

# Life Matters

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## ***What It Means For Others To See Jesus In You***

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*October 2012*



*The Image of God,  
upon the soul of man  
in the eyes of the world.*

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***Christ E Free Church Pulpit Series  
October 2012***

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*Jesus Christ*  
*Our Highest Calling,*  
*Our Greatest Purpose,*  
*Our Soul's Source and Joy*  
*And Our All-Consuming Passion.*



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## Introduction

The focus of this series is showing the life of Jesus to the world, through our Christian lives. It is the image of God, stamped on the soul of man, in the eyes of the world.

We will be attempting to answer the question...

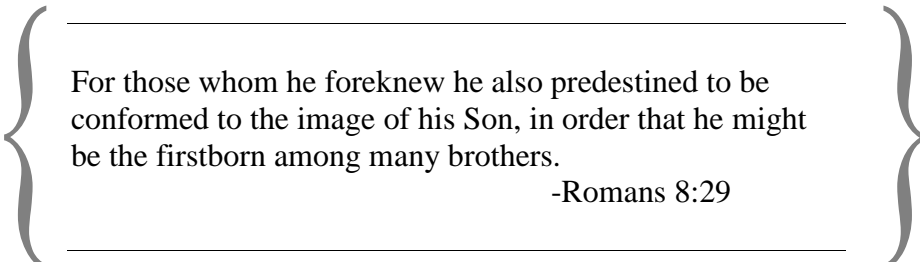
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*“What does it mean for others to see Jesus in me?”*

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The unbelieving world around us, needs to see the life of Jesus in us. The Church in America today longs to see the life of Jesus manifested in our own relationships.

As the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, we must, without exception, be growing in our Christian faith and maturity, more into the likeness of Jesus Christ each day.



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For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

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-Romans 8:29

Living the Christian life is not an option to God, it is an every day expectation. Growing more into the likeness of Jesus, is not an option but a very real expectation.

It matters how we live and how we treat others. It matters what others think about us as believers and followers of Jesus. It matters what others see in us, think about us and how they judge us.

We have a reputation and a name to uphold. It is the name of Jesus Christ. They must see Christ in us. Our lives must reflect His life and must be a visual confirmation of the verbal message that we proclaim.

*What does it mean for others to see Jesus in me?*

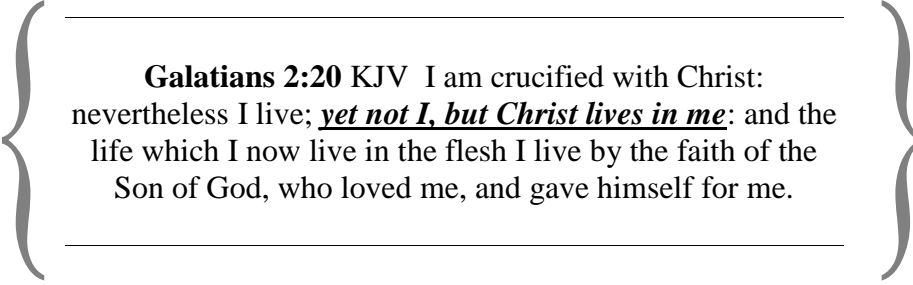
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# Breaking The Mold: Evidencing Acceptance and Defeating Rejection

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John 4

October 7, 2012



**Galatians 2:20** KJV I am crucified with Christ:  
nevertheless I live; **yet not I, but Christ lives in me**: and the  
life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the  
Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

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**Theme:** -- Deference, Prejudice, Racism, Bigotry,

## INTRODUCTION

The focus of this series is at the forefront of what God wants for every believer in Christ. Yet it is the very thing Satan fights to prevent and our own human nature rebels against.

It is this very component of the Christian faith that Scripture promises to be a force of great power in reaching and transforming unsaved husbands. This also is responsible for, once implemented in the life of the husband and father – is responsible for life giving confidence and culture changing influences in the world today.

It is this element of Christian faith that has been responsible for Christian martyrs leading their murderers to saving faith in Jesus Christ. It is what has won many converts to Christ, long after the missionaries they tortured and brutally executed, were gone.

It is this which God promises to use and bless as kingdom power and the instrument which communicates and evidences the gospel message as nothing else in the universe can. Likewise, it is the absence of this all important element which will render the life

giving gospel as inactive and bring destruction on families, communities and peoples.

This element of Christian faith and kingdom power is...

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***The Image of God, Upon the soul of man, In the eyes of the world.***

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Or to put it another way, when the unbelieving world sees the life and character of our Lord Jesus Christ's life reflected in our lives – this is the confirming and authenticating element that can either make our message of hope and salvation in Christ believable or detestable to those around us.

As believers and representatives of Jesus Christ, we are called to reflect His likeness, love, and character, - in our attitudes, choices and behavior.

Our behavior can authenticate the gospel message or negate the gospel message.

It is God's desire for our lives as Christians, to reflect His likeness, love, and character, - in our attitudes, choices and behavior. This can never take place until we begin living lives that are changed by His grace to evidence His life in us.

**Galatians 2:20 KJV** I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; **yet not I, but Christ lives in me**: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Some may think, “Well, its my life. I want to live like I want to live.” God made us and gave us life for His purposes. Failing to live our lives for the purpose for which we were created amounts to wasting our life. John Piper says “It is better to lose your life [for Christ], than to waste it [living for ourselves].”

It is God's desire for our lives as Christians, to reflect His likeness, love, and character, - in our attitudes, choices and behavior.

**QQ:** What does it mean for others to see Jesus in You?

For the past week, I have been asking people this very question.

One person said “It means to make others feel welcome or accepted.” Another said, “it means being loving and considerate toward others.”

Today we look at Jesus “Breaking the Mold: Evidencing Acceptance and Defeating Rejection.”

## **JESUS AND THE FOREIGNER**

In John chapter 4, we see Jesus breaking the mold and the cultural norms in those with whom He associated. Though Jesus was the sinless Son of God, He did not view people critically, but saw the value and potential in everyone, even the woman at the well.

**John 4:3-9** ESV he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. (4) And he had to pass through Samaria. (5) So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. (6) Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

*As a foreigner,  
Jesus Himself  
knew what it  
was like to be  
an outcast and  
a reject.*

This well would have been the gathering place for the locals. The site is the well of Jacob, which would be a fairly sacred Jewish site. At the same time it was in the area of Samaria, who were a people viewed, by the Jewish people, as defiled and outcasts.

In the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, “it is suggested, that Sychar was a derogatory nickname applied to this area by the Jews. It is believed Sychar referred to being either

‘drunken’, or ‘falsehood’.” (ISBE)

The Easton Bible Encyclopedia states that “‘Samaritans’ was the name given to the new and mixed inhabitants whom the king of

Assyria, brought back in 677 B.C., from Babylon and other places and settled in the cities of Samaria. These strangers amalgamated with the Jews who were still in the land, and gradually abandoned their old idolatry and adopted partly the Jewish religion.

