

## The Cross of Christ – Part 5

When we came to the cross, we prepared to land. Remember, this is holy ground so we had to prepare our hearts to land on it. Then we looked at the God-man, Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane where He said, “if it be possible, may this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done.” We received the revelation of Him, as fully God, fully man, to then receive the revelation that we too are God-men. And that’s how we’re to approach life as New Testament Christians. Because do you not know that you are a temple of the Holy Spirit? Do you not know that the Spirit of Christ dwells within you? Last time, we looked at the physical suffering which I labeled “sweet suffering”, because any suffering that’s done to the glory of God, has a sweet savor to it. So it can’t be viewed as just suffering in isolation. It is “sweet suffering”; because remember, self-crucifixion is the willing acceptance of pain out of devotion to a greater pleasure—namely the glory of God. Then we looked at targeted tears when Jesus said, “don’t weep for Me; weep for yourselves and your children.” And we worked our way through what that meant. Then we went into the forgiving of ignorance – “forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.”

So today, I hope to motor right along and finish the lesson on the forgiving of ignorance. A couple of key points about the forgiving of ignorance...we like to quote the Scripture where it says that, “to he who knows it is sin and still does it, to him, it is sin.” We don’t like to quote the Scripture, “the man who thinks he knows doesn’t know as he ought to know.” So we’re accountable for two things before a Holy God: what we know and knowing more. Because knowing more is nothing more than a passion and a zeal to become one with God, which is what the love of God is. We also learned that ignorance is not excusable; because if it had been excusable, He would have said, Father excuse them, for they do not know what they are doing. But He said, “Father, forgive them; because their ignorance is a transgression against You. Because every man who simply looks at creation knows about You and Your power and Your nature and knows where this came from and knows that he is to seek You.” So when they do not and are ignorant of that, it is ignorance by choice. Remember, ignorance isn’t just a condition, ignorance is a choice. Because we’re ignorant of what we ignore and we ignore what we give a low priority. So if we’re ignorant of God, we give a low priority to God; and thus, we are in a position of needing forgiveness for ignorance.

But to press on, can you doubt the love of God for you when you look at that comment by Jesus on the cross? As He’s hanging there, suffering and bleeding, He pled for those who were doing it to Him. So He pled as He bled on the cross, in His travail, for those who were doing it. So when you observe that, can you ever doubt that that God can forgive you? He interceded for me in my comfort and in my hostility toward Him and my friendship with the world; and He doesn’t stop there. Hebrews 7:25 – “He forever lives to make such intercession for us, for me.” This is personal. He intercedes, pleading forgiveness for my sins because they are paid for, forgiven, not excused; if excusable, no price needed to be paid; because if sin were excusable, no Savior need come. They were forgiven because the price was paid, because that which He was praying for, he paid for. And we looked at that as another aspect of how we’re very fond of praying, but the

question is, are we willing to engage and pay the price to bring about that which we are praying for?

Well, then what happens after they are forgiven? Jeremiah 31:34 – “Declares the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more.” Can you imagine that an omniscient Being knows everything, except what He in His sovereignty chooses to forget, to fulfill His love? Well, how long does that continue? Well, remember Revelation 1:8 – “I am the One Who is, Who was, and Who is to come.” So His intercession, remember Jesus forever lives to make intercession for us, and He was and is and is to come, in that same process until either the rapture when He comes for me or when I die and go to Heaven to join Him. Because once He stepped into that gap between my righteousness and His righteousness, He never steps out of that gap. That is why He can be called faithful and true. But remember, we went through the things we did not know. We didn’t know our sin and still don’t. Unless we see our participatory role in the blood flowing in His sweat at Gethsemane and the blood flowing from His body at Calvary; because this is what we did to Him—not just them, but what *we* did to Him. So, if you realize, for instance, that lying, or adultery, or whatever, are sins that put the nails in His hands and led to the forsakeness by the Father, then how can you claim to love this Savior when you continue doing that which nailed Him to the cross, and apathetically so in your continuance? We must come to hate our residual, spiritual ignorance. Remember, love is a passion for oneness? So, when we love truth, we have a passion to be one with truth. A corollary to a passion to be one with truth is we have a passion to be totally separate from untruth. And ignorance is simply veiled untruth.

