

How to Get Along With Everybody All the Time

by Charlie Orr

To get along with everybody all the time, we must personally experience the process of divine compassion in our own lives and stay in the presence of God and walk with Him.

Duration: 1:11:02

Scripture: Matthew 18:21

Topics: "Bitterness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a personal experience of how he came to recognize his own sinfulness and the need for Jesus' forgiveness. He emphasizes the transformative power of the gospel and how it can bring reconciliation and peace in relationships. The preacher also highlights the importance of forgiveness, drawing from the parable in Matthew 18:23-35 where a servant is forgiven a massive debt but fails to show the same mercy to others. He challenges the congregation to reflect on their own attitudes towards forgiveness and to embrace the process of divine compassion in their lives.

Transcript

Well, it's good to see you back tonight. I want to mention that I put up some books that I take with me, not all the books that I have had room for. But one book I would encourage you to get, Mighty Prevailing Prayer by Dr. Wesley Duell.

He was a missionary to India for 25 years with OMS International. And this book is dynamite. He's a man of prayer.

We've had him in our fellowship several times. And a great tool for those who want to learn how to pray. Some other books that we'll mention later in the week.

Some newsletters that we put out bi-monthly. I trust you've come. How's your faith tonight? How's your faith tonight? If you look at the circumstances, your faith will get weak.

Circumstances always dictate to me negativity. Amen. But the Word of God and the Spirit of God always relays to me a positive rest that God's at work.

And I'm glad you're here tonight on a Monday night. Be praying much. Be open to God tonight.

Let's open our Bibles to Matthew chapter 18 beginning at verse number 21. Matthew 18 beginning at verse number 21. Then came Peter to Him and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him till seven times.

You know, Peter had a tremendous knack of putting his foot in his mouth. And Peter thought he was pretty spiritual to say that he'd forgive somebody seven times. But then Jesus showed him just how incapable he was of forgiving on God's level.

He said, Jesus saith unto him, I say not to thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven. Four hundred and ninety times we're commanded to forgive people. Then he goes into a parable in verse 23.

Therefore the kingdom of heaven likened it to a certain king which would have taken account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents. Now if that was in modern day money, he owed his Lord fifty-two million dollars.

How would you like to be in debt tonight for fifty-two million dollars? Would that be a burden? For as much as he had not to pay, his Lord commanded him to be sold and his wife and his children, all that he had in payment be made. The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him saying, Lord have patience with me. I will pay thee all.

Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion and loosed him and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out and found one of his fellow servants which owed him a hundred pence. Now, modern day terminology, this fellow owed him forty-four dollars.

And he laid hands on him. He is Pentecostal. And took him by the throat, I know he's a Baptist for sure, amen? Saying, pay me that thou ow'st.

And his fellow servant fell down at his feet and saw him saying, have patience with me. I will pay thee all. Now that wasn't an unreasonable request, was it? That man probably had the capacity of paying back forty-four dollars.

But I want you to notice the response which is generally the response of many of God's people even when others go and ask for forgiveness. And he would not. But went and cast him into prison till he should pay all the debt.

Now let me ask you another question. How can somebody pay off a debt when he's in prison? That guy was not interested in seeing that guy get right with him. He wanted to make that fellow suffer for some reason.

Is that not the way usually unforgiveness begins? And we'll mention how the process goes a little later. But I am convinced that there are people who do not want to totally settle issues. So when his fellow servant saw what was done, they were very sorry and came and told their Lord all that was done.

Then his Lord, after he had called him, said unto him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt because thou desirest me. Should not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his Lord was angry and delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my Heavenly Father do also unto you, that if you from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother of their trespasses.

God said, I'm not going to forgive you until you're willing to forgive others. Now I'm convinced tonight that one of the major reasons why God is not blessing his church and why God's hand is not upon his people is because churches all over this nation and all over the world are filled with people who are full of unforgiveness and bitterness. You see, we need to be rightly related to God.

That's our first step, to being rightly related to God. But if we're rightly related to God, I can tell you folks, you're going to be rightly related to each other. And the Bible does have a lot to say there.

There are close to 27 reciprocal commands in the Word of God telling us how we ought to treat one another. Love one another, forbear one another with love, and that's a unique Greek word. It means put up with one another.

There's some people you just had to put up with for the glory of God. Amen? Yes. And you're supposed to, what, bear ye one another's burdens? You're supposed to forgive one another? You're supposed to... you name it.

One another's in the Word of God. But I'll let you know, folks, God will give us enemies to love. How can you learn to love an enemy until somebody rubs you wrong? Now, the Bible tells us how to treat our enemies, don't they? If your enemy's thirsty, starve him.

Thirst him to death. If he's hungry, starve him. Right? Now, that's Baptist language, but God says, do what? If he's thirsty, give him a drink of water.

If he's hungry, give him something to eat. But, preacher, you don't know what they did to me. They don't deserve that.

It's not whether they deserve it or not. It's whether or not we're going to obey God, whether we like it or not. There's a lot of things I don't particularly want to do, but I know I must do in the power of the Holy Spirit to fulfill the Word of God.

How can you learn to forgive until you're offended? How can you learn to pray for those that spitefully use you until people spitefully use you? Now, here's the way I used to pray for those that spitefully use me. God sent a lightning bolt between their big toe and scared them to death. Rip them off the face of the earth.

No, God wants me to pray blessings on them. Why? Because isn't that what Jesus did for us when we were still lost sinners? But I've never seen, especially in the last year since I've been doing this ministry, churches filled with people who are just not heads. Unwilling to give up that marble that's in their pocket because they've been offended.

And it's usually over little things. They begin with little things that escalate into bigger things. Now, the title of this message I failed to give you, how to get along with everybody all the time.

I know what you're thinking. You don't know my mother-in-law, preacher. You don't know my boss.

You don't know my friend. You don't know that Christian that hurt me. No, you can get along with everybody all the time with Bible language, but there's several things we must understand about that principle.

Number one, we had to personally experience the process of divine compassion in our own lives before we can ever forgive somebody else. And here we have a perfect illustration of biblical salvation and biblical forgiveness. Number one, we must comprehend how great a demand we encountered.

We must comprehend how great a demand we encountered. Here was a man that was a servant of the Lord. One day his Lord brought him into his presence and said, I want you to pay me what you owe me.

This fellow owed him 52 million dollars. Do you know what kind of demand he encountered? The reality of meeting the Lord. And the reality of measuring up to his standard.

Isn't that what happened to every one of us when we got saved? That we were brought into the presence of God by the Spirit of the living God and suddenly we realized who we were in the presence of. And once we got into the presence of God, we began to realize that we had a standard that we could not reach up to, that by nature and by act we were all sinners and we could not reach up to the standard of the glory of God. And isn't that an awesome, earth-shattering, life-changing experience when somebody is brought into the presence of God and for the first time in their life they see they owe their Lord 52 million dollars worth of sin debts, but they don't have a single penny to pay off because they're bankrupt? And my friends, that's the only way anybody gets saved, is when the Spirit of the living God falls on somebody and reveals to them just how sinful they are.