After the return from the Captivity, the Jews in Jerusalem refused to allow them to take part with them in rebuilding the temple, and hence sprang up an open enmity between them.. The bitter enmity between the Jews and Samaritans continued in the time of our Lord: the Jews had ‘no dealings with the Samaritans’. (*Easton*)

## **Association**

It is important to take note that Jesus was not afraid or ashamed to associate with Samaritans. He didn’t embrace the cultural prejudices of His own people. He refused to accept the negative perceptions of others and categorize people from the evaluation of others. I don’t know about you, but I want to be like that.

A few years ago, I met a young man dressed in black, died black hair, black eye liner, chains around his waist and piercings in his ears, nose, lips, and eyebrows. I thought, “this is someone I might want to avoid.” But through various circumstances, I got to know him and discovered he was a very sensitive young man, extremely courteous, and very open to spiritual things. He even wanted me to come to his house to talk to his mom about the LORD.

Jesus was not like that. He didn’t view others like that. He cared enough to initiate contact and break the mold of the cultural norms.

## **Prejudice**

Jesus did not show favoritism or prejudice. Prejudice is putting one person or one group below another. Favoritism is placing some people on a higher level than others.

**James 2:1-3** ESV My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. (2) For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, (3) and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You

sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet," (4) have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

Jesus was our example and we are to hold all people as valuable in Gods' sight, even the outcasts, and those viewed by his own people as detestable.

## **ACCEPTANCE**

Jesus evidenced the acceptance of the Father in His relations with humanity.

*Jesus was a good example of what it looks like to be secure enough in our faith, in order to keep from being manipulated by the forces around us.*

## **Caring Contact**

Jesus cared enough to initiate contact. Growing up in school, Faith's parents encouraged her to notice the loners and try to be a friend to them. We have tried to teach the same principles to our boys.

We have been blessed to grow up as a family in very racially diverse communities, where we were the minority. 67% of the population were Hispanic, 25% were African Americans, and the rest was a sprinkling of others people groups. We have had lots of neighbors and friends who were of different ethnic origins and economic levels than we were.

**John 4:6-9** ESV Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. (7) A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (8) (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) (9) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

She was a woman. She was a Samaritan woman. It didn't matter to Jesus, what the person's gender, ethnic background or economic level was. He was willing to associate with all.

Lewis Curtis was my High school drafting instructor. He was black. One day, during drafting class, he sort of pushed aside his drafting book and began addressing some of the racial issues in the school. Regarding racism, he said, "**We're all the same on the inside.**"

Jesus valued women. He valued Samaritans. He evidenced the acceptance of the Father in all His relations with all humanity. *Jesus didn't show favoritism or prejudice.*

## **Cultural Acceptance**

Jesus didn't allow the negative cultural prejudices to affect His perspective or treatment of others.

### **How can you know you might be prejudice?**

**1)** Do you refer to others who are different than you by derogatory slangs or cultural nicknames? Every people group has nicknames which our culture has given. Blacks, Asians, Hispanics, Italians, the poor, some slangs for women, etc...

When we first got married we were visiting my family in Tennessee. We met an old friend of my Dad's and I introduced him to Faith. He said, "***so you married a d \_ \_ Yankee.***"

I was a little surprised at the statement. Later Faith said, "***boy are these folks prejudiced!***"

You know you may be prejudiced if you refer to others different than you with cultural slangs or derogatory nicknames.

**2)** When looking at others do you emphasize the unattractive qualities of others?

- a) "Look at that guy's goofy clothes."
- b) "Boy is that person fat or what?."
- c) "Can you believe her dress?"

If that's how you typically look at and refer to others, you may be prejudiced or perhaps even racist.

*Jesus was not like that, He evidenced acceptance.*

## **JESUS DEFEATED REJECTION**

Jesus defeated the rejection of prejudice through His connection with those to whom the world had turned away, or deemed “unworthy.”

**John 4:10** ESV Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

## **The Outcast and Despised**

Jesus cared about the soul of the outcast and the despised. He engages her in conversation. He even asks a favor to the outcast.

Jesus is willing to evidence acceptance and defeat rejection by going against the grain of society and breaking the cultural norms. Even the Samaritan woman noticed it.

*Jesus  
associated with  
the despised,  
the rejected,  
the outcast, and  
even the sinners.*

*“Why are you talking to me? I’m a woman of Samaria”*

Jesus was willing to break the molds and look beyond social, cultural and racial differences.

## **The Importance of Eternal Things**

Jesus lovingly spoke of eternal things. He loved and cared enough to look beyond the difference of others and direct them to God. Jesus did not separate himself from those who were different.

## **OFF THE PAGE AND INTO MY LIFE**

Jesus identified Himself with the outcasts, the rejects and the sinners. He was a friend of sinners. So were others in the Bible.



**Nehemiah 1:5-6** ESV And I said, "O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, (6) let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father's house have sinned.

**Isaiah 6:5** ESV And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

Nehemiah was a man who, when he prayed for his people, included himself with them as one who was in need of forgiveness.

When Isaiah saw his vision of a holy God, he prayed, and considered himself as deeply in need as his people. Both Nehemiah and Isaiah identified themselves with their people.

And Jesus, though He was the sinless Son of God, associated Himself with those deemed by his own people as being those to be avoided.

## *What does it mean for others to see Jesus in You?*

### **1) The life of Jesus is evidenced in your own life.**

**Galatians 2:20** ESV I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

- including the love of Jesus toward others is seen in your life
- the acceptance of others is evidenced in your life
- the prejudices and rejection of others is defeated in your life for the world to see and take note of

### **2) The presence of Jesus in your attitude and actions is perceived by others.**

**2 Corinthians 2:14-15** ESV (14) But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. (15) For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing,

Some are a pleasing fragrance of the Lord Jesus to others, which draws them favorably to Jesus through our interaction with them.

Someone here at church has a perfume or cologne with an aroma that reminds me of the men's room at the hospital. When I'm there, I love to smell the men's room. Even when I don't have to use the men's room, I like to stop in, wash my hands and smell the aroma there. Evidently the cleaning solution there is much like that perfume I often smell here at the church. It is a very pleasant aroma to me.

And even though the person wearing the perfume is no longer in the hallway or stairway, the aroma lingers, leaving a pleasing impression.

Some Christians are a pungent offensive odor to others, which repels others from taking any interest in Christ. Others are a sweet pleasing aroma of Jesus, that long after the person is gone, there is a lingering fragrance, leaving a pleasing impression behind.

What fragrance do you leave behind? Is it the aroma of Christ?

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### **“Oh To Be Like Thee Blessed Redeemer”**

O to be like Thee! blessed Redeemer;  
This is my constant longing and prayer;  
Gladly I'll forfeit all of earth's treasures,  
Jesus, Thy perfect likeness to wear.

**Chorus:** Oh to be like Thee! Oh to be like Thee!  
Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art;  
Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness;  
Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart.



## “Beyond The Call Of Duty” Showing Patience and Nurturing Respect “

John 4

10/14/12

Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." - -

*John 4:11*

**Theme:** personal worth and value, infusing confidence and faith. Seeing with God's eyes, the value of all His creation.

