

Tommy Meador / General

The Gospel of Luke / Forgiveness / Luke 17:1–10

Introduction

- \$22 million dollar lottery winner on Dave Ramsey show - Most expensive thing he has bought - patio furniture - hasn't told his children - doesn't want them to be entitled. Why hasn't he spent the money? Doesn't want to harm relationships.
- What are you willing to do to protect the relationships God has given you? How are you handling your relationships with care?
- We all know the pain of broken relationships. We've all been hurt by someone else. We know the difficulty of forgiving someone who has wronged us.
- We also know the joy of healthy, Christ-centered relationships. We know how Christ-centered relationships are life-giving.
- And, we know that Jesus calls His church to be unified. Numerous times in the NT, we are challenged to be unified as a body of believers.
- As a church, we can't accomplish much if we are divided, but we can accomplish great things for the Kingdom when we live unified.
- How do we handle our relationships with care? Jesus' words in [Luke 17:1-10](#) are very practical and helpful. Three challenges that will help us handle our relationships with care.

Let's protect each other from sin.

- Jesus has been addressing the Pharisees, now He turns to His disciples. Difficult words to disciples, but necessary words.
- Reminder: We have an obligation to each other. We have an obligation to help each other grow in Christlikeness, to hold each other accountable, to maintain unity, etc. We have an obligation to live unified together, and Jesus helping us to live in unity.
- vs. 1 - Offenses will certainly come - ESV - Temptations to sin are sure to come. Jesus, God in the flesh, knows that we live in a broken world. He knows that sin is crouching at the door, an enemy ready to devour. He also knows that we have a tendency to wound our own.
- “Woe to one through whom they come...” Challenging words - Woe to those of us who tempt others to sin - who put people in a position to dishonor the Lord. We should be encouraging people to grow in Jesus, not sin against Jesus.
- Vs. 2 - Better if a millstone (picture of millstone) tied around your neck and cast into the sea. Or, better if you were dead than to live a life where you influence and cause other people to live in rebellion against God.
- Kent Hughes: “I have occasionally prayed with my pastoral colleagues, ‘Lord, if one of us here is headed for adultery, take him home now.’” (Luke, Vol. 2, pg. 163).
- A very STRONG and challenging word for followers of Jesus: Let's protect each other from sin.
- How can we be stumbling block to others? How can we stand in the way of someone honoring Jesus?
 - **Theological negligence** - Your lack of biblical understanding may be causing people to reject God or not know God. You not taking your faith seriously a stumbling block to others to take faith seriously.

- **A godless example** - You talk the talk but don't walk the walk. What people see in you is inconsistency. You influence people to sin by your own sin.
- **Hurtful words** - Put people down and cause anger, bitterness. Or, gossip and cause people join in the gossip with you.
- **Pressure people to satisfy your desires** - Maybe outright pressure people to join in with you - whatever it is - high school student/college student - pressuring your bf or gf to sin sexually. Pressuring someone to join in gossip and slander, addictive behaviors, judgementalism, etc.
- How do you protect people from sin? By doing the opposite of the above.

Let's forgive each other repeatedly.

- Be on guard. (vs. 3) - You will sin against people, and people will sin against you. How will you respond when someone sins against you?
- **Be willing to lovingly correct.** Rebuke - The temptation when someone hurts you is to hurt back - by hurtful words, gossip, etc. When someone sins against us temptation to go to someone else and talk about it. Number of times I've said over the years, "Have you talked to them about it?" [Matt. 18:15](#): "**God tell him his fault, between you and him alone.**" Care enough about the other person to tell them how they offended you.
- **Be willing to restore.** "If he repents, forgive him..." Doesn't mean that if he does not repent to NOT forgive him. You cannot live in bitterness towards someone who refuses to repent. If someone who hurts you doesn't repent after you gently rebuke, restoration may not be possible. [Matthew 18](#) - bring someone else in who sees the same sin and try again. We don't abandon people who are sin, we keep rebuking with

love. Get the faith family involved for the sake of the soul of the sinner. BUT, in a personal situation, if the person who sins against you repents, restoration is possible! Work towards restoration.