You know why we don't see more people repenting of sin? Because they're not brought into the presence of God, they're brought into the presence of men. In the presence of emotion. In the presence of easiness.

And no wonder everybody thinks everything's just fine. And then when a holy God shows up and begins to show us just who He is, and begins to show us what He demands of us as His children, you'll have a back-door revival. They don't want to deal with that.

This is too hard. Too difficult. That's exactly where God wants to get us, where we're at the end of our rope, where we can't do it apart from Him.

God has graciously and mercifully in my life and probably many of your lives showed us from time to time just how wicked we were. And you won't know that until you get into the presence of God. And when we comprehend how great a demand we encountered, and realize what God did for us, forgiving another person's no big deal, number two, we comprehend how great a disaster we escaped.

How great a disaster we escaped. What disaster did this man escape? Well, because he couldn't pay up. His Lord said, selling his wife and his children and all that he had in payment be made.

He was sentenced to become a slave, and he was to suffer because of his condition. Isn't that exactly what every one of us escaped when we got saved? The slavery of sin, the possibility of hell. God set us free of sin.

God set us free of the future of hell. Gave us a place called heaven. Cleansed us in His blood.

Gave us a new nature. And we escaped bondage in this world. Fifty-two million dollars worth of debts.

Totally forgiven. And this guy set free. Isn't that wonderful to know that? I have a hard time with this crowd that thinks they did God a favor by letting Him save them.

And when they join church, they say, Boy, you got a good one in me, friend. I heard these people say, you know, I don't see how the church can make it without me. I can.

You know, the people God uses, those who realize just exactly who they are before God, before they got saved, and how gracious and wonderful and thankful they are for God sparing them from hell and giving them abundant life. By the way, Jesus didn't just save you to give you a ticket to heaven. He wants you to have abundant life.

Victorious life. What else did He comprehend? He comprehended how great a debt He erased. He fell down and said, Lord, have compassion on me.

I'll pay you all. He couldn't pay up. But His Lord was moved with compassion, loosed Him, forgave Him the debts, and gone act like nothing happened, friend.

Now, how would you like for somebody today to make a phone call to your house and say, Listen, you don't know me, but I've been watching you. And I know you have a great need financially. And from now until the day you die, you'll never have to pay another bill.

I believe I just might shout tonight. Amen? I think I just might say, Glory, and run down the streets of Alliance, Nebraska saying, Woo! Glory, glory, glory, glory, glory, glory. No more bills.

Hallelujah. Gonna take the preacher out for a steak tonight. Glory to God.

Yes, He says, Amen. Now, listen, I want to ask you a question. You were bankrupt, incapable, had an enormous debt, and God blotted it out with His blood.

And He said, You're free! Can you imagine the load that gets off people's hearts and minds once their sins are forgiven and washed? Well, when I got saved that day in Charlotte, North Carolina, I was ready to commit suicide. Been smoking cocaine out of South America and snorting that stuff down my nosebleed. Had a fellow that had paid two men \$500 apiece to shoot me because I had ripped him off in a drug deal.

And had been involved with two devil worshippers. And they set me up and took me for all my money with \$100 and led me along that house. That day my life flashed before me.

I tried it all. Religion, popularity, college athletics, drugs, girls, anything, I tried it all. It didn't register.

I said, This is what life has to offer a young man. I'm going to take my life. I'm just going to take the last \$100 bill I had in my back pocket, go two blocks down the road, and find an old dope dealer, write a note to my parents, and end it all, folks.

I'd make my mind's going to do it. There's a little old black and white TV in this house. And I just went by and unconsciously turned it on.

And when I walked away, a voice came out over the TV set and said, Somebody out there needs help. And when I turned around, guess who I was looking at? A preacher with a Bible. And he began to explain to me the gospel, how I was a sinner for the first time in my life.

I recognized just how bankrupt I was, just how wretched I was, just how I made a mess of my life, just being me, just being a sinner. But he said, The good news is, while you were yet a sinner, Jesus died for you. And he loves you just the way you are.

And he can change you. Folks, that day, I got on my knees in that house. I didn't have a choir singing just as I am, or some preacher saying, Come on down.

But praise God, the Son of God was knocking on the door of my heart. And I asked Jesus into my heart. And folks, the sin debt was forgiven.

The sin debt was paid. And it was like somebody took a load of bricks off my shoulders, and suddenly I had peace in my heart that I believed my life was going to straighten out. Now folks, that's been over 17 years ago, and I never got over that death.

God changed me. Broke the drug habit after three months. I mean, I struggled.

I wanted it, but I couldn't find any. And when I finally got a hold of some, and took off that hashish, it made me sick as a dog, and I felt like a heathen could never do it again. Moved me with a Baptist preacher.

Can you imagine a heathen moving in with a Baptist preacher? I had to change my whole vocabulary. Amen. I used to cuss like a sailor, and I began to read the Bible, and go to church, and pray, and seek God.

And I'll tell you this, folks. I'm so glad today that my sin debts have been forgiven, and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, continually cleanses me and you from all sin, as we walk in the light, as He is in the light, and have fellowship one with another, and as we confess our sins. And you know, if God forgives us for so much, what's the big deal with that \$44 debt somebody owes you? You have to experience the process of divine compassion personally.

Now, the second step is this, and this is the negative thing of the sermon. I want to show you the personal expression of human retaliation. And this is a perfect picture of how most people act in most churches.

He made his mistake in verse number 28. But the same servant went out. Now, let me propose another question.

I try to make you think when I preach. If somebody, Brother Neal, and you owe them \$52 million, suddenly said, you're getting ready to throw them in jail, get in all kind of trouble, and you said, hey, man, have patience. The guy said, oh, I feel sorry for you, man.

You don't owe me a cent. Don't you think you want to spend a little time with that kind of fellow to do something like that for you? Do you know where we make a mistake and begin to exercise human retaliation when we do not stay in the presence of God and walk with Him? We walk out on God and decide we can do it by ourselves. We don't have our devotions.

We don't have our prayer time. We don't walk in the Spirit. And when we walk in the flesh, friends, everything in the world is going to irritate you and me.

And the devil will make sure of that, friend. Yes, sir. He went out from his presence.

Rather than worshiping the Lord and walking with the Lord and working alongside the Lord, he decided he's going to go out because he is free. I want to show you the method of human retaliation and then I want to show you the mess we get in when we practice human retaliation. What's the method? The first method is this.

We curse the offense. We curse the offense. Somewhere along the line, way back, this guy came up to this other fellow and said, I want to borrow \$44.

