

8/21/11
CcUMC

He Lost It

R. G. Loy
Genesis 45:1-15

THESIS: To forgive is divine.

PURPOSE: To encourage a forgiving will.

Earlier this year we looked at forgiveness from Jesus' direction as he did forgive Peter and the disciples for denying him. You do remember the deep pain Peter was feeling and the relief that remained with him for the rest of his life through Jesus' forgiveness.

Today we come to this topic from the other angle: How are we to forgive others?

OPENING ILLUSTRATION. A woman and her grandmother were on the front porch discussing a family member. One said, "He's just no good... But Jesus loves him." "Of course, Jesus doesn't know him like we do."

We are instructed:

I. FORGIVE BECAUSE REVENGE IS PETTY

A. Joseph saw how God brought him up through suffering to be a leader in Egypt.

B. He could have really hurt brothers, but revenge is not my business, nor yours. ^{The Bible says,} “Vengeance is mine saith the Lord.”

ILLUST. Herbert Hoover and Hugh Gibson published a penetrating study some time ago entitled *The Problems of Lasting Peace*. They made vital inferences from diplomatic history with words that are perhaps more pertinent today than when they wrote them: “This endless treadmill of punishment must be stopped in the world if there is to be real peace. Victory with vengeance is ultimate defeat in the modern world. We can have peace, or we can have revenge, but we cannot have both.”¹

II. **FORGIVE WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT**

A. Joseph’s heart knew it was time when his brothers showed remorse.

B. I must hasten to add that I have counseled people to forgive even when those who hurt show no remorse at all. Why? Unforgiveness is hurting you most.

¹ Maxie D. Dunham, *Channels of Challenge: Fifty-six Meditations That Inspire and Challenge* (Nashville: Abingdon) p.53.

We are instructed:

III. FORGIVE BECAUSE HATE IS WRONG

- A. Hatred among people is wrong. To hate injustice is OK, but not people.
- B. The Bible says you cannot hate your neighbor whom you can see, and say, “I love God,” whom you cannot see.
- C.

IV. FORGIVE BECAUSE GOD IS AT WORK

- A. Upon those who hurt God’s people.
ILLUST. During the Korean conflict, a South Korean Christian, a civilian, was arrested by the communists and ordered shot. But when the young communist leader learned that the prisoner was in charge of an orphanage caring for small children, he decided to spare him and kill his son instead. So they shot the 19 year old son in the presence of his father. Later, the fortunes of war changed, and the young communist leader was captured by the United Nations forces, tried and condemned to death.

But before the sentence could be carried out, the Christian whose boy had been killed pleaded for the life of the killer. He declared that he was young, that he really did not know what he was doing.

“Give him to me,” said the father, “and I’ll train him.” The United Nations forces granted the request, and that father took the murderer of his boy into his own home and cared for him.

Today the young communist is a Christian pastor. That is Christian love. But it **could never have been**, and it can never be, **apart from a new life found only in Jesus Christ.**”²

- B. Punishment is none of my business.
- C. God withholds the divine intervention when we take revenge; the results are not the same.

V. FORGIVE FOR OUR OWN SAKE

- A. Peace of mind

² T. Roland Philips, quoted by Al Bryant in *1000 New Illustrations*, p. 97.

B. Health (Medical science has shown that an unforgiving spirit is poison to the mind and the body resulting in ulcers, asthma, headaches, skin rashes and a thousand other conditions).

C. Because we want to be forgiven.

1. The Lord's Prayer: Forgive us this day as we forgive our debtors."

2. The Apostles' Creed "I believe in

- The Holy Spirit
- The holy catholic church
- The communion of saints
- The forgiveness of sins.

ILLUST. George Herbert said, "He who cannot forgive breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass."

D. Forgive because it hurts.

E. Forgive because Jesus showed us how, as he hung there dying, he said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing."

F. Ask for that peace the world cannot give & the love that empowers us to forgive.

ILLUST. The wife of a Zulu chief attended a Salvation Army meeting, heard & responded to the call of Jesus. When her husband heard of this he forbade her to go again on pain of death. However, eager to hear more about Jesus, she dared to go. When her husband knew of this he met her on her return journey and beat her so savagely that he left her for dead. By and by his curiosity moved him to go back and look for her. She was not where he had left her, but he noticed broken twigs and found her lying under a bush. Covering her with his cruel eyes he leered, “And what can your Jesus Christ do for you now?”

She opened her eyes, and looking at him said gently, “He helps me to forgive you!”³

VI. FORGIVE BECAUSE GOD COMMANDS US

- A. If there were no other reason, this one is sufficient in itself. Just because! We are to be an obedient people of God.
- B. Jesus said, “If you love me... keep my commands.”

³Mrs. M. L. Carpenter, *In the Land of His Love*, quoted by Walter B. Knight, *Knight's Master Book of new Illustrations*, p.228.

CLOSING ILLUSTRATION

Steve Winger from Lubbock, Texas, writes about his **last college test** -- a final in a logic class known for its difficult exams:

“To help us on our test, the professor told us we could bring as much information to the exam as we could fit on a **piece of notebook paper**. Most students crammed as many facts as possible on their 8 1/2 x 11-inch sheet of paper.

But one student walked into class, put a piece of notebook paper on the floor, and had an **advanced logic student stand on the paper**. The advanced logic student [stood there &] told him everything he needed to know. He was the only student to receive an "A."

The ultimate final exam will come when we stand before God and He asks, "Why should I let you in?" On our own we cannot pass that exam. Our creative attempts to earn eternal life fall far short. But we have someone who will stand in for us."⁴

⁴ Steve Winger, "Jesus Stands in for Us," Leadership, Vol.15, No.3.

Christ stood in for us at the cross and
Christ will stand in for us at the judgment.

Praise God, Christ is still alive! Amen.

BENEDICTION

May the God whose Word is good news for us

- open our hearts that we may listen and hear,
- open our minds that we may appreciate and understand how blessed are we who hear God's Word

...and do it

in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.⁵

Amen.

⁵ Miriam Therese Winter, God-With-Us: Resources for Prayer and Praise (Medical Mission Sisters, 1979), 88.