### **Introduction**

**Q:** What does it mean for others to see Jesus in You? It means we leave an aroma. We also leave a print.

### **Kingdom Print**

Each of us has a finger print. When you touch something, you leave that finger print on it. Each of us has a foot print – wherever we walk, we leave an imprint.

Each of us has a Kingdom Print – with the people you meet, the impression you leave is a Kingdom Print. Our Kingdom print may cause some to see the Life of Jesus in us and to be interested in Him. Or our Kingdom Print may cause some to see our own fallen, broken selfish nature and cause others to be disinterested in the things of God.

What is your Kingdom Print like? What lasting, lingering impression do you leave on others?

*What does it mean for others to see Jesus in you?*

I believe it means, that at varying levels, we as Christians, reflect Christ's, love, His likeness and His character, in our attitudes, our choices and in our behavior.

***It is The Image of God, stamped upon the Soul of a man, observed through the eyes of the world.***

In our world today, if you want to stick out like a sore thumb try this for size.

*Reflecting  
Christ's love,  
likeness and  
character in my  
attitude, choices  
and behavior.*

- 1) Start showing a little Long-Suffering, which is nothing more than an uncommon demonstration of unmerited patience.
- 2) Try a little Loving-Kindness, which amounts to an unmistakable display of Christ-like compassion, tenderness and helpful encouragement toward others.
- 3) Try a little Nurturing Respect, which basically boils down to purposefully honoring and being respectful toward others, whether they deserve it

or not.

Once we begin demonstrating these traits of Jesus, I believe the world will see Christ in us, whether they are aware of Him or not.

Jesus and The adulteress - this is actually an extension of Jesus's encounter with the woman at the well from John 4.

Jesus does everything right. If she had gotten angry with him and stormed away, we might think, "*well certainly Jesus blew that opportunity*". That is certainly a far cry from "*God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life*". But if it works, and if the woman is receptive, then we would think, "how effective Jesus was in reaching the adulteress woman right where she was. And that is what happens.

Jesus refrains from being degrading, though perhaps she would merit some name calling and sin pointing out. He was not insulting or inflammatory in his treatment of her situation, her sin and her spiritually needy state. He was not belittling to her as a

woman or a foreigner or as an all around common sinner. He is tactful and effectively addresses her situation with tenderness that brings about conviction. To this adulteress – Jesus is patiently understanding and respectfully nurturing.

Please turn to John chapter 4.

## **ETERNAL HUMAN VALUE**

Jesus Recognizes The Eternal Human Value of Every Person.

Jesus knew this woman's situation, when the woman didn't know He knew.

**John 4:10-15** Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." (11) The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? (12) Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." (13) Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, (14) but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (15) The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."

It is one thing to be tolerant of those whom our culture is prejudiced toward. Its another thing to be genuinely concerned about their spiritual life and feel compelled by the love of Christ to actually go out of your way to interact with them. That is risky business. What will people think of us?

## **THE IMAGE OF GOD**

**Gen 1:27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Jesus recognized the eternal human value of the woman's soul. We know the "image" of God is something unique only to humans.

1) We know it has something to do with authority and responsibility. Immediately creating humans in God's image, they are instructed that they are to rule over all of creation.

**Gen 1:28** And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

2) We know that being created in the image of God has something to do with the breath of life.

**Gen 2:7** then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

God personally breathed in the nostrils of mankind, the breath of life. With the likeness of God and with the breath of life, man became a living soul, or being or creature.

3) We know the image of God includes some kind of moral responsibility regarding our choices between right and wrong.

**Gen 3:5** For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Whether we choose to believe the words of the serpent, we do know that humans have the ability to make moral choices between right and wrong *and* good and evil.

## **THE SOUL OF MAN**

The soul of man will live forever. But is man's soul eternal or everlasting? Eternal means it has always existed and always will exist. Everlasting says something began, but has no ending. Eternal has no beginning and no end. Everlasting has a beginning but no ending.

First, there is the beginning of the individual soul. There is the position that at some point during creation, perhaps when angels were created, that God also created every soul of every person who has ever lived and that ever will live. And at the point of

conception or birth, the soul was imparted to or assigned to the body.

There is another belief that when the human is conceived in the womb, the soul is conceived at the same time. However it occurred, and I believe only God can know this – however it occurs, we know that the human soul continues to live without end.

Secondly, the soul endures for eternity to come or is Everlasting. We cannot put our finger on when the soul began, but we do know the soul is everlasting or that it endures to eternity to come.

When Jesus interacts with the woman at the well (John 4:v10) He evidences the eternal value of her soul. Even though she is an outcast, a reject and a bottom of the barrel sinner – an adulteress, he recognizes the image of God upon her soul, He values her, He is tenderly patient with her and He nurtures her with respect for who she is as God's creation.

*It is important  
in any  
relationship that  
we attempt to  
see the God  
given value of  
each person.*

## **The Eyes of The World**

To say that the world has eyes is an overstatement. People see, they observe, they take note, they recognize and realize how we act and live and we leave others with a lasting lingering impression of something.

*\* What do people see or think about Christians?*

If humans saw one another as Jesus saw the woman at the well, imagine the change that would take place in the world.

Wars  
trafficking

Prejudice  
World hunger

Persecution

Human  
Slavery

What difference would it make if Christians deeply and consistently reflected the love, likeness and character of Jesus in our attitudes, choices and behavior?

Patience and respect within not only our communities and churches, but what about our families? What if it started there,

filled our

churches, and on to impact our culture and community? Imagine the change that could affect the world.

When the world looks at us what do they see?

- Do they see us reflecting the image of Jesus Christ?
- Do they see us evidencing the value of each everlasting soul?

When the world looks at us, what do they see?

*Jesus recognizes the eternal human value in every person.*

## **THE PHYSICAL HUMAN PROBLEM**

This woman at the well was an eternal soul, but she was a lost soul. Not because she was a Samaritan, certainly not because she was a woman, but because she had not met or believed in Messiah Jesus.

### **Temporary vs. Eternal**

Their conversation reflected...

- 1) She had a lack of spiritual understanding

**John 4:11** The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?"

She was thinking temporary physical water. Jesus was thinking eternal spiritual life.

- 2) She had a need for spiritual teaching or direction

**John 4:13-14** Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, (14) but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Someone needed to care enough to risk offending her culture, her traditions, her sacred beliefs and direct her to the Truth of God's word and the clarity of salvation.



## **Spiritual understanding begins**

**John 4:15** The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."

She is still not there, but she is heading toward a spiritual breakthrough. From there, the conversation turns to the Messiah and ultimately to life and fruit.

**John 4:39** Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did."

It often takes more than one meeting or a 4 point statement to get the Truth of God's word into the heart of another person. It takes long-suffering and a nurturing-respect to get Truth to take root in a person's spirit.

## **JESUS REFLECTS THE FATHER**

We see Jesus reflecting the image of God in the eyes of the world.

**John 4:16-18** (16) Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." (17) The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; (18) for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true."

At this point, the very worst has been revealed. And yet, Jesus shows patience and nurtures respect in others. He simply knows everything.

The focus here is not on Christ's omniscience, but that in knowing everything about her, He remains loving, compassionate, while showing patience with her and nurturing respect in her.