So, II Thessalonians 2:10 (remember) – “they did not receive a passion for the truth so as to be saved.” But we, as Christians, can receive a passion to be one with the truth; not only to be saved, but also to be progressively sanctified, as we’re transformed by the renewing of our minds, by engaging with that truth. But to be delivered from ignorance, you have to complete the process; and the process must include hating ignorance. Because to be delivered from sin, you can’t just say, “I’m sorry”; you have to progress to a point of hating the thing that you’re repenting of. Because until you hate it, you will not release it. And you simultaneously have a passion to be one with the opposite of what you are repenting of. So if I tell a lie and repent, I will not quit being a liar until I hate lies and love truth. Otherwise, you’re apathetically stuck in the middle continuing your unsanctified life.

So, we’re on a journey, remember, through the cross to come to the kingdom. But our attitude needs to be that of Matthew 11:12 – “The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence and violent men take it by force”; because there are two types of violent men. It could refer to enemies of God doing violence to the Kingdom and those who are in the Kingdom; but another meaning is the following. Because you see the Kingdom of God will never be taken by the kingdom of Satan. The gates of Hell will never prevail against it, Jesus told us in Matthew 16:18. So some violent men attack the Kingdom and some violent men pursue the Kingdom. So, the question is, “who is more violent in their aggression toward their goal?” The violent ones who attack it or the violence of the ones who want it and need it and must have more of it? That’s zeal, remember? “Zeal for My

Father's house consumes Me. I must be about My Father's business." But most of us prefer to kind of apathetically motor along content in our salvation, not hating ignorance and not truly loving truth. "So violent men can take it by force" applies to the heart attitude of hungry saints, who simply must have more of their God. They're always satisfied with God, but never satisfied with what they know of God. Remember, like Moses, who would not be satisfied until he saw the glory of God. And like the man that beat on the door of his neighbor until he got bread. He had to have that bread. Or the woman who beat on the door of the judge until she got legal relief. So, we're to be violent men, not passive men, in taking the Kingdom of God. We simply want it, need it, and have got to have it.

That's why at that point, we're not satisfied with just honoring God; we're not just satisfied with reading the Bible, going to church, and doing an occasional good deed. But we simply must honor Him as God by acknowledging Him as King in all things. But what is our greatest thank offering and praise offering in the context of what we're talking about – forgiveness. Well, even the world knows this. The world says imitation is the sincerest form of flattery; because how can you claim to truly appreciate that which you do not try to pursue? So, how sincere is our thanksgiving and praise for the forgiveness of God if we do not esteem it enough to become forgivers ourselves? So, let us pray for others as He prayed for us. "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they're doing." Ephesians 2:1-7 (remember) – The first three verses talk about who we were, "children of wrath, dead in sin...but God." That transition that takes place about verse 4. Titus 3:3-7 has a similar flow of "this is what we were...but God." Now here is what we pursue. So we forgive their not knowing; and our intercessory prayer becomes "forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." Then we become II Corinthians 2:15 – "Accept that we are a fragrance of Christ to the nostrils of God." Well, that prayer offered by Jesus on the cross, I now begin to understand. See my enemy is not my enemy; my true enemy is my lack of love for my enemy. And then I can cry louder, "forgive *me*, for I did not know what I was doing as I hated my enemy and cursed my enemy instead of interceding for my enemy." So this prayer is not just for our forgiveness, although we can all crawl into that little pronoun, "them"; "forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." It's our calling; because Jesus is our Savior, but He's also our model. When we are transformed by the renewing of our mind, we are being transformed into His very likeness. And when we understand the cross, we'll do likewise.