The old boy reaches in his pocket and said, Here's \$44. I'll pay it back to you in a week. Well, a week passed, a month passed, two months passed, three months passed.

Hey, man, you got my \$44? I'm going to pay it back to you. And he cursed what happened to him. Do you know when you and I start practicing human retaliation? We get offended with what somebody does to us.

We curse them. We resent them. We get aggravated at them.

We say, that's not right. Smoke comes out of our ears and nose and we get bleary-eyed and puffed up. You know that? That's exactly what happens.

What happens when we curse the offense? We decide to play God in somebody's life. Now, listen to me closely. This will blow your mind.

Do you know the only person in the entire world that has a right to have vengeance? God. Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord. I'll repay.

So when you and I decide to take vengeance on something that's happened to us that's not right, then we play God in somebody's life and I'll tell you something, folks, there's not a single person in this building and in this world has the capacity to play God in somebody's life and have vengeance. And we curse the offense. Number two, we rehearse the offense.

Rehearse the offense. We start remembering. And like a broken record, we start remembering what they did to us.

This fellow obviously had rehearsed it because he never had forgotten it because the first time he saw him, he didn't say, hey, dear brother, how you doing? God bless you. And he said, you sorry dog, give me that money you owe me. Give it to me! He didn't want the money, he wanted blood out of a turnip.

You know what happens when you and I do? We start talking to people about what happened to us, folks. Now listen, if you're offended by something somebody does to you and you bring it up to somebody else, you brought somebody else in on your offense and you made a big mistake. Let me tell you what Sister Susan said to me about that.

What do you think about it? Well, I think that's awful. I think I'll tell some other people. Isn't that awful? She said she's a Christian.

She even sang a solo Sunday morning. And that sorry preacher, he gets there and preaches this, I'll tell you what he did to me the other day. Yank him, yank him, yank him, yank him.

That means amen. If he said enough of those, I'll preach quickly. That means amen.

We start remembering. It's like a group of people that every time they're offended in a West Indies country, they put an object in their hut to remind them of what happened. You know what happens? Their hut gets so full of objects, objects got to sleep outside.

When I went to seminary, there's a fellow that was on the security force that came to me one day and said, Brother Charlie, I have a great need in my life. Could I borrow \$150 from you? That's a lot of money. Now, but dear, it's a lot going to seminary and having a wife and a kid.

But I felt sorry for the fellow and I made two mistakes. Number one, you don't loan people money. You give it away.

Right. Number two, I didn't check with my wife because she's my help, meeting part of me and when I check things with her, she's got a little different radar with me and she can read people different. And she'll caution me.

And she's always letting me be the leader, but there are times she's cautioned me and she's been very good at her caution. I didn't even tell her about it. I just wrote him old check out, you know, going to be generous and didn't even have a bit of peace but gave it to him.

Figuring, you know, pretty good fellow. Liked him. He even prayed with me now and then.

Amen. Must be a man of God. His brother was a big time, independent, fundamental preacher at banks.

Big time boy. Big time. My motive may have been a little selfish to try to impress that fellow so his brother may be impressed with me.

I don't know. Back in those days, I did a lot of awful things for wrong motives. I'm just being honest.

Well, a week passed. He said, I'll pay it back to you in two weeks so I can handle that. I knew what we had in the bank.

Well, two weeks passed and I saw the brother go by and said, Hey, brother Fred. He was gone. I said, Uh-oh.

And, you know, the next day I saw him. I said, Hey, brother, come here. He said, Oh, I'm busy, brother.

God bless you. Gone. That went on for a whole week.

I saw him dodging me and, you know, when we were together he'd be talking to somebody else and then after a week, after all that junk, a fellow came to me. He said, Did Fred borrow any money from you? I said, Yeah. Why? He said, Well, we made a survey of all the security fellows and he hit us all up for \$1,150.

Something along those lines. Man, the thermometer hit 110 degrees. What'd you do? I was going to get that boy kicked out of school.

I was going to go to the Dean of Students and have him put in a ring of washing and get his money back. You know what happened to me, folks? From the first day I started remembering what happened to me, this Bible became a closed book. My prayer life diminished.

My relationship with my wife began to corrode and we started getting irritated. My going to school suddenly was a drudgery and I lost contact with God. And I stayed up one night and I was wrestling with this thing, wondering what was going on because I said, It's really his fault.

I saw a dog preacher ripping me off of money and he's going to be preaching next week and bragging about how many souls he's going to get saved. God won't even show up around him. I said, I'm sorry, hypocrite.

I was just letting that boy have it. And every time I got around to the brother, I said, Brother, has Brother Fred paid you that money back? No. Isn't he an awful sorry dog? I said, well, I'll pay the judgment of God on him.

There he goes right now. You know, just, just, hot as fire, you know. I was like a firecracker.

Well, what happened, preacher? God said, preacher, you're the one wrong. God began to show me. He showed me the truth.

He said, you miss me when you get loaned the money. You disobey my commandments. You don't loan money, you give it away.

So, therefore, you don't have anything to be mad at him about because if you gave him something, what you're upset about is something that's his. And then you need to ask your wife to forgive you for being stupid and putting her in financial bondage. Now, folks, when you lose the presence of God and the touch of God, and you know you've got to walk by faith, friend, you'll do anything to get right if you mean business.

That's why some people don't want to mean business because they could care less about having the power of God and the touch of God and the presence of God. They can make it without it. So, the next day, I said, Lord, I'll make it right with him, but I can't ever catch this old boy.

Amen? He said, I'll hunt him up for you, son. I was going around one corner, and I ran into Fred. He got raptured.

Oh, brother, let me out. He was reaching in his pocket trying to get some money. I said, brother, you don't owe me a thing.

You know, I wish I could... A picture is worth a... Oh, I wish I had a picture of that. He looked at me. He said, what? He said, oh, I gave you that money, brother.

I said, I was too stupid to know what the Bible said. That was a gift from me and Jesus. He said, you don't owe me a thing.

And by the way, you forgive me for being bitter at you and talking about you. I'm so sorry. Folks, the minute I did that, the glory of God touched me again.

I was free. But I've been rehearsing the offense. There's some of you here, even though you said you've forgiven, if you're still rehearsing the offense, you've never forgiven, even though you've gone to him.

Then you nurse the offense. See, if you rehearse it long enough, you pull it to your bosom. And it becomes a part of you.

That means you have a certain spirit that emits from you. It's either an angry spirit, an irritated spirit, a hateful spirit, a cold spirit, that bitterness will bring into your life, that unforgiveness. And you aren't free to love people.

You just nurse it. Have you ever seen how ladies just hold their babies so close? Those babies are almost like a part of them. That's how people get their old baby, pet a fence, and just pet it, kiss it, and say, Oh, I'm so bitter, and I love you because that's the way I'm going to pay him back.