He doesn't say, "Oh for crying out loud woman, when is it going to sink in with you?"

He doesn't implement insults or sarcasm or guilt manipulation. In John chapter 8 Jesus encounters another adulterous woman and has

a golden opportunity to give her what she deserves, which is judgment and condemnation, but He does not.

**John 8:10-11** Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" (11) She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."

In the midst of those who would have executed her, Jesus showed mercy, patience and respect.

Notice that Jesus knows the worst about these women, but still shows patience and nurtures respect.

*Even when  
justice was well  
deserved, Jesus  
showed mercy,  
understanding  
and respect*

### **OFF THE PAGE AND INTO MY LIFE**

It is possible to say the right words to others, but our body language or voice inflects a different message. It is possible to say 'I love you', but your countenance shouts, 'I detest you'. Often *how* we say things, sends a louder message than *what* we actually say.

When we love others, it shows. When we detest others, we can't hide it. That is why the key part of others seeing Jesus in us, is not about our words, but our treatment of others. It has to go deeper than merely what we say.

For others to really see Jesus in me, I must reflect or display His likeness, love and character in my attitude, choices and behavior.

And ultimately those things cannot be faked. They can only come as we are gradually, but increasingly changed from glory to glory and from who we are, into who He wants us to be.

- 1) Start showing a little extra patience towards others, who try and exhaust your patience.
- 2) Try a little Kindness when your initial impulse is to respond with an insult.

3) Consider giving a little extra respect, especially to those whom you feel may not deserve respect. There is a difference between feeling like you respect some, and actually showing respect or being respectful.

An unwillingness to show patience and give respect toward others is an unwillingness to obey God and an unwillingness to reflect the likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ to those who so desperately need it.

Pray that God would build that likeness in us.

### **When the World Looks at Me, Roger Bennett**

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Album: The Prestigious Cathedral Quartet (1984)

I want my life to be a light for those around me  
I want my life to be that roadmap that says “Hope”  
I want my life to be a beacon on life’s raging sea  
I want the world to see Jesus when they look at me

(Chorus)

When the world looks at me do they see Jesus?  
When the world looks at me what do they see?  
Do they see hope? Do they see love? Do they see charity?  
When the world looks at me what will they see?

When I spoke, did my words contain Your wisdom, Lord?  
And when I prayed, did my prayers contain Your love?  
And did my life reflect the glory of Your Spirit?  
And did I show the ones around me they were loved?

(Chorus)

Jesus went above and beyond the call of duty, showing patience and nurturing respect. How far will we be willing to go to become like Him?

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## “The Unexpected Secret Weapon: Dispelling Discord and Reconciling Relationships”

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Matthew 5

10/21/12


“Friendships born on the field of athletic strife are the  
real gold of competition. Awards become corroded,  
friends gather no dust.”  
- Jesse Owens



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But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who  
persecute you, (45) so that you may be sons of your Father  
who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and  
on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.  
(46) For if you love those who love you, what reward do  
you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?  
-Matthew 5:44-46

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**Theme:** strife and making and keeping peace

### INTRODUCTION

In our lesson today, the key concept is “willing to give” or to bend.

**1Cor. 3:3** for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy  
and *strife* among you,...

**Pro 6:16-19** There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that  
are an abomination to him: (17) haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and  
hands that shed innocent blood, (18) a heart that devises wicked  
plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, (19) a false witness who  
breathes out lies, and one who sows *discord* among brothers.

## *What does it mean for others to see Jesus in me?*

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### **CULTURAL EXAMPLES**

Our culture gives us many examples of how “not” to do things, including relationships. What does it take to dispel discord?

Consider the situation within the church. One survey I read, 66% of all people who leave their church, do so over an offense. Someone hurt them, angered them, offended them, irked them....

Statistics differ depending how long a person has attended a given church. For instance, if a person visits a church a couple times, and never comes back, most of the reasons are different. But for those who are long term attenders or members, who leave a church, the #1 issue typically has something to do with personal offense, being hurt or angered, being unable or possibly unwilling to work out differences, dispel the strife and discord or reconcile the broken or injured relationships.

In other statistics, the percentage is different, but in nearly every survey or analysis on why people leave their church, somewhere in the top 10 is the reason of personal offense from others.

What it boils down to is that Church attenders (not necessarily Christians) appear to evidence an inability to dispel discord and reconcile relationships, to the degree that rather than working out the wrongs, and reflecting Christ Biblically, they simply choose to leave. What does this tell us about people in general?

Three facts to remember:

Fact #1: Discord and strife are possible in every relationship.

Fact #2: It is difficult to have a fight between only one person.

Fact #3: Some people would rather fight than change!

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### *What does it mean to dispel discord?*

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*“If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.” - The Bible, Romans 12:18*

At least one person has to be willing to reflect the likeness of Jesus

- 1) It involves taking off the boxing gloves
- 2) It involves loving and blessing the “opposition”.
- 3) It means a willingness to be

misunderstood and even mistreated, in order that others see the life of Christ in us.

*It is possible to  
live at peace with  
others, even  
when we have  
significant  
disagreements.*

So much of Scripture is about relationships. Patrick Morely from ManInTheMirror ministries say, “if you cut the Scriptures, it bleeds relationships”.

“Do Unto Others as you would have them do unto you.” -Matthew 7:12

“Do nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves.”

Philippians 2:3

## **Abraham and Lot**

**Gen 13:7-9** and there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land. (8) Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are kinsmen. (9) Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left."

1) We must refuse to fight. You can't fight with only one person.

2) We must resolve to love. It all begins with a commitment of obedience.

3) We must attempt to pattern our attitudes and responses after godly examples in Scripture. We have to look outside of ourselves to those who evidenced Godly character and behavior.

4) We must commit to save the relationship and actually encourage the other person. What means most to us, winning the fight or winning the relationship?

## **BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF A CHRIST LIKE RESPONSE**

What are some Biblical examples of a Christ-like response and what does it take to dispel discord and reconcile our relationships?

**Mat 5:38-46** "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' (39) But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. (40) And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. (41) And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. (42) Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. (43) "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' (44) But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, (45) so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven ([clarification]). For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (46) For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

Does this sound like a recipe for becoming a “doormat”?

There’s a story of a man who was walking down a path when he came upon Jesus sitting on a rock, contemplating His dilemma and asking Himself, “What would I do?”

What *would* Jesus Do? We have just read what He would do. But to put it into understandable bites, we will state it this way.

### **Do Not Do Unto Others**

We know we are to do unto others as we would want them to do unto us. This is the Golden Rule.

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*"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." -Matthew 7:12*

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But the adverse can also be true when it comes to dispelling discord and reconciling relationships. Do *not* do unto others as they have done unto you.

We must be willing and able to entrust our situation to God and refrain from doing His job for Him. Trust God to work it out and to bring about His justice, rather than seeking our own rights through revenge.

We must also forgive those who offend or mistreat us.

Mat.5:38) “eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth” – this is the means of justice. This was the law of justice that says, “they took something from you, you are to take something from them” – what they took from you, they owe restitution to you.

