

Part 5 Forgiveness, Reconciliation & Trust Nov 13

Intro: Stefan Duerksen – Lead Pastor of Southland Church

Hi to those online!

Church-wide Requests: PRAY TOGETHER. 1. & 2. Great Command & Commission: Love & Disciple family, friends, neighbors & beyond

1. That every person in our church would engage the Great Commission. That we would disciple our kids and communities to Jesus.
 2. That our love for Jesus would spill over into everything we do!
 3. That the Church of Southeast MB would shine bright for Jesus – that we would be known for our LOVE.
 4. Pray for those being baptized and those thinking about it for next week!
 5. Pray P. Ray & Fran – they had a presentation in Toronto – now fly to Asia. Back-to-back events. Presenting CR, talking About the current global climate – the Church Needs to be engaged in Disciple Making and Loving people, presenting how to make a Disciple-making church, etc.
- wisdom, strength, favor, Spirit filling, etc.

Recap: we have been talking about understanding your enemy – and we are jumping back into this series.

- Our enemy is NOT people – we fight FOR people not AGAINST people. Our enemy is Satan himself and our flesh.
- The enemies preferred weapon is LIES and his preferred soil is a WOUNDED HEART
- We looked at the devastating effects of BITTERNESS, RESENTMENT & OFFENSE
- And we covered the DANGERS of BUSYNESS! How the enemy is perfectly comfortable with us being Christians and going to church as long as he can keep us DISTRACTED & BUSY to the point of losing meaningful connecting with JESUS and BURNING OURSELVES OUT.
 - He LOVES to destroy the TESTIMONY OF A BELIEVER.

Today we are going to talk about Reconciliation. And the heart of forgiveness required to move towards reconciling with those who've hurt us.

Luke 17:1 And he said to his disciples, “Temptations (*Greek: skandalizo – stumbling, temptation OR offense!*) to sin are sure to come (offenses are sure to come), but woe to the one through whom they come

Nothing kills LOVE in the heart of a believer quicker than OFFENSE. And nothing destroys our lives from the inside out better than OFFENSE. (see pt. 3)

I think everyone in here can agree that we don't want to be trapped in our hurts! We see that the Command to Forgive is a COMPASSIONATE COMAND.

- We get STUCK in the practice of forgiveness
- We get STUCK when the offender continues to hurt us
- We get STUCK when we try to TRUST the one who hurt us!

How do we navigate forgiveness and having relationships with those who have hurt us?

“forgiveness and trust are different.” Which is TRUE. Forgiveness is something we extend regardless of what someone has done to us. It SETS US FREE.

- TRUST on the other hand? Is like a wall. It needs to be BUILT. And once broken, may take some time to rebuild.
- In order for this to happen, we have to work through a process of RECONCILIATION.

A. We are called to Reconciliation

2 Corinthians 5:18-21 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

- God reconciled us to Himself through Christ’s death on the cross.
- He then calls us to the MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION
- **OBJECTION:** Doesn’t this just mean reconciliation with God? YES – but extends beyond that. Our life is a testimony to who God is and what he is like – if we refuse to reconcile with others? Something is wrong with our hearts. God is about reconciliation. We should be about reconciliation.

What does it mean to be reconciled? Reconciliation is the Greek word *katallagē*, meaning “an exchange; reconciliation, restoration to favor.”

Dictionary defines reconciliation: as the process by which “*friendly relations are restored*”

Romans 5:8-11 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us... For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

He calls us into the Ministry of Reconciliation – primarily this means – pointing people to Jesus to be reconciled with God! YES! But it also means...

The Church – each of us – should be MASTERS OF RECONCILIATION!

This is our BUSINESS. IF Jesus is in the business of reconciling relationships – then we should be as well! First to God, but also modeling it with one another!

Ray Ortlund writes: The gospel being what it is and always will be, “the message of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:19), our churches should be the most reconciling, peaceable, relaxed, happy places in town. We are so open to enemies, so meek in the face of insults and injuries, so forgiving toward the undeserving — if we do make people angry, let this be the reason. We refuse to join in their selfish battles. We’re following a higher call. We are the peacemakers, the true sons of God (Matthew 5:9).

This is hard in any circumstance. But can be extremely messy and painful when dealing with broken relationships within our families and friendship circles.

For example: spousal abuse, neglect, addiction – pornography, substance abuse, abandonment, financial disputes, etc.

For example: gossip, slander, social media attacks, people lying about you, etc.

These are BIG examples. But it could be smaller forms of disagreements, parenting, to character issues, misunderstandings, and angry outbursts.