I'm going to look at him. Isn't that right? You nurse the offense. And if you nurse something long enough, it will eventually become a part of the fabric of your character, your personality, your look, your speech.

And it shows, folks. Some of you can't fool God, hence you can't fool other people because they see it. Because you're not free, you're inhibited in how you respond to other people.

If you're inhibited in how you respond to other people, my friend, you're not free. There was a lady that joined our fellowship. She was a lady that was in and out of mental institutes.

They diagnosed her as a manic, depressive, schizophrenic, whatever that means. She was a rare bird. She just messed up with God.

That's what I say. And she got saved. And, you know, once people get saved, God begins to try to set them free totally.

And she came to me one day wanting me to talk to her during my office hours. And so she came into the office. And the Holy Spirit whispered in my ear, see, the only counselor that's good is the Holy Ghost.

And whenever I counsel with people, I say, Holy Spirit, you're the counselor. I'm stupid. You're going to have to be the counselor.

So she was talking and bringing up all this nothing. It was nothing. We weren't going to... She said, God, tell me.

He said, ask her about her daddy. I said, Debbie, could you tell me about your daddy? This is a big woman. Big woman, size-wise.

And she was sitting in a chair like this. The minute I mentioned her daddy, I pushed the red button. My daddy? I thought she was going to wring my neck off, Brother Neal.

I'll tell you about my daddy. I mean, her face got red. Her eyeballs started bugging out.

I mean, her nostrils got flared up. She was like this. I thought she was going to flog me, preach her, beat me to death.

Ah, he's a hypocrite. He's a preacher. And he slept with women and drank on Saturday nights.

And he called me some ugly name I don't want to repeat in front of young people. And I'll tell you what, I hate him. And I told myself, the minute I got to be 18 years old, the first man that came by the house, I was going to marry him and leave there because I hated him so much.

And I did. I said, yeah, what happened? He said, he died on me of all things. I said, what? He said, my daddy died on me and I wanted to kill him.

He said, in fact, you know what I did? I went in the funeral home and got over his dead body and spit in his face. I said, why did you die on me? And walked out. What did you do, preacher? I just grinned.

I said, well, Debbie said that. Thank God for just showing us what your problem is. Well, what's my problem? I said, it's not your daddy, it's you.

And you got to be willing to forgive your daddy for everything he's done to you because now you're a Christian and you don't have a right to feel that way. What did you do? She got mad at me and left the church for two weeks and lied on me for two weeks to people. I didn't love her and I made her feel bad and all that junk when you nail people down in the sin bucket.

What did you do? I just kept believing God and one day she called up. Softest, sweetest voice I've heard in my life, preacher. Preacher, I'm free.

I just forgave my daddy. And I said, preacher, how can she forgive somebody that's dead? It's easy. You get an empty chair and say, Daddy, if you're here in Jesus' name, I'll forgive you.

And the Spirit of God knew that in her heart that if he was alive, she said, in fact, I wish he was here. I'd love to hug him and tell him how much I wanted to love him all my life but I was too bitter to admit it. And that girl began to blossom and all, like layers off an onion, all those pods began to drop off one at a time because she got to the chief ground where the demons torment her.

Nurse the offense. Then you start to enforce the offense. I mean, it all starts right down the line and you'll get to the place where you're going to pay them back.

Now this bellet is a lot more crude than most Baptist folks. I haven't seen too many fistfights in Baptist churches. I've heard of a couple.

I've seen a couple come close to breaking out. But we won't do that. You know, if somebody offends me, I'm going to go right here and grab old brother Neal by the neck.

He'll ought to whip me anyway being a little, you know, rougher than me. But I'll tell you one thing I will do. I'll talk about him behind his back and I'll slander him.

Or, you know, if I'm a little more sophisticated, I might not talk about him. But if he tries to talk to me, he says, How you doing brother? Just fine. And give him the old solid treatment.

Somebody says, What you think about brother Orr? He's a good man, but... And that but's always the thing that they've been butted on against you done to them. You know, most of the time you do it ignorant of the preacher. But boy, they certainly got that little black book out and they've got all of them written down in their soul.

I had a lady, we were having an all night prayer meeting one night and there's a bunch of folk in there and in that setting we allowed people as they felt led the spirit to pray aloud. And this one gal got to praying and she was in the flesh putting on a show praying for things that was killing the prayer meeting. Prayed for ten minutes praying for missionaries, praying for things that exalt herself and that God, I was in charge of the prayer meeting and God said, Just ask her to quit praying.

So I went over to this sister and I said, I patted her on the shoulder and said, Sister, I think for one whole year when Revival came she admitted to me that she had been bitter and angry at me for telling her just to quit praying. She'd prayed too long and she admitted once she was willing to give the defense that I was in the flesh and I was trying to impress you and everybody else how I could pray. How'd she pay you back?

She didn't come to church but now and then held her money out.

She wasn't hurting me. I didn't even know it. I called her up and asked her, I said, We sure missed you in church.

Okay. All over just patting her on the shoulder and trying to help her not to ruin the prayer meeting. Preacher, you shouldn't do things like that.

I asked the preacher, God, preachers can have the right to do things like that. He's a leader. I don't think that's right.

Well, you don't need to think about biblical authority and biblical responsibility of a pastor, friend. Well, if you don't do that, you'll try to hurt him one way or another. Preacher, however you do that, you'll do.

I've seen people keep their money out, keep their kids out, jump like grasshoppers from church to church, old grasshoppers. Whenever people came to our church, I never got too excited when people visited from a good church. Why? Because I knew good and well they met the preacher.

And they'd come and, you know, especially, you know, some of my folk were carnal, boy, if they had a little green stuff in their back pocket, you know, or had a little prestige or, you know, a good singer or something like that, oh, preacher, you ought to go get them, preacher. Boy, they'd make a good addition to our church, I said. And I'd visit them and I'd say, I want to ask you a question.

I said, why did you come to our church? They said, well, we're not satisfied with our church. Well, that says a whole lot right there. I said, well, what are you not satisfied with? They said, well, the preacher did something we don't like.

And, you know, they tried to, I said, can we tell you? They said, no, it's none of my business. But we just don't know how to handle this. I said, well, let me tell you a couple of things about me.

I'm glad you came. I trust we ministered to you. But we don't want you to join our church until you get it right with your preacher and you make sure the Spirit of God led you.

Preacher, do you have people join your church every Sunday? No, we don't want them joining. We want them to get hooked up with Jesus first. And if you let them, we know we've got a good thing.

I don't want a bunch of bitter folks bringing that awful spirit to church, but there are a lot of preachers who will do that. Enforce the offense. How do you do it? Well, we just absolutely find any way we can to get back to the person.

Don't talk to them. Won't speak peacefully about them. And when we're around a man, you know, you know, I was in a school system last week.