- **Be willing to identify with the person who sinned against you.** When someone sins against you, the temptation to see yourself as superior to that person or better than. You're not. You're a sinner too. You need grace just as much as the person who has sinned against you needs grace from you.
- **Be willing to absorb the debt of the person who sinned against you.** When someone sins against you, they owe you. They need to pay for the damage they've done to your heart. BUT... forgiveness is a refusal to make the person pay. Forgiveness is voluntarily suffering by choosing to bear the cost of someone's hurt instead of retaliating. It's giving up the desire to get even and choosing to forgive and forget. (Treat the person like it didn't happen.)
- **Be willing to want good for the person who sinned against you.** Instead of wanting the person to pay, or to get what they have coming to them, pray for God's best for that person. Pray for life change and encourage it.
- **Be willing to offer continual forgiveness.** vs. 4 - Seven - number of completion/wholeness. Keep on doing it. Why? Because people struggle to change. You struggle to change. We're sinful, and we often run back to our sin. Sanctification takes place over time not in a moment. Imitate Jesus - live with a posture of forgiveness.
- Jesus NOT calling us to excuse sin, denying someone's sin, pretending like it didn't happen, etc. It's helping someone to see their sin, then doing what it takes, if possible, to put the relationship back together.
- I've seen so many relationships end when they didn't have to. I've seen so many people walk away from the church mad when they didn't have to. There was simply an unwillingness to do the hard but necessary work

of forgiveness. DO NOT end relationships because of your heard heart. Care enough about your relationships to do what is necessary to restore.

- What Jesus teaches is HARD and requires much grace and wisdom. Jesus NOT teaching us to put ourselves in a place where we allow someone to walk all over us, abuse us, continually hurt us, etc. BUT, He is teaching us to imitate Him. This requires humility from you.

Let's live out our faith even when it's hard.

- vs. 5 - "Increase our faith." You can understand why the disciples wanted Jesus to increase their faith. What Jesus said was hard.
- Forgive over and over again? How is that possible? Who is THAT patient? That loving? That gracious? That kind? We need MORE faith.
- Jesus: "If you have the faith the size of a mustard seed."
- **Acknowledge that there are times when you don't want to live out your faith.** When it comes to doing the hard things Jesus calls you to do, you might look for an excuse. "I'm just not strong enough to forgive. I can't live like Jesus. I don't have enough faith." Jesus says you have enough faith. If you are a follower of Christ, you have enough faith. Live out the faith you have even if it's hard to do so.
- **Living out your faith grows you in your faith.** Do you want a greater faith? Live out the faith you have. Every step of faith you take increases your faith. Forgive now, and you'll grow in your ability to forgive the next time you are required to forgive.
- **Live out your faith because it's the right response to grace.** vs. 7—10 - A short parable about a servant who does his job all day, comes in, prepares a meal for his master without the expectation of a "thank you" or accolades. He does it because it's his job. vs. 10 - In the same way,

you do what God has called you to do because you are His servant - as a humble servant of God, do what God has called you to do.

- THIS is a helpful reminder - in the big scheme of things, know who you are. The reason you have a hard time relationally is because you want to be at the center of every relationship. BUT, God should be at the center of every relationship. His will being accomplished should be at the center of every relationship. Therefore, to make sure that God is at the center of every relationship, just do what He says. Forgive. Live out your faith.
- Why should you do what God says? Because it is the right response to His grace. Gospel! [Philippians 2](#) - Because God loved you He sent His Son who served you by going to a cross to die in your place and rise again from the dead so your sins could be forgiven. At the cross, Jesus identified with you by dying in your place. He absorbed your debt by paying your debt because He wants the best for you. When you understand how loved you are by God, you will begin to say, "Not my will be done, but your will be done."
- This morning, will you embrace the forgiveness of Jesus? Believer, who is it that God is calling you to forgive? What will you do this week to extend forgiveness? Ask God to help you overcome your own bitterness and anger so you can imitate Jesus.