

Conundrums of Conflict & Deeper Truths (Part 3)

My Goals of this Sermon Series

1. I Want You to Become Experts in Recognizing & Avoiding the Evil Trap of Offense
2. I Want You to Discover the Sources of Hurt, Anger, Resentment, and Unforgiveness Inside
3. I Want You to Diligently & Humbly Work Towards Reconciliation Regarding Any Offense that Stands Between You and Others

We get hung up on and confused by these conundrums, and default to holding on to offenses.

- Justice Claim
- Weakness
- Trust & Vulnerability
- Enabling & Codependency
- Self-Care & Respect (Doormat Effect)
- **The Offender Has No Remorse**
- **The Offender is Dead**
- **Responsibility to Push Back on Oppression**

The Hierarchy of Truth

Some truth is “weightier” than other Truth. In other words, some truth is deeper, more foundational, and supersedes the claim of less “weighty” truths.

The Offender Has No Remorse

Understandably, this can be a very painful process where the offended expresses significant hurt and the offender is either unaware or unwilling to acknowledge it and/or work towards reconciliation. A common question that arises is “Must I forgive someone who is not sorry for what they’ve done?”

“Forgiveness Is Not an Occasional Act, It Is a Constant Attitude”

--MLK, Jr.

Luke 6:27-28, 33, 35

²⁷ “But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you. ²⁸ Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you...if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit? Even sinners do that much! “Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked.

Mark 11:25

But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too.

Luke 23:34 “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.”

Forgiveness is Not Dependent on the Offender's Cooperation

2 Issues

1. **Internal** Determination to Forgive
2. Must Be an **External** Relational Exchange that Requires the Cooperation of the Offender
 - This Can be Exponentially Painful
 - You Can't Control
 - **Romans 12:18** As far as it depends on you be at peace with all men.
 - Keep Your Heart Humble and Prepared for Future Reconciliation
 - Compassion for the Unrepentant Can Cut the Leg Out from Under Bitterness, Anger, and Unforgiveness

The Offender is Dead

A common struggle for many is that the offender is no longer alive, and the interaction of repentance and forgiveness is no longer possible. This can lead some to mistakenly believe that letting go of the offense is no longer possible.

- As Stated Above, Forgiveness is Not Dependent on the Offender's Cooperation
- **The Empty Chair**

Responsibility to Push Back on Oppression

2 Cor. 10:3-4

We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons...

“Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. You not only refuse to shoot a man, but you refuse to hate him.”

MLK, Jr.

Remember, this is what waging war looks like as a Christian:

Matthew 5:39-42

...Do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also. ⁴⁰If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too. ⁴¹If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles. ⁴²Give to those who ask, and don't turn away from those who want to borrow.

Romans 12:20-21

“If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads.”²¹ Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

The Ultimate Goal is Reconciliation!