You know what happened? Sunday, I met with all the, some of the board members and some of the teachers. And then, I asked them, could I do devotions on the mornings with the teachers for about 15 minutes. I got in there and the principal and all the teachers together, and it was like this.

Nobody could look at one another preacher. Nobody could go over here and say, I love you. When I taught, all of them looked down at the Bible like this and looked at me and looked down.

And when the principal said something, all of them did like this. Why? Because they'd been offended. And here's a bunch of teachers teaching kids the Word of God, and they don't have a bit of God on them.

Did you address that that week? You better believe we addressed it. What happened? People began to break and go to one another and make things right. And by the end of the week in devotions, we had glory on the devotions and they started receiving the Word of God.

But what they did, they froze each other out and they had little cliques that had formed and everybody was mad about what, you know. They had several people who had been ex-principals and they had authority being under the real principal. So they were always second-guessing what he did.

And their ways seemed to be better. That's the method. What's the mess? What's the mess? Well, let me tell you several things.

First of all, it brings sorrow to others. It says in verse number 20, 31, So when his fellow servant saw what was done, Do you know, whether you want to admit it or not, other people know, other people know that you're bitter. And it brings sorrow to others.

How does it bring sorrow? There are people that love Jesus, want to do right, and when you walk in the church with bitterness, you grieve the Spirit of God. When you get around bitter people, I'll let you know something, folks. It absolutely grieves your spirit if you're full of God because you can see it just spewing out like green poison in their eyes and in their countenance and through their heart and through their lips.

Just green poison. I had a tragedy occur in our church. A young boy accidentally hung himself in an awful act.

And the mother was a bitter, vindictive woman who wore the pants in the family. She was the boss and the husband was the passive one. And of course, the son got in all kinds of mess because of that.

And during the accident, the lady, because her defenses were down, but her defenses dropped when the shot came. And it was like a green mist of poison. She poured out on Christians from the time her boy was little to the time he got old.

Nobody ever did him right. Nobody treated us right. Preacher, there's something wrong in our church.

Every time we come there, we don't feel God. And you've made mistakes. And she started spewing green poison out.

And my people got around her. And you know, we couldn't even minister to that lady because that bitterness was so thick, a demonic atmosphere in that home that you felt like you were stifled and you walked in. Yet, boy, she was spiritual.

And you know what she joined? She joined a group of ladies who had had tragedies like that where they could share their problems. You know what it was? It was a bitterness club. Do you know, if you're not careful, you and I can join bitterness clubs in the house of God, those who are disgruntled and dissatisfied.

And we say, well, if we pray long enough, things will change. Gag on a spoon. You know what I mean, folks? There's nothing like a dog sick, that kind of stuff.

And that's all in the thing of sharing and being spiritual. No, it's a way of us getting the flesh out. It brings sorrow to others.

Number two, it secures the displeasure of God. It's that God was angry. You know God gets that angry at us? Now, I ran with a crowd when I was lost called the Black Mountain Motorcycle Gang.

Now, I wasn't a biker, but I knew. Had one old fella, his name was Phillip, and he could take the back of a pickup truck and do like this. Rock, rock, rock, rock.

First time I met him, I was at a party in his house, his wild house, and somebody introduced me to him. He grabbed me around the neck and just lifted me up like that and held me with one arm and said, you like to party, don't you, son? I said, I love to boogie, man. I love to boogie.

Put me back down. They could whip anybody in the city. Now listen, when somebody messes with those boys, they could whip you and nobody wanted them angry.

Now listen, I'd rather be in a pack of Black Mountains and have them angry at me and have God mad at me. There are people, brother pastor, in churches that God's angry at. He loves them, but He's angry.

You can love somebody and be mad at them at the sin they're doing. The Bible says to be angry at sin. You can be flat bad at sin, but you can still love the person doing it.

That's a good kind of anger. You can be mad at sin, but you can love the sinner and know it wasn't for the grace of God. And God got angry.

Then here's the kicker. You know what the biggest mess is? You're sentenced to prison where Satan is free to torment you. The Bible says His Lord was angry and delivered Him to the tormentors.

Whenever you see that tormentor, that's demons. Till it should pay all that was due to Him. Now folks, I want to tell you something.

When you have bitterness, you open your life to demonic activity. Oh, preacher, demons don't bother me. Well then, why are you so suspicious of people? Why do you distrust people so much and can't be free to love them and you always hold out because you're afraid you got burned in the past and you don't want to give in again? Why are you critical? You know, we call it gift of discernment.

I think we all call it critical sometimes. Why are you defensive? You know, you can't be admonished. Nobody can come to you and say, my dear brother, I just want to share something with you that I think can help you.

I see some areas in your life where I think there's some problems with you. And we go, what are you talking about? Of all the audacity of that person coming to me and telling me I'm wrong. What about your life? Defensiveness.

Can't be transparent. Brother Jules got a mask on. I had a young convert.

He got saved out of crack addiction. A boy came to me wanting to get saved and the Spirit of God said, I'm not ready to save him. Folks, when people say they want to get saved, it doesn't mean God's ready to save them.

Be careful picking green fruit. I said, well, brother Norman, I tell you what, why don't you listen to this tape on the love of God for a few days and then come back to me or if you're alone, ask God to save you. Well, he got on conviction and he got so on conviction, brother Jules, he was on top of this mountain where there's this Catholic school.

Well, he was so ignorant to the things of God, he thought he had to be in the church to get saved. So he climbed through the window of a Catholic church and got saved in the Catholic church at the altar and came back and joined the Baptist church. Amen.

That boy got on fire. It wasn't three weeks later. His Lutheran wife, that was a lost Lutheran, got saved and they lined up like a straight stick.

And one Wednesday evening I was in my office studying, kind of, you know, caught up with getting the sermon ready and walked in and sat down and he said, preacher, I want to ask you a question. I said, okay, brother Norman. He said, are you backslitting? He got my attention.

I said, Norman, what do you mean? He said, you don't seem to be as happy in Jesus as I am. Are you backslitting? Preacher, I'm concerned about you. Now, here's this little year old buck and the Lord, I helped, you know, had a part in him getting saved and I knew he was struggling with giving up the rock music and, you know, he'd sniff and smoke a cigarette, still hadn't got victory over that stuff and here he is rebuking me.

What did you do? I was very ready to cling that boy's clock. But the Spirit of God said, he's right. A.W. Toaster gave me some great information in the book.

He said, whenever criticism comes to your life, never look at the source. Take the criticism, spread it out before God and ask God how true the criticism is. He says, people that are your enemies are usually mean enough to tell you exactly what's wrong with you.

Hello? See, we can receive it from the person we admire, but what about that one that's mean to the devil telling you the same thing? What did you do? I said, Norman, I think you're right. Would you pray for me right now that God would light a fire in my heart? I believe I don't have what you have. He said, Amen, preacher, I thought you were.

I'm glad you told me. He said, I feel better now. No big deal to him.