Three categories of offenders: 1) people we don't know 2) People we know & trust; 3) We offend others

- Its one thing to forgive, turn the other cheek and respond with love as a customer at work attacks us.
- It's another thing when the person who is hurting us is close to us. Especially if the behavior is repeated. TRUST IS BROKEN.

B. Three components for restoring broken relationships:

1. **Forgiveness** – is something we do with God... it is a MUST. We release the offender of their debt owed us, regardless of them changing.
2. **Reconciliation** – requires two parties to come together. This means participation on both sides. It cannot be forced. Both parties need to be willing
 - a. In reconciliation we deal with:
 - i. wrongs we've done to the other person
 - ii. wrongs committed against us.
3. **Trust** – trust is necessary for relationships to work. In cases where we have relationship with the other person. Trust needs to be rebuilt.

C. Step 1: Forgiveness - Truly forgive from the heart

Colossians 3:13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

We Die With Gratitude Chiu-Chin-Hsiu and Ho-Hsiu-Tzu, Jiangxi, China, During the Red Guard Era, 196669 Read pages 109 110. The two Christian girls awaited in the Chinese prison yard for the announced execution. They had decided to submit to death without renouncing their faith. Flanked by renegade guards, the executioner came with a revolver in his hand. It was their own pastor! He had been sentenced to die with the two girls. But, as on many other occasions in church history, the persecutors worked on him, tempting him. They promised to release him if he would shoot the girls. He accepted. The girls bowed respectfully before their pastor. One of them said, Before you shoot us, we wish to thank you heartily for what you have meant to us. You taught us that Christians are sometimes weak and commit terrible sins, but they can be forgiven again. When you regret what you are about to do to us, do not despair like Judas, but repent like Peter. God bless you, and remember that our last thought was not one of indignation against your failure. Everyone passes through hours of darkness.

May God reward you for all the good you have done to us. We die with gratitude. They bowed again. The pastor's heart was hardened. He shot the girls. Afterwards he was shot by the Communists.

Genesis 33:3-4 He himself went on before them, bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.

The point: True Reconciliation cannot happen unless we have FIRST forgiven the one who has hurt us.

Forgiving FIRST requires a different mindset: We need a perspective shift! We need to realize a few core truths in order to do this.

- 1. Our King & His Kingdom are MORE important than our RIGHTS.**
 - a. **Love God** - Our rights are important – but when in conflict with each other... we gladly give up our rights for the sake of the Kingdom.
 - b. **Love People** – what is best for the other person?
 - c. **1 Corinthians 10:23-24** All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.
 - d. **PRACTICE:** 1) what would honor Jesus? 2) what is best for the person who hurt me? 3) what is best for me?
- 2. Whatever measure I use with others will be used with me**
 - a. **Luke 6:37-38** “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”
 - b. **Do I want judgement or mercy for my sins?**
- 3. My sin is just as bad as their sin – we all hurt and hurt others**
 - a. ALL sin required Jesus’ sacrifice to atone for. ALL of it. Mine and yours.
 - b. We judge others by their actions and ourselves by our intentions.
 - c. This KILLS our ability to LOVE God & people. It also drastically limits our ability to forgive.
 - d. **Luke 7:36-50** story of Simon and the sinful woman.
 - i. **Luke 7:47-48** Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.” And he said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”
 - e. **Romans 3:23-24** or all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

QUESTION TO PONDER: what would change in our hearts towards forgiving others if we saw our BITTERNESS as EQUALLY SINFUL to the EVIL or HURT committed against us?

RICHARD WURMBRAND STORY: Wurmbrand saw the pastor caress the hair of the man who had tortured him and speak these amazing words: “I have forgiven you with all of my heart, and I love you. If I who am only a sinner can love and forgive you, more so can Jesus who is the Son of God and who is love incarnate. Return to Him. He longs for you much more than you long for Him. He wishes to forgive

you much more than you wish to be forgiven. You just repent.” There, in the prison cell, the Communist began to confess all his murders and tortures. When he had finished, the two men prayed together, embraced, and then returned to their beds, where each died that very night.

The Romanian pastor had learned how to forgive. He had learned this from Jesus, who first forgave his debts, and then taught him to forgive his debtors. This same Jesus forgives us and delivers us, for by His death on the cross He has canceled our debt and destroyed the power of the Devil.

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/those-who-are-truly-forgiven-truly-forgive>

SABINA WURMBRAND STORY: Excerpted from In God’s Underground, pages 222-224.

When Romania entered the war on Germany's side, a pogrom began in which many thousands of Jews were killed or deported. At Iasi alone 11,000 were massacred in a day. My wife, who shares my Protestant faith, is also of Jewish origin. We lived in Bucharest, from which the Jews were not deported, but her parents, one of her brothers, three sisters, and other relatives who lived in Bucovine were taken to Transmistria, a wild border province that the Romanians had captured from Russia. Jews who were not murdered at the end of this journey were left to starve, and there Sabina's family died.