Now I'm going to make practical comments from this point on about forgiveness. This poster is meant to represent time: past, present and future. We're told certain things in Scripture about the past. Isaiah 43:18-19 – "Do not call to mind the former things, nor ponder things of the past; I've begun a new thing, do you not even know it?" The future: Matthew 6:34 – "Take no thought of the morrow." Luke 12:7 – "Fear not the future." So when we look at our past and look at our future, here's the choice that we are given: We can only worship God in the precious present. You cannot worship God in your past; it's past. You cannot worship God in your future; it's yet to come. So the only moment that you can truly worship God is right here and right now. So if you're not in the here and not in the now, you cannot worship God. Now when you are in the here and the now,

here's your choice about how to handle it. There's a part of your present that can be lived in the past. Unforgiveness is to digest your precious present by living in the past; self condemnation does the same for a Christian; because you're condemning and calling unclean that which He has called clean by the blood of Christ. It's to say I can judge my unworthiness more than you can judge the value of the blood of your Son. It's to live in the past. We can digest our precious present by considerations of the future, such as, if we are in unforgiveness yoked to the past, we will be contemplating revenge in the future. Or, fear of anything but God; remember - the only legitimate fear is the fear of the Lord? Awe and reverence of God; that which we fear, we give glory to. So if I'm fearing the future, I'm not in the precious present, glorifying and worshipping God.

Well, then there are certain things about the past and the future that are legitimate that put the precious present into focus. Like here, calling to mind the things that you have been delivered from by God. Like David; "the God Who delivered me from the lion and the bear will deliver me from this Philistine." See, he's worshipping in the precious present by calling to mind the deliverance of God from his past. But his focus and his behavior is in the precious present by recalling from the precious past. Do you follow me? Another about the future... "without a vision, the people perish." Remember, if we don't know where we're going, it never matters where we are or what we're doing. Without that vision, you cannot properly worship God in your precious present. But you live the precious present in worship to your God in the light of your vision which is your sustaining view of the morrow; the accumulated promises of God for which you now can worship God in the precious present.

Well, then if you're not living in the past, not living in the future, but are in the present, there are certain things you can be doing. You can be consuming your precious present with unholy things. If I am contemplating how to seduce a woman at church, that is an unholy thing. That is not worship of God. And anything that I build will be consumed so as by fire. I may still be saved, but everything that I do as a Christian will be consumed so as by fire. Or you can begin to move up the ladder to holy. Well, what would that be? That could be the person of Romans 7 who knows what holiness is and is trying to pursue it; but is frustrated by the battle in the spirit versus the flesh kind of thing; trying to complete in the flesh what was begun by the spirit. But at least he's pursuing holiness, although frustrated by the pursuit.

Holier—well, that's when you begin to see Jesus as the God-man. You begin to fix your hope completely on the grace brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Fix your gaze on Jesus, the author and perfecter of your faith. Now, instead of just wrestling with self, you're focusing on Jesus, you see. And you become what you behold; so if you behold your failure, you become more failure, but when you behold your Savior, you'll become more like your Savior.

Holiest—well, that could be an example like the revelation that He was a God-man, I'm a God-man too. I'm not in this battle alone. The Holy Spirit of God is in me; the Spirit of Truth is in me. He will reveal to me what to say. He will empower me to think as I ought to think; because He will bear witness of Jesus through me. I'll be an Earthen

vessel as He gives me the progressive revelations and speaks them into the moment, you see. And that's when I begin to function as a God-man instead of trying to seduce the woman, I'm seeing her as a child of God, indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, a crown of glory to her husband, an Earthen vessel to reflect and pour out Jesus Christ on Planet Earth. And when you're consumed by that, you cannot be thinking seductive thoughts, you see. So seductive thoughts simply is occupying a vacuum because you are not progressing in the precious present from unholy to holy to holier to holiest, you see.