Then those old boys just learned to be transparent and honest. That's all they knew. You get some of these street people out of ballrooms and stuff, they don't have any bad habits to unlearn.

So they learned to be transparent. They love hot preaching. They love to be in church all the time.

They love to witness. They love to give. Why? Because they've got God all over them.

But we're defensive, vindictive. You know where most insecurities come from? People who are insecure? That's simply another word for pride in reverse. You just don't think enough of yourself to be yourself for people because your pride won't let you be yourself.

So therefore, you're hiding this little thing of, oh, I'm nothing. No, you're just saying that you're full of pride and you don't want to be who you are because you never liked yourself and you don't think anybody else will like you. Now it's getting heavy, isn't it? And now people are bound.

We had an 84-year-old lady that was afraid to share testimony. You know what her problem was? She was afraid what people would think about it. So during the Soterra meeting, Ralph Soterra said, Ms. So-and-so, will you come and share a testimony of what God did for you? And she was shaking like a leaf and she had to admit in front of that whole crowd she was afraid to say anything.

You know what Ralph said? Well, dear sister, I think you ought to go to the prayer room and confess pride. Right in front of the whole crowd. Now these old fellows are like general tithers.

They did that to me one time and just, oh my, killed me. But it set me free. She went and came back and said, for the first time in my life I feel free because I've admitted where the true problem was, it's pride.

See, you can confess everything but the right ground and it won't set you free. You've got to call it what God calls it. I said, in the name of Jesus, you're not going anywhere, fellas.

Boy, I'll let you know for two weeks I got my associate in there, these demons hissed, fussed, cussed, said, we've had her all her life and we're not letting her go. I mean, this is another gravelly voice. I said, in the name of Jesus, when we find out where you got her at, you're going to go, boys.

I mean, I wasn't that cocky, but I was just telling them and they hissed and cussed, threw a purse at me, they got up and threw a purse at me and I said, you're under the foot of Jesus, sit down. And they just, yes, sit down. And then, closed their eyes and pointed fingers, said, we're going to kill you, we're going to kill you.

I said, you can't kill me, I'm under the blood of Jesus. They said, yes, yes, yes, we know it. What did you do, preacher? Well, she was beating her hands on her chair and I noticed that she may get bruised and I said, I'm going to back off on you if you back off on her because I don't want to mess with you anymore today, I'm tired.

And they surfaced and she said, what's been going on here? What's been going on here? I said, oh, God just showed us where your problem is. I said, would you be willing if I found someone that's a little more adapted to counseling in this area to go with me, you and your husband, and go for some counseling? And I called two men that are major writers in the area of spiritual warfare and I got to both of them and they mentioned the same man that was an hour and a half from me. And I called him up and he's a very busy, prominent evangelist around here in Canada and he said, I feel liberty to see you and he has a group of seven, eight, it's about seven people that pray with him and fast whenever he deals with demonized people and we brought her in.

You know what her problem was, folks? Now listen to this. Her real daddy died when she was four. Her mother remarried a man that at best I will call him a heathen.

He was an occultist, a sexual abuser, and a drunkard. This girl, from the age of six, I think she said to the age of maybe 15 or 16, maybe 17, I don't know the exact time, teenage years, she had a stepbrother that lived down the hallway with her upstairs. The stepbrother would come down the hallway, slip in a room, crawl in the bed with her and say these words, the only reason I'm doing this is because you're making me do it and rape her.

The mother do it, the stepfather do it and then the uncles got in on it. She was so absolutely devastated by this that she began to seek the devil for help. She had a picture of her real daddy and she was so traumatized as a child that what she did, she would talk to that picture and say, Daddy, why did you die?

Why don't you help me? And those demons would use that as a mediumistic point of contact and would mask his voice and would tell her, I'm alive, I'm helping you.

And she began to have fellowship with demons. Where did you break the ground? She had to repent of being bitter at her mother, at God for losing the daddy, at the stepfather, at the uncle, and at the stepbrother and she had to ask them to forgive her for being bitter for what they did to her before we ever could get her free. She could not, Brother Jules, even pray the prayer.

We had to bind the devil where they could not even suppress her voice and she could barely, ah, God forgive me, and we'd just stand against her and then she began to break and get free and it's like pulling layers off, skins off an onion and that girl began to get freed up when she repented of that bitterness. You know what she did? Now listen, this is how free you get. Her mother, who was a crude, ugly, mean woman, Vicki began to love on her mother.

Guess what happened one day? I got a phone call. She said, Pastor, are you busy this afternoon? I said, well Vicki, if it's important, I have time for you. I have time for anybody if God's in it.

I'll adjust my schedule. She said, well my mother's under conviction and I believe she wants to get saved. Her mother came to my office, that crude, hard woman, got saved and it's the most beautiful thing in the world to see Vicki put her arm around her mother and love her mother, worship together, where her mother, she hated her all those years.

Why? Because she got freed of bitterness. But she was tormented by demons. And the girl got free and over a two year period, she's one of the strongest Christian women in that church in Maryland.

And she'll tell you, my problem was not psychological, it wasn't a chemical dependence, a chemical imbalance, it was me giving place to the devil through bitterness and going to the devil for help. When I should have gone to God, I was angry at God. And now her husband says, I've got a new wife.

Are you in the devil's jailhouse tonight? Well, preacher, I'm not having problems with what about your kitties? They might not jump on you, they might jump on your kids. Now you say, well, preacher, how in the world can I get free? Let me give you my last point. It's this, the personal elimination of unforgiveness.

Number one, you've got to confess your unforgiveness as sin and quit making the excuse that if they would come to me, I would get right. You're commanded to go to them even if they never get right with you. But they were wrong in doing that and I've got to eat crow and go to them and tell them and ask them to forgive me for all the stuff they've done.

I don't want to do that. That's your problem. You're full of pride and you don't want to pay the price enough to get right with God.

You've got to ask them to forgive you as well as God. And see how serious an offense it is. Number two, you've got to have compassion toward the one that did it.

Realize if it wasn't for the grace of God, you'd be doing the same thing or worse to other people. Rather than condemning them and putting them down and talking about them, you say, listen, what about so-and-so? Oh, I love him to death. I'm praying for him in Jesus.

Then number three, this is the kicker, this one will kill everyone of us. You've got to cancel out the debt. Cancel out what you mean.

That means if you've forgiven them, then you never bring it up again even to somebody else. They say, I don't want to talk about it. That's a dead issue.

But you don't know how badly I was hurt at that church. You don't know what those people did to me. God does.

He allowed it to happen just to see what's in you because when you kick a bucket, what's in it comes out. Amen? And when somebody kicks your bucket real good, what's going to come out? The love of Jesus or a bunch of junk? Isn't that right? You know what God gave me, Brother Jules? He always gave me enough bread from the devil to pull the worst out of me. I had horny headed beacons, ratchet jaw women, bitter bitties.

