficult as that may seem. Yet with God, nothing is impossible! He never calls us to obedience without equipping us for the task. He is the ever-ready supply of grace, sufficient to meet our needs.

Become More

“Make me into a rock which swallows up the waves of wrong in its great caverns and never throws them back to swell the commotion of the angry sea from whence they came. Ah! To annihilate wrong in this way—to say, ‘It shall not be wrong against me, so utterly do I forgive it!’” —George MacDonald

“You never touch the ocean of God’s love as when you forgive and love your enemies.” —Corrie Ten Boom

“The man who is truly forgiven and knows it is a man who forgives.” —Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Further Reflections

“Peacemakers are people who breathe grace. They draw continually on the goodness and power of Jesus Christ, and then they bring His love, mercy, forgiveness, strength, and wisdom to the conflicts of daily life. God delights to breathe His grace through peacemakers and use them to dissipate anger, improve understanding, promote justice, and encourage repentance and restoration.” —Ken Sande

“Consider Christ. He was of a meek and quiet spirit, and of a most long-suffering behavior ... He was very much the object of bitter contempt and reproach, and slights and despised as of but little account. Though he as the Lord of glory, yet he was set at naught, and rejected ... He was the object of the spit and malice and

bitter reviling of the very ones he came to save ... He was called a deceiver of people, and oftentimes he was said to be mad, and possessed with the devil ... He was charged with being a wicked blasphemer, and one that deserved death on that account. They hated him with morbid hatred, and wished he was dead, and from time to time tried to murder him ... His life was an annoyance to them, and they hated him so they could not bear that he should live ... Yet Christ meekly bore all these injuries without resentment or one word of reproach, and with heavenly quietness of spirit pass through them all ... On the contrary, he prayed for his murderers, that they might be forgiven, even when they were nailing him to the cross; and not only prayed for them, but pleaded in their behalf with His Father, that they knew not what they were doing.” —Jonathan Edwards