Sometime later our landlord, a good Christian, told me sadly of a man who was staying in the house while on leave from the front. “I knew him before the war,” he said, “but he's changed completely. He has become a brute who likes to boast of how he volunteered to exterminate Jews in Transmistria and killed hundreds with his own hands.”

I went upstairs after supper to the landlord's flat. Lounging in an armchair was a giant of a man whom the landlord introduced as Borila, the killer of Jews from Transmistria. When he rose he was even taller than I, and there seemed to be about him an aura of horror that was like a smell of blood. Soon he was telling us of his adventures in the war and of the Jews he had slaughtered.

The murderer proved to be not only a murderer. Nobody is only one thing. He was a pleasant talker, and eventually it came out that he had a great love of music. He mentioned that while serving in the Ukraine he had been captivated by the songs there. “I wish I could hear them again,” he said.

I knew some of these old songs. I thought to myself, looking at Borila, The fish has entered my net! “If you'd like to hear some of them,” I told him, “come to my flat—I'm no pianist, but I can play a few Ukrainian melodies.”

The landlord, his wife, and his daughter accompanied us. My wife was in bed. She was used to my playing softly at night and did not wake up. I played the folk songs, which are alive with feeling, and I could see that Borila was deeply moved. I remembered how, when King Saul was afflicted by an evil spirit, the boy David had played the harp before him.

I stopped and turned to Borila. “I've something very important to say to you,” I told him. “Please speak,” he said. “If you look through that curtain you can see someone is asleep in the next room. It's my wife, Sabina. Her parents, her sisters, and her twelve-year-old brother have been killed with the rest of the family. You told me that you had killed hundreds of Jews near Golta, and that is where they were taken.”

Looking into his eyes, I added, “You yourself don't know who you have shot, so we can assume that you are the murderer of her family.”

He jumped up, his eyes blazing, looking as if he were about to strangle me. I held up my hand and said, “Now—let's try an experiment. I shall wake my wife and tell her who you are, and what you have done. I can tell you what will happen. My wife will not speak one word of reproach! She'll embrace you as if you were her brother. She'll bring you supper, the best things she has in the house.

“Now, if Sabina, who is a sinner like us all, can forgive and love like this, imagine how Jesus, who is perfect Love, can forgive and love you! Only turn to Him—and everything you have done will be forgiven!”

Borila was not heartless: within, he was consumed by guilt and misery at what he had done, and he had shaken his brutal talk at us as a crab shakes its claws. One tap at his weak spot and his defenses crumbled. The music had already moved his heart, and now came—instead of the attack he expected—words of forgiveness.

His reaction was amazing. He jumped up and tore at his collar with both hands, so that his shirt was rent apart. “Oh God, what shall I do, what shall I do?” he cried. He put his head in his hands and sobbed noisily as he rocked himself back and forth. “I'm a murderer, I'm soaked in blood, what shall I do?” Tears ran down his cheeks. I cried, “In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I command the devil of hatred to go out of your soul!”

Borila fell on his knees trembling, and we began to pray aloud. He knew no prayers; he simply asked again and again for forgiveness and said that he hoped and knew it would be granted. We were on our knees together for some time; then we stood up and embraced each other, and I said, “I promised to make an experiment. I shall keep my word.”

I went into the other room and found my wife still sleeping calmly. She was very weak and exhausted at that time. I woke her gently and said, “There is a man here whom you must meet. We believe he has murdered your family, but he has repented, and now he is our brother.”

She came out in her dressing gown and put out her arms to embrace him; then both began to weep and to kiss each other again and again. I have never seen bride and bridegroom kiss with such love and purity as this murderer and the survivor among his victims. Then, as I foretold, Sabina went to the kitchen to bring him food.

Conclusion KEYS PLEASE:

MARANATHA!! Come soon Lord!

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SC CHURCH WIDE PRAYER REQUESTS 2022

Cruise Ship → → → → → Battleship

1. **Great Command** (Mt 22:37-40): Love God – Love people: hospitality, generosity, serving & empathy
2. **Great Commission** (Mt 28:18-20): Disciple family, friends, neighbors & beyond
3. **Word & Truth** (1Pet 3:15): Know the Gospel, grow in discernment, speak the truth in love
4. **Persecuted Church** (2 Cor 4:7-10): Religious freedom, freedom of speech, spiritual fortitude, wisdom
5. **Church Renewal**: Directors for India & the Chinese worldwide, make many global disciple makers (The Way)
6. **DONE - Leadership**: Wisdom and direction in the search for Lead Pastor and Executive Pastor