*An eye for an  
eye, tooth for a  
tooth, hurt for  
hurt, offense for  
offense and  
insult for an  
insult.*

Matthew 5 is not about rejecting justice, but about reconciling relationships.

What we tend to do is to implement this kind of justice in our own relationships. Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, hurt for hurt, offense for offense and insult for insult. We take what was meant for corporate justice and we apply it to our own personal excuses for revenge.

v.39) don't oppose those who do evil toward you.

And if someone hits you on the cheek, turn the other cheek.

Some read this and immediately are concerned that if we treat others this way, it will be an open invitation for them to walk all over us and make me a “door mat”. God does not promise what the outcome of the relationship will become. He does however, invite us to reflect the life of Christ in our attitudes and actions.

Now if someone is being abusive to you, then it might be a good idea, to attempt to remove yourself from that situation, at least temporarily. But if we are not willing to live as Christ as stated, then ultimately we are not living the Christian or the Christ-like life.

v.40) if someone sues you for something, consider giving them more than they sued you for. That would certainly be unexpected, but it would be risky. Anytime we attempt to live as Christ lived, we are taking a risk of being taken advantage of.



v.41) If someone forces you to go 1 mile, go an additional mile. Risk giving more than people expect from you. Risk being gracious and benevolent.

v.42) Give to the beggar and loan to the borrower. Risk loss. Show compassion, rather than hard core business sense.

v.44) Love not only your neighbor but your enemy as well. Risk being offended.

Yes, pray for those who persecute or mistreat you. Risk being a doormat. Was Jesus a doormat? It would be interesting to hear Him answer that. My guess is that He was beyond all those earthly, human worries. “What will it look like?” “What will people think?” “Will people make a doormat of me?” Jesus had more important, eternal concerns than that.

Somewhere, sometime and at some point, Christians must grow and mature, such that offenses don’t so easily offend us and insults, don’t so easily insult us.

**John 13:15** For I have given you an **example**, that you also should do just as I have done to you.

**John 13:34** A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

How many times I have heard someone insulted, and their response is “I don’t deserve that!” or “You can’t treat me like that!” And out comes the sword of relational justice – an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hurt for a hurt, wound for wound, insult for insult and offense for an offense.

**1Peter 2:21-23** For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. (22) He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. (23) When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

Our problems do not arise when we are insulted. The problems arise when people who should be strong enough and mature enough to handle such offenses and insults – don’t.

Mat.5:44) But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, v.45) so that you may be sons of your Father *who is in heaven* [clarification]

Why? What is the purpose of all this? Is God wanting to destroy our lives? Does he want me to be taken advantage of or to be used as a doormat?

Ultimately what it boils down to for the true believer in Jesus Christ, is that, God *is not* most concerned whether we have an easy, blessed or “doormat” free life. God *is* most concerned with whether or not we, as His lesser children, reflect the image of Jesus, His greater child, in our lives and in our relationships.

*We are not  
merely to reflect  
our “Father” but  
specifically our  
Father in  
heaven.*

Any radio program that turns that message around, any TV preacher that puts your comfort before your suffering, any book that focuses on you feeling good about living a self-focused idolatrous life, turn it off, or thrown it away. It will only lead you astray, as it deceives you – leading you farther away from God, while making you feel good about your journey.

## **A Chip off Which Block?**

We have heard the adage, “he’s a chip off the ole block?” The question for us today, is what block am I a chip off of? Or “The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree?” What tree have I not fallen far from?” In other words, who am I more like, my earthly Father or my heavenly Father?

In the ancient Jewish culture, there was a strong tradition that, if the father was a farmer, his sons would become farmers. If the father was a carpenter, his son would become a carpenter.

It was my Dad’s desire that I would one day take over our family business. I wasn’t too interested in that and I pursued another vocation.

God's desire for us, is not to take over His family's business, but that we take on the family likeness. We are expected to reflect the life of His Son Jesus.

Do not misunderstand the Matthew 5 passage. It is not by loving our enemies, that we become children of our Father. It is, however, by loving our enemies, that we become known as children of our Father and specifically – not children of our *earthly* father, but children of our *heavenly* Father. Those are crucial clarifications of this passage.

And this is where the rubber meets the road.

v.46) For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

God is not most concerned whether we have an easy, blessed or pleasant life. On the other hand, He is most concerned with whether or not we, reflect the image of Jesus, in our lives. That is what its all about for every single professing believer in Jesus Christ – that through the circumstances of life, we are all molded into the likeness of Jesus. (Rom.8:29)

From which block will others think you are a chip? Your earthly father or your Heavenly Father?

*Our Biblical Example of a Christ like response.*

## **OUR SCRIPTURAL INSTRUCTION TO REFLECT CHRIST**

What does it take to dispel discord and reconcile relationships and ultimately reflect Christ?

a. Don't make revenge or returning blows your goal, but showing love.

**1Cor. 13:4-8** Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant (5) or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; (6) it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. (7) Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (8) Love

never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

Are you willing to make this the goal of your life? Are we willing to align ourselves with the lifestyle and mannerisms that reflect the inner transformed life of our Lord Jesus?

**1Tim. 1:15-16** The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. (16) But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an **example** to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

“Example” – to help us learn what it means for others to see Jesus in me.

- b.** Realize that it is not revenge that wins out, but understanding and reflecting Christ.

**1Peter 3:7** Likewise, husbands, dwelling together according to knowledge...

- c.** Be willing to suffer for righteousness in being an obedient, Christ reflecting, follower of Jesus.

**1Pet. 2:21** For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an **example**, so that you might follow in his steps.

“Example” – to help us learn what it means for others to see Jesus in me. It means we can risk being a “door mat”. It means we are growing into being able to handle offenses and insults with grace and maturity.

## **Disarming without force**

Each of us must be growing in our ability to dispel discord and reconcile relationships. It takes Jesus living on the inside - His life reflecting out of us, and others taking note of or observing us. It takes the image of God, displayed upon the soul of a man, being observed in the eyes of the world.

It means the love, likeness and character of Jesus being reflected and displayed in our attitudes, choices and behaviors, so that in the eyes of the world, all that we do and say points others to our Lord Jesus.

Here are some points of Biblical application in dispelling discord and reconciling relationships.

**1) By acting or dealing with others lovingly -**

**Pro 10:12** Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.

How can we disarm our adversaries without using force? By dealing with them lovingly – especially those who tend to quarrel or argue. People find it either awkward or difficult in complaining that you are loving toward them. It's hard to have a fight between only one person.

**2) Don't be proud, but be willing to hear the input of others and consider their input or advice.**

**Pro 13:10** By insolence comes nothing but strife, but with those who take advice is wisdom.

**3) If you are a quick tempered person, seek the source of your anger and the cause of your contentious spirit.**

**Pro 15:18** A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.

Repent from that and ask God to deliver you from that kind of disposition. Not only does it make the lives of others most miserable, it dishonors the name and cause of Jesus Christ.