You know what I mean? Who dared me to love them? When I tried to, it wasn't good enough for them. What has God done? He's given me people to show me just how much I needed Jesus to love them and forgive them. Prick, have people ever hurt you? Son, they've told some things on me enough to sink ships and it did sink me a couple of times.

I spent three months in one church lambasting a church for not doing what I wanted them to. And then I had to eat crow and admit to them I was the one wrong all along. See, when you cancel out the debt, you had to release them from prison.

That means next time you see them, you're free enough in the Spirit to not even think about defending my brother. How you doing? God bless you. Can I do anything for you? Hallelujah.

And when you're around, you treat them as though they're your best friend even though they might not be. Do you know how you win people to Jesus? Love never fails. You love your people to death.

That's a weapon of warfare loving folks. See, we know nothing about supernatural love. I mean, how can you love somebody that doesn't love you back unless you have God's love? I mean, if somebody wants to give me something and be nice to me and talk about me and take me out to eat, I can love that crowd, but can't the world love that same crowd? We don't have anything the world wants because, hey, all they ever see us do is fussing and talking about one another and griping about what we like and don't like and about that old Southern evangelist and emotional who walks all over the place and yells and carries on and I don't even know why he had him here.

We don't even understand his language. Ask God to give you the gift of interpretation. I think you can understand what I'm saying.

Amen? Yeah, no, I might be Southern friends, but I think I've been some places. And then you've got to respond to them in love. What about old Joseph? Of all the people in the Bible that would all be bitter, it's Joseph.

Can you imagine walking up to your brother and saying, listen, I just had an experience with God's fellows and God said one day I'm going to be a leader of this whole crowd. You know, and he was Daddy's favorite which didn't help much at all. Had that coat of many colors on too, you know, cocky.

And that fellow said, let's get rid of this fellow. Gonna put him in a pit wanting to kill him. One of the fellows had a little bit of mercy and said, well, let's not kill him, let's sell him into slavery.

Now, how would you like to have a bunch of brothers like that? Sold him into slavery as a child. Worked in Potiphar's house, God blessed him and then the woman lied on him and accused him of rape. Got in the prison, helped the baker and whoever the other fellow was.

Got out of prison, one of them got out of prison and said, I'll tell them that you helped me and didn't do that and had to stay in prison longer. Then God elevated him because he had the right attitude and one day, guess who showed up in a famine? The sorry crowd that sold him into slavery and he had authority over them and he looked like an Egyptian and when he saw them, if it had been us, we said, I've got them now. I know where that deep, as dark, as dungeon is where the biggest rats and cockroaches, son, they've had it now and they want to know it was me.

You know where your truth of character comes out? When you have a chance to get somebody and you don't. The Bible says, the first time I really heard this in the Holy Ghost was in seminary with Dr. Schrader, brother, Jules, and he started talking about in those Hebrew terms how the guy went there and broke down and wept because he was so moved with love that he just wanted to love that crowd, son, I got up and took a shouting spell in that class. I said, glory to the Lamb, what love! And when he said it, he said, hey, fellas, take it easy.

You're all forgiven. You've meant it for evil. God was over this whole scenario.

God meant it for good. He sent me ahead of you to save you. Bring daddy over here.

I got seven years worth of grain. We're in good shape. God and I are alright.

No bitterness. Not one bit of bitterness. Yeah, you got hurt and God did it for a reason to mature you and break you and bring out of you and you're resenting what God let happen because you think you deserve better.

Folks, at best, all of us deserve the deepest, darkest part of the lake of fire and anything above that is grace, friends. God's on this thing. Well, that's not the end of it.

See, you cancel out the debt but then you're in the position to see things change. There was a girl at a ball game that time. There was a guy behind her with an air horn and in the midst of this ball game, he blew this air horn and it was so loud that it literally just devastated her ears completely.

She became deaf at fourteen. The fellow was broken. He came to her many times and she was like this, I don't forgive you.

You ruined me. And for seven years she became one of the most bitter, vindictive, self-centered girls. In fact, a lot of people with physical infirmities sometimes become very bitter and angry at God if you're not careful.

Or people have tragedies, can be bitter and very angry at God if you're not careful. Because you think you deserve more than what you've got and God's got a purpose in adversities, a chief friend of somebody wanting to grow up in Jesus. God's got you weak because you've got to trust Him to make it.

She went to a crusade where they had a deaf interpreter. God broke her heart about her bitterness and the minute she got on her knees and said, God forgive me for my bitterness and I'm willing to go to Him, God healed her ears on the spot. True story.

I wonder why we don't have more physical healing, brother, and more spiritual healing because there's a bunch of bitterness damning up the power of God. There was a girl in the church I pastored in Martinsville, Virginia and Brother Harold Vaughan came in a meeting and he was preaching along these lines something, not this sermon, but another one. And it's a girl that the whole two years I was there pastoring that church never would smile.

She just never could smile. If you're the kind of person who never can smile, you better check up on what's in your heart. Amen? You better check up and see what's in your heart if you can never smile.

She was faithful, gave. Her husband was lost. She slipped into the prayer room that night.

I didn't notice her. She wasn't a very kind of noticeable person. She kind of blended in with everybody.

The next night we asked for testimonies. This girl got up and brother, when she stood up, she was so full of God that God came out of the pores of her skin. Her eyes were twinkling.

She was smiling so big. I thought she'd break her face and she was weeping. Massacre coming down through here.

She said, some of you know what happened seven years ago. She said, two men in this city brutally murdered my brother. And because their families had money and power, they got off free.

And for seven years, I've hated them. Every time I went by their houses, I said to myself, how can I kill them for killing my brother? You got off and I'm going to pay you back. But today, Jesus set me free because I went to their house and knocked on their door.

And asked them to forgive me for being hateful to them bitter. And said, Well, what happened to that gal? Well, last year, I was in a meeting in that same city at another church. And she showed up.

Guess who came with her? Her husband, who'd gotten saved. Guess what her husband was doing there? He's a preacher. See, circumstances can change when you get free and decide to get right with God.

I saw, just the other week, in a meeting, this girl was 15 years old. She'd had a boyfriend that was physically abusive with her. And because of that, she became suicidal and very rebellious against the parents.

And her mother was there. She stood up and said, I've got to forgive this boy. I'm scared of him, but I know I need to forgive him because he's pulled my hair out.

He's hit me with his fist. He's threatened to kill me. But I know I've got to forgive him.

And he said, Mama, will you forgive me? I've been like a devil. And the mother came there and they fell on the floor and started weeping. Guess who came to church the next night? The daddy who never would come to church.

Guess what happened during the invitation? This fellow that had never walked out walked the aisle and got saved and came back the rest of the meeting. Why? Because Mama and the daughter got right. I wonder what happened in Alliance, Nebraska, the city where revival came years ago.