So forgiveness is a condition of the heart more than it is an individual act. There is such a thing as a lie; but a lie is told by a liar, so lying is an internal condition, not an individual act. To forgive is to let go of the past. To forgive is to refuse to sacrifice my precious present on the altar of the past. Not to forgive, is to refuse to worship God in the here and the now. My forgiving is, in part, for the recipient of the forgiveness, but even more so for me because it frees me to worship my God right here and right now. Matthew 5:24 – “If you come to pray, leave the altar and be reconciled, then come back, so you can truly worship Me. Because as long as you've got this unforgiveness in your heart toward your brother, you can't offer a pure heart toward Me in worship.” Not to forgive is to cling to the emotion that accompanies unforgiveness. Well, what is that? Anger. Prolonged, unfulfilled anger is bitterness. Hebrews 12:15 – “The root of bitterness defiles many.” So my bitterness from prolonged unfulfilled anger, because of my unforgiveness toward someone who violated me, will give those around me only one of two choices. Leave me or be defiled by me. And that's an awkward choice that we should never offer our brothers and sisters. Unforgiveness is self worship; because all unforgiveness is self-centered, not God-centered. Unforgiveness is to say “my ways are higher than Your ways and my thoughts are higher than Your thoughts”, is to demand justice for my transgressor and grace for myself. That's self worship.

My transgressor may be seeking power over me. Well, when I respond with unforgiveness, anger, bitterness, and contemplation to revenge, he does have power over me. Because he has pulled me away from the throne of God. Then I've submitted to him, not to God. I've submitted to the god of this world by responding in the ways of this world, rather than submitting to God, Himself, and reflecting Him as the way. Not to forgive is to refuse to see how much we have been forgiven by God through grace. It's to refuse to give that which we have freely received, namely grace. (Dr. Buddy: “Deane has an appointment, she's not fleeing from the onslaught here.” ☺) Unforgiveness is rebellion; because it is to refuse to set your love upon the One Whom God has set His love. It's to pronounce as unlovable that which God loves and sent His Son to be pierced for. Luke 7:47 – “He who is forgiven little, loves little; thus he who is forgiven much, loves much.” See unforgiveness is to insist, by choice, on focusing on how much I have been wronged rather than focusing by choice on how much I have been forgiven and on how much God loves the transgressor who has violated me. Thus, unforgiveness is to refuse to grow in love and to refuse to reveal God to the one who transgressed. But to forgive is to be like Jesus, when He said “forgive them for they know not what they do.” See, unforgiveness is to hold against my transgressor his transgression; although his transgression has been paid for. I John 2:2 – “And He, Jesus, is the propitiation for our

sins and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.” Unforgiveness is to personally demand payment for that which has been paid for, in full, by a Holy God.

So how can we be a living epistle who tells a true story of a forgiving God by displaying unforgiveness? How can you testify of a loving God, while displaying bitterness? Unforgiveness is to take offense. Taking offense is always *self* focused. Look at the second part. Because when I am violated by someone and I take offense at another, here’s how the flow sheet works. It is either diffuse evil which is impersonal; that is to say he is a liar who tells lies to everyone, including me. Well, that is a very impersonal outflow of evil; why should I take personally that which is impersonal? Or, he’s responding to my ungodliness; I have done something which is ungodly that he has responded to; of course, there is repentance, not offense. Or he’s responding to something in me that is godly and Jesus said, “if they reject Me, they’ll reject you.” So they are rejecting Jesus in you, not you; so why should you take it personally?

Also, we cannot take offense at others without running the risk of taking offense at God. That’s because when we feel that someone has just done something that our offense is justified, we usually presume either God was not there and He ought to have been; or He was there and misbehaved. He did not do what He should have done by preventing that which violated me. Or He did not do what He should have done by punishing the one who violated me. So we cannot take offense at others without simultaneously taking offense at God, however veiled we may prefer it to be.

The next poster. I’ve outlined four things that are different, but overlap enough that they are often confused. Love always. Love is never to be conditional. No one has to earn my love just as I cannot earn the love of God. Excused? Never! The fear of the Lord is to hate evil. Those who love the Lord are to hate evil; but you can hate the evil without hating the evil doer. We never excuse sin; because if it were excusable, Jesus could have stayed in Heaven and not come and died on the cross, remember. So we love them always; we excuse their sin...never. Forgive them? If in Christ, by the grace of God. As we grow in the revelation of what that means and begin to forgive them, for they know not what they are doing.