**Pro 20:3** It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from *strife*, but every fool will be quarreling.

Strife here is actually a Hebrew word that is spelled and pronounced “rib”. When I was growing up, when someone was antagonizing someone, or teasing them or trying to get under their skin, we referred to it as “ribbing” one another. I don't know if that

is where the term “ribbing” came from or not, but it certainly carries the same meaning.

**4) Humble yourself and be willing to take off the boxing gloves and take the first step to dispelling discord.**

**1Pet. 5:6-7** Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, (7) casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

**Rom. 12:21** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

How can I fight with the weapon of goodness?

**Rom 12:14-21** (14) Bless those who persecute you; **bless and do not curse them.** (15) Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. (16) Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be conceited. (17) **Repay no one evil for evil,** but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. (18) If possible, so far as it depends on you, **live peaceably with all.** (19) Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." (20) To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." (21) Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

**Here are some Peace Destroyers and Discord Producers**

v.14) Cursing – anger, jealousy, pride – whether in attitudes or words.

v.15) Failure to understand the position or perception of others

When others attempt to keep up appearances or present a certain image – these are elements that hinder deep relationships and masks understanding.

Expectations and performance are things from which we tend to judge or evaluate people.

**John 8:15** - You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.

**2Cor. 5:16** From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer.

*Christ like behavior can change worldly relations,  
as others experience what it means to be treated  
with patience and kindness.*

We gather erroneous information, formulate inaccurate perceptions, and follow through with inappropriate behavior, thus negatively affecting our relationships – many of which are of far greater value than the very things we argue over.

### **Here are some Peace Destroyers and Discord Producers**

v.16) viewing others as lower, lesser or beneath yourself.

The Cast System is deep in the heart of every human, not just in India.

v.17) revenge and retribution – we have opportunity to make or keep peace, but our attitudes and actions take us in a different direction.

Do you remember “The Thing” from The Fantastic Four? When he got upset he’d say “Its Clobbering Time”.

There is a law called the law of “cause and effect”. For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. And for every relational offense, there is an equal, if not greater reaction of retaliation.

**1Pet 2:22-23** He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. (23) When he was *reviled*, he **did not revile** in return;

when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

Destroy discord and reconcile relationships with undeserved acts of kindness. Anyone can fight back. That's why the world is in the shape its in now. Few are willing to forgive. Few are willing to reflect the likeness of Jesus. But those who do, the promise is they will become part of God's solutions to strife, discord and contentious relationships, while becoming a catalyst for kingdom transformation.

*This is our Scriptural Instruction to Reflect Christ.*



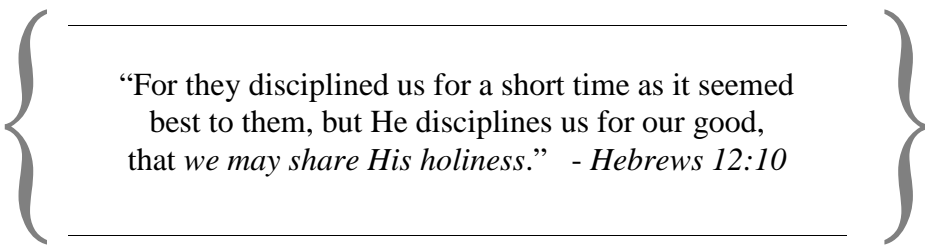


# “Heart to Heart Combat: Quenching Anger and Sharing Love”

Text: Mat. 5:1-11 / Rom. 12:10-21

10/28/12

Theme: strife and making and keeping peace



“For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that *we may share His holiness.*” - *Hebrews 12:10*

## INTRODUCTION

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*What does it mean for others to see Jesus in you?*

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I’ve asked many this question, to get their thoughts. Here are some responses.

- It means the fruit of the Spirit are increasingly evident in your life.
- It means sensing a loving compassion towards others in us
- It means an acceptance and openness to those unlike you.
- It means having the right attitude toward my work
- It means we evidence the character or nature of Christ, growing from glory to glory – that is, His nature, essence and attributes.

The answer to this question, means everything to the true believer and the true follower of Jesus Christ. This is paramount in what it means to be a genuine, true, authentic, obedient, Christ loving disciple.

Ask yourself – “Do I really want this?” “Am I really willing to go this far in the Christian faith, so as to actually do and genuinely become what God expects of me?”

What *does* it mean for others to see Jesus in me?

It means that others see the holiness of Jesus Christ in my earthly interactions. Hebrews 12:10 says, it is God’s purpose to build in us the holiness of God Himself. That almost sounds blasphemous.

It means taking on the inner nature of God.

**2Pet. 1:3-4** His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, (4) by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become ***partakers of the divine nature***, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

What does it mean to share in the holiness of God and to become “partakers of the divine nature”?

It means there is a gradual, but ever increasing transformation in my life. As the imprint of the image of God is restored upon my soul, I am molded more in to the likeness of God’s Son, and that through God, the Spirit of Holiness, I begin to exhibit more and more of the qualities and attributes of God in my life, that others are able to observe.

### **Our Sermon Title today is**

“Heart to Heart Combat: Quenching Hate and Sharing Love”

God must first change our heart, our desire, our purpose, even our reason for living. In fact we might say, we must first die in order that we might properly live as true believing Christians.

How would the outcome have been different, if Joseph’s’ brothers had not allowed jealousy to grow into anger – for anger to fester into hatred and for hatred to give birth to the sinful desire of the heart to murder Joseph? Or what would have been the outcome if Cain had somehow found it in his heart to forgive Able?

**Gen 37:4** But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.

Hatred cannot be hidden. Hatred will not go away on its own. Jealousy, anger and hatred are all natural occurrences and normal inclinations of the human heart, of which we are born with and do not need to learn.

How would we define unforgiveness?

UnForgiveness can be defined as holding the offenses from others against them; expecting restitution or desiring revenge for hurts or wrongs done; imprisoning others in the dungeon of resentment and vengeance.

Forgiveness on the other hand can be defined as not keeping a record of wrongs done to you; caring enough for those who have offended you, to surrender your hurts to God and entrusting Him to work things out as only He can. Forgiveness might be viewed as freeing others from their wounds and offenses against us.

*Unforgiveness  
is like keeping  
others  
imprisoned in  
our dungeon of  
anger and  
resentment.*

## **WARNING FOR FORGIVENESS**

Jesus warns us to prepare for forgiveness - perhaps even one sided forgiveness.

Jesus went against the grain of the natural tendencies of the human heart. He was telling others how to reflect His life in them. He was warning them that true discipleship requires, sacrifice and personal inner, death.

**Mat. 5:1-11** Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. (2) And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: (3) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (4) "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. (5) "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. (6) "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. (7)

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. (8)  
"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (9) "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. (10)  
"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (11) "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. (12) Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you..

Forgiveness requires that we die to ourselves.

**I'm Sorry** - The inability to say, "I'm sorry", may be evidence of a strong hold of the broken, fallen, sinful, human nature in the life of the Christian.

**Please Forgive me** - The inability to ask for forgiveness may be a sign that the Lordship of Jesus Christ is not part of the Christian life, nor the filling of the Holy Spirit.

**I Was Wrong** - The inability or unwillingness to say, "I was wrong" may be evidence of the strong hold of self-righteousness and pride in the human heart.

**I Choose to Reflect Jesus** - An inability or unwillingness to reflect the life of Christ in your life, may reflect the absence of the life of Christ in your life.

**Rom 12:20** To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head."

"But, I may get taken advantage of" "I may loose face" or "I may get walked on or have to turn the other cheek".

An unwillingness to feed your enemy or give your opposition a drink may evidence the stench of rotting flesh, rather than the fragrant aroma of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor.2:15)

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"Forgiveness is the fragrance that the violet sheds

upon the heel that has just crushed it.”  
- Mark Twain

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**Question:** How can anyone possibly live this out, without learning the difficult discipline of one-sided forgiveness? Blessed are those who are persecuted. Joyful are those who are reviled. Blessed are the meek and unoffensive. Blessed are the merciful, the pure in heart and the peacemakers.

How can a person ever become the peacemaker without obeying and practicing one-sided forgiveness? If we all waited around for an apology from those who have offended us, then most of us will die without ever being reconciled. If we chose not to forgive until someone asked us to forgive, then most would die with hearts full of offense, anger and hatred, and even secret desires for revenge.

*It is possible  
to forgive  
others,  
even when  
they don't  
deserve it  
or ask for it.*

*Jesus warns us to prepare for forgiveness - even one sided forgiveness.*

## **One Sided Relationships**

Along with the warning of one sided forgiveness comes the promise of one sided relationships. Jesus assures us that as a disciple of our Lord Jesus, our lives will be filled with one-sided relationships. Our lives will be full of people who offend us, but yet are the same to whom we are to demonstrate the life of Jesus.

“I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live. Yet not I, but Christ lives in me...” - Gal.2:20

### ***The Image of God, Upon the Soul of Man, In The Eyes of the World***

If we are to reflect His life in us, we will begin to exemplify the Christ-like Beatitudes of Mat.5.

And yet it goes against all that is within us as humans, yet represent all that God expects from us if we are true believers in our Lord Jesus.

## **Christ Reflecting Relationships**

There was the expectation for true disciples to reflect the life of Jesus. If it is an important relationship to you, consider what you might do to change, in order to make the relationship work. Instead of praying for God to change the other person, pray God will change you into the Jesus reflecting person He wants each of us to become.

Vodie Bachman says, *“Everybody wants to change the world, but no body wants to change themselves.”*

Regarding that challenging relationship in your life, consider this application for change from 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

**1Cor. 13:4-8** Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant (5) or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; (6) it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. (7) Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (8) Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

1 Cor.13:4) What word or act can I implement that would show God’s patience to this person?

**1Ti 1:16** But I received mercy for this reason, that *in me*, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might *display his perfect patience* as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

Think of the person you have a tough time loving.  
According to verse 4, How can I meekly respond, that would not be boastful or appearing to show myself equal or superior to them?

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From 1 Cor.13:5, what respectful attitude and honoring words can I use to keep from acting rude?

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From v.5, How can I phrase my thoughts in order to keep me from appearing irritable? \_\_\_\_\_

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How can I agree or bend a little, to allow the other person to see that their input is valued?

From 1 Cor.13:7, what thoughts can I think about that would allow me to believe the best and hope the best for this person and this situation? \_\_\_\_\_

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*Possibilities:*

*\* This person is a valuable creation of God.*

*\* This person may be here by God's will to help or purify me.*

*\* This person may have some valuable input to the group or to the situation.*

*\* This person has ideas, desires and input that long to be expressed and accepted.*

*\* God may have me in this person's life to encourage, build up in the Lord and to impart confidence, faith and value.*

I can remember a specific young lady I was counseling or attempting to counsel, together with a couple other counselors. This person was extremely agitated and had a reputation for this kind of behavior. She was unruly, angry, unusually strong and simply did not do, what she did not want to do.

These counselors were attempting to convince her that it would be in her best interest to calm down and go back to her room. Things were only escalating. At one point, she came stomping down the hallway, of which I was standing in the middle. During this ordeal, I was praying for God to somehow touch her heart and calm her troubled spirit. As she

*It is both  
relationally  
beneficial  
as well as  
Biblically  
necessary that  
we learn to treat  
respectfully,  
those whom we  
may not respect.*

approached me, I stepped aside to allow her to go by me. As she stormed by I spoke her name and said, “God loves you and you are a treasure of His creation”. I was surprised how that just came out of my mouth.

That troubled, furious young girl immediately stopped in her tracks, looked at me and said, in the voice of a tiny child, “thank you”. And she was at peace.

Sometimes being a peacemaker may require that we treat respectfully those whom we may not fully feel respectful toward. And there are times when forgiveness is required, even one sided forgiveness. and a one sided relationship.

Blessing our “enemies”, may require one sided forgiveness. We simply cannot image how God plans to work when His children obey his word. We cannot see how things will work out logically, but when we do things God’s way, it is always the right way.

When we are unwilling to forgive others, that unforgiveness tends to fuel the fire that God desires to quench.

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*An Illustration of one sided forgiveness*

**“Greatest Story of Forgiveness”**, by Gregory J. Rummo

*“He is no fool  
who gives  
what he  
cannot keep  
to gain  
that which  
he cannot lose.”  
—Jim Elliot*

Jim Elliot, Pete Fleming, Nate Saint, Ed McCully and Roger Youdarian were American missionaries working in Ecuador. They had learned of a savage tribe of Indians that had killed several Shell Oil company employees. Violence was a way of life for the Aucas. Six of every ten adult deaths were homicides by spearing.

Fearless, the missionaries initiated contact through an ingenious method of lowering a bucket of gifts from a small airplane. As Nate Saint flew the bright yellow single-engine Piper PA-14 overhead, banking it in a tight circle, a bucket was lowered on a long rope. It remained nearly motionless, just long enough for several curious



Aucas to help themselves to what was inside. This continued for several months.

Thinking they had gained their trust, the missionaries landed their plane on a sand bar in the Curaray River. Over the ensuing days, they made several friendly face-to-face encounters and even gave one of the Aucas, Naenkiwi, a ride in the plane. But on January 8, 1956, all five of the missionaries were attacked and brutally murdered.

The world recoiled in horror. The images of the mutilated bodies, recovered from the Curaray River, appeared in newspapers across the county. LIFE Magazine ran a 10-page story on the incident. It seemed to be nothing more than a tragic loss.

But God would soon roll back the dark clouds of despair, allowing the world a providential glimpse into his often mysterious ways. God was about to make the wrath of man praise him.

Two years later, in what could be considered one of the greatest acts of forgiveness in the 20th century, Elisabeth Elliot, Jim Elliot's wife and Rachel Saint, Nate Saint's sister, went to live with the tribe, now known as the Waodani.

The women studied the tribe's language and learned their culture. Their demonstration of forgiveness to the men who murdered their loved ones so moved the Waodani, they were given the opportunity to share the greatest story of forgiveness—Christ's death on the cross.

Many members of the tribe were converted to Christianity. The murder rate among the Waodani dropped 90%.

Years later, Nate Saint's son, Steve moved his family from Florida to live with the Waodani. His children now call Mincaye, a tribal elder and the man who speared Steve Saint's father to death, "grandfather."