Trust? Maybe someday; because trust takes a track record of trustworthiness. Therefore, it is not true to say, if I forgive them, then I must trust them. That’s not true. Because forgiveness is to let go of the past. Trust is to embrace the future with confidence—two totally different things. So if we have a thief, we may forgive them, but we don’t put them in charge of the church treasury. If we have a pedophile, we may forgive them, but we don’t put them in charge of the church nursery. If we have an abused wife, she may forgive the abusing husband, but that doesn’t mean she has to return and live under the same roof; because he may be forgiven, but he’s not delivered. So we don’t have to forgive, we get to forgive. We obey His commandments and they are not burdensome. Because see, we get to display God, not just ourselves. The rest of humanity can only display themselves and the ways of the world to the world. But we have the choice of displaying ourselves or displaying a Holy God and how He feels about them to them. We’ll know that we’re truly displaying God rather than ourselves when someone says,

“how do you forgive like that? How do you not take offense at things like that?” Then we get to bear witness of Jesus. See that’s the work of the Holy Spirit, but it’s done by forgiving just like Jesus, rather than not forgiving; because not forgiving is to function as mere men. “You’re behaving like mere men; not behaving like the God-man that you are.” So, when crossed, my choice is to be cross or display the cross. Because I will either display the cross or be at cross purposes to the cross.

So my choice is to reveal to my transgressor and to others one of two things: my flesh or my Savior. My transgressor and others will judge my God by how I judge my transgressor. When I respond with unforgiveness, anger, bitterness, and revenge; then they will say, we can do that without your God, why do we need your God? But when you forgive them and take no offense and bless them, then you run the risk of having them say, “will you explain to me the reason for the hope that is within you? We cannot do what you just did. Clearly you have accessed something that we have not accessed” and they may come to you in the middle of the night like Nicodemus, from the Sanhedrin, came to Jesus so the others wouldn’t see him; but come, someone will; because the human race cannot function like that. Then you can smile and say, “I only do what I see my Savior do, I only speak what I hear my Savior speak. His forgiveness is speaking to you through me in response to my prayer for you, which is, ‘Father forgive them for they know not what they do.’” Because, see the ones who don’t know what they’re doing are veiled and here’s the point. The veiled are simply who we were and thus our present reminder of God’s grace for us.

You’re even blessed by the process, for God causes it to work together for good. Because, remember, this was about accessing the abundant life? As I deny self, I access the abundant life. For my greater revelation of the grace of God, which is sufficient, is not His grace for me. My greater revelation of the grace of God is His grace for the one who has violated me the most. That’s the revelation of the grace that is sufficient. So, Christians, the choice is ours when we’re violated. Display self, or display God. You can display self; that’s part of your freedom in Christ. But you can’t access the abundant life while displaying self; because the abundant life is in the spirit and it’s not accessed by life in the flesh. So my time is up and I thank you for yours.

(Question to Buddy: About your saying forgiving if you’re in Christ, you mean if you, the victim is in Christ? You’re not saying if the perpetrator is in Christ? You forgive everybody?)

Buddy: Correct. Yeah, but if you’re not in Christ, you cannot forgive to the magnitude I’m talking about Biblically, where people are nailing you to the cross and you’re saying forgive them for they know not what they’re doing. That is the power of God working in a believer.

(Then, if the perpetrator is totally unrepentant, you still forgive?)

Buddy: Absolutely. Because, see, every time you are violated, it is an opportunity to display the qualities of God. And remember, His qualities are love, grace, mercy, forgiveness, long suffering.

(Believers have to truly be repentant, right? We have to be repentant. The perpetrator does not have to be repentant for us to forgive them.)

Buddy: Correct. And even with a believer, it doesn't stop with forgiveness; because there's a process called, a passion to be one with the truth, which is to continue. That's purification, progressive sanctification and we're to speak into each other's lives to bring that to pass. But as soon as I take offense at a Christian brother or sister, I drive them away; I don't attract them to the qualities of Christ within me. So the process of purification, remember, "we shall become like Him because we shall see Him as He is." So if you have someone, a Christian brother or sister, who progressively violates you and you just keep displaying the qualities of Christ - that is going to be a testimony to that person over the longer term. But how it grows, you know not; and you're not responsible for the growth, you're responsible for displaying Christ. You're responsible for planting the seed; but you cannot make it grow. Thank you.