This forgiveness occurred, long before anyone ever said, "*I'm sorry for murdering your husband*" or "*I apologize for massacring your father.*"

This is an example of someone who is reflecting the life of Jesus in them, through one sided forgiveness.

## **JESUS AND THE WEeping WOMAN**

### **The Power of Forgiveness**

In Luke 7:37-48 Jesus is at Simon's house and a woman is there presenting an awkward situation. She is weeping, washing his feet with her tears and hair *and* she is pouring perfumed oil on Jesus's feet. Furthermore she was known to be a sinful woman. Simon, thinks Jesus should realize who she is and that in doing so, He surely wouldn't want her there.

**Luke 7:40-43** And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "Say it, Teacher." (41) "A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. (42) When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?" (43) Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly."

"She loved much because she was forgiven much" - Luke 7:47

**Luk 7:47** Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven--for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little."

God does not promise that each time we forgive someone, they will in turn respond lovingly to us. He does, however, inform us that this is the attitude, and behavior of Jesus that we are to reflect and display. And that in the process of evidencing forgiveness of others, can implant the seed of love.

### **Be willing to call it quits and act like Christ**

"Hoka Hey" was a statement used by the Sioux. Translated, it means "*It's a good day to die*". It was traditionally said to have been the battle cry of Crazy Horse. But it was more broadly

believed to have been used by the Sioux people as an expression of willingness and even eagerness to give one's life in the name of one's cause. It was a belief that one should never live a moment of one's life with any regrets, or task left undone, which would make today as good a day as any to die.

**1Cor. 13:5** "... It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;" - or "keeps no record of wrongs". It literally means to keep no inventory. Today we might say, "Keep short accounts".

Or perhaps we might dare interpret this as a challenge to forgive our offenders.

On the Andy Griffith show, there was a feud between the Carters and the Wakefields. Sherriff Taylor stepped in to help and asked, "What are you two are feuding over?" You know their answer? "I don't know." "We can't remember".

Once you can't recall exactly why you're angry, It may be time to lay down your musket and forgive your "offender".

A One sided Forgiveness is possible. A One sided reconciliation is possible. However, one sided relationship restoration is not possible. A restored relationship requires the same determination from both parties in order to be restored.

However a fault overlooked and an offense forgiven, can by anyone's step toward quenching anger, keeping peace, averting potential disaster and nurturing love.

*"She loved much because she was forgiven much"* - Luke 7:47

*\* When the person comes to their senses, they will see that you were willing to sacrifice for the sake of the relationship.*

Where does unforgiveness reside and where does forgiveness take place? Within the heart and mind and spirit of the one offended.

If we say we do not forgive, but say we are obediently living and reflecting the life of Jesus, what practical difference does that make? And is it even true? If we harbor unforgiveness but show

Question: Why  
would anyone  
withhold  
forgiveness from  
another?  
Answer: Refusal  
to die to self.

kindness, what does it accomplish? If we act lovingly but refuse to forgive, what good is that?

If we bless others, but withhold forgiveness, who benefits and who is harmed? If we live reflecting the life of Christ, but keep others in the dungeon of forgiveness, what does that do or say or communicate to others?

Unforgiveness is the fruit from a well-tended garden, where the weeds of love are regularly pulled – where the mulch of kindness is regularly withheld, where the water of selflessness is purposefully omitted, and the fallow ground of hard heartedness is left untilled. Surely, unforgiveness is not appropriate for the true believer and authentic follower of Jesus Christ.

## **Off the Page and into my life**

It seems, that far too many people don't know how to handle a threatening relationships, other than by arguing, fighting and threatening in return.

Here are some Biblical suggestions on one sided forgiveness toward others.

**1) Find a way to agree with the angry person.**

**Mat 5:25** Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison.

This refers to attempting to come to a peaceful agreement, which will put an end to fighting and bickering.

**2) Find a way to keep from opposing the angry person.**

**Mat 5:39** But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

An evil person is often bent on arguing with selfish motives. This will prove to be unproductive in most any resolution, much less achieving peace.

**3)** Find a way to defer the provoking conversation or circumstances until things have died down. Choose your words carefully

**Pro 15:1** A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Offer an apology if appropriate. Gary Chapman, says, “you cannot have a meaningful lasting relationship without apology.”

\* Maybe the best thing to do is to remain silent.

**Isa 53:7** He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

There were times when even Jesus remained silent.

**4)** Work on keeping your own anger under control

**Pro 15:18** A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.

Remove yourself from the situation if necessary, as was the case with the strife between Abraham & Lot in Gen.13.

**5)** Attempt to determine what has provoked the anger and attempt to understand the offended person’s position.

**Pro 30:33** For pressing milk produces curds, pressing the nose produces blood, and pressing anger produces strife.

\* Remember God’s word has many, many, many instructions regarding relationships and forgiveness.

**Rom 12:21** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

**Rom 12:14** Bless those who persecute you; bless, and do not curse.

**Mat 5:44** But I say to you, Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” – Mat.7:12

“Don’t’ do unto others as they have done unto you.” conversely

What does the person need to receive from you? Christ-like understanding and compassion .

What does the person need to see in you? Life of Christ.

What does God expect from us? That we reflect the love, likeness and character of Jesus, in our attitudes, choices and behavior.

Q: What does it mean for others to see Jesus in Me?

I hope we have been able to understand more of what it means to reflect the love, likeness and life of Jesus in our attitudes, choices and behavior. It is not merely what the world needs. It is what the Lord commands.



# ***Don't close this booklet yet***

*without considering this all important question.*

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## **Is Jesus Christ the Savior or your soul and the Lord of your life?**

Every person is born guilty of sin and in need of forgiveness.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;  
--Romans 3:23

Our sin is against God, therefore our forgiveness can only come from God.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. --John 3:16

God has appointed His Son as the payment for sins and sent Him to die in our place.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
-- Romans 6:23

God's love is demonstrated through the sacrificial payment of Jesus Christ in our place for our sins.

...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ---Romans 5:8

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." -- Rom 10:13

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, - John 1:12

Before you close this book, why not be absolutely certain that you are truly a citizen of God's eternal kingdom and loving family?

Trust in Jesus Christ today and receive forgiveness for your sins and citizenship into God's family and His Kingdom.



**A** - Admit you have sinned and are in need of a Savior.

**B** - Believe Jesus died in your place, and you can no way help yourself.

**C** - Confess your sins to God. *He already knows.*  
- also Confess Jesus as you LORD.

**Prayer**: Take time to talk to God right now and open your heart and life to His instruction and leadership.

**Connect** with a local Bible believing, Christ centered church.

**Commit** yourself to meeting regularly with other Christians who are growing in their faith.

**Heb 10:24-25** And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

**Act 2:41-42** So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

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***It is our prayer that you find Jesus Christ to be,  
your greatest purpose, your highest calling, your  
soul's source and joy, and your all-consuming  
passion.***

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*May each lesson bring a growing submission, a deeper obedience  
and an increase of the righteous reign of the Lordship of Jesus  
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