Folks, don't even look back to that. You can't live on past fumes. You know, the hardest places you can go into? Those who've had it and think they've got it now when they don't.

I'll just do a little prophesying tonight, too. You know what would happen to this city if every person who's had their feelings hurt, been offended, been disillusioned, disenchanting, would decide to get right with God? I don't believe anybody could drive within the city limits without sensing the presence of God if every saint would do that. You know, who it must begin with? God's best that have been harboring things for years.

And yes, you've prayed the prayer with your lips, but you've never been broken over it or you repented of it because you still remember it and resent it and rehearse it. I was making that statement in a meeting in Fairview, North Carolina. I was four-fifths through with this sermon and a pastor was sitting on the front row and he said, quit preaching! Now, when a pastor tells me to quit preaching, it's either one or two things.

It's either he's going to get right with God or he wants to ship me off. And I was hoping it was the first one. He said, I can't take it anymore.

He said, up to this sermon tonight I would have swore up and down that I was not bitter, but God showed me that I was rehearsing the offense and I was nursing the offense and he showed me this, I had not responded in love to the people that hurt me. If you're not responding to them in love, you haven't forgiven them, even though you've gone to them. And he said, there are three men in this church, only one is here tonight, but I want to ask you to forgive me for the past two years I've damned at the power of God because I have been resentful toward three men who bucked me on an issue and I want you to forgive me, church.

And I'm going to talk to the fellow after the service and the pastor fell in brokenness. What did you do? I only gave one more illustration. The tide came in.

We had three ladies come down there, one was 52 or 30, they were weeping and sobbing and crying and hugging and one stood up, the pastor said, does anybody have a word from God tonight? She said, I'm visiting tonight, folks. He said, this lady next to me is my sister-in-law. We hate each other.

We've hated each other for years. Last week, we got so mad at each other we got into a fist fight. But we've made things right.

Teenagers who've been angry at mom and daddy for visiting them and making them go to church and killing them, they got the anger. Folks, it was like a calm sea when we left there because suddenly contention was cast out. Now, I wish we had a bigger crowd tonight, but the crowd that spoke to be here is here.

Obviously, somebody here is bitter and unforgiving. And it's run so deep so you got hurt as a child. Some of you got hurt as children.

You've never let go of that childhood offense of how your daddy or your mother disappointed you or your siblings or somebody at school who called you an ugly name. They called me the needle. Why? Because I was so skinny I could turn sideways and go down the field without them seeing me.

Called me freckle face. Called a friend of mine crow nose. You know, when you say words like that young people, you injure somebody's spirit and some people never get over it.

And it goes deep, four eyes, skinny mini, dummy. And there's somebody here, you've been scarred so deeply that you've actually stuffed it so far down that unless we dig deep, you won't even see it. Only the Holy Ghost can show you just how angry and bitter you are.

Because that's why you're not free to be what God's called you to be because you're bound and shackled and demons give you a fit. You've heard the song Jesus sets me absolutely free. He died on Calvary to give me liberty.

Jesus sets me absolutely free. I praise His holy name. Give you one more illustration.

I hurt my wife being a preacher. Now don't look at me real bad because it wasn't anything intentional. You know how I hurt my wife? I made my preaching and my ministry first before her.

Now God's always first, but I was a driven man that would say yes to people before I think about her needs. And this went on for about three years. And my wife's a strong lady and never has done anything, but I noticed her close in her spirit to me.

And when she got sick down in Florida with chemical allergies and I was out of the ministry a year, all that stuff surfaced. She just was so hurt, she just let it go one day and hit me just upside the head with all the hurt. I asked her forgiveness.

I asked God to change me. And I began on an odyssey of learning how to be a servant to my wife and love her the way Jesus loves the church. And that's hard, man.

Because we're so self-centered, we never really think about our wives as much as we ought to, but they have a lot of needs only we can meet. And God's given me a sick wife to make me a servant. And about every decision I make, I usually have to think about how is this going to hurt her health.

Well, I asked her to forgive me, but one... Oh, I think about the third year I was in Maryland and we had Brother Manly Beasley in who was a powerful revivalist and he preached on the church of Laodicea on lukewarmness. It had nothing to do with bitterness, but I noticed my wife went to the prayer room. And after the service, she came in and said, I've got to share something with you privately.

Now, whenever a wife says that, the first thing that went through my mind, Brother Pastor, she's got another man. Oh, God. I had a sick feeling in my stomach.

I said, how in the world did this happen? I could just see it. I said, oh, my God. I mean, I was absolutely devastated.

She said, now, before I say anything, it's not another man. I said, hallelujah. I didn't care what it was.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Glory.

I was just... You know, she could have said she robbed a bank. I'd be happy. Anything but that, Lord.

And she said, I've set you free tonight. I said, what, Paul? She said, I've set you free. She said, I have harbored such a deep resentment and hurt that I haven't been able to love you because I've been afraid if I loved you, you'd hurt me again.

But I've set you free tonight. You know, there's somebody here you can't love because you've forgiven, but you've never released love because you're afraid if you love again, you'll be hurt again. But did not perfect love hurt? And you'll always hurt? But that's the kind of hurt that Jesus wants to have because you'll never have love or hurts.

But that kind of love is a never-ending supply. But somebody here tonight, you've been afraid to love. There's some relationships here with husbands and wives, children, people, grandmothers, grandfathers, Christians that you've been afraid to love because you're afraid of getting hurt again.

And I said, you're free. Do you know why our relationship has been different ever since? And God showed me to read her spirit rather than her eyes and mind. And when I sensed her close enough, you know what I had to do? I had to humble myself and say, honey, where did I fail you? Tell me.

I don't want you to close up again. We can't go through that again. We won't make it.

And she'll tell me. She's honest. She's a prophetess.

My wife will tell you the truth. You know what I'm seeing in our lives? Us doing this in Christ. Growing together.

Enjoying one another. Even though we're away, our spirits are tangled up and we're together. Where did it begin? When I got right with her and she got right with me.

On a deep level. Not this superficial stuff, but a deep level. And I sense a deep work of the Spirit by the pastor here tonight.

Because I think some of you have been in the kingdom of God long enough and you've been hurt awful deep and it's run a lot deeper than you're willing to admit. Because are you free to love anybody in any situation for the glory of God? And you're free and you're not entangled. Even if they're ugly, you just say, well, hallelujah, what a challenge.

What a challenge. See, love never fails. You can have the great preaching, revival preaching.

You can have all the principles you can have. You can know spiritual warfare. But if you don't have love, folk, you're like a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

How much do we love these people outside of this church's walls? Enough to express love to them this week in tangible ways, in the prayer room, fasting and prayer, with humility and brokenness. No, if it wasn't for the grace of God, you wouldn't even be in church tonight. Are you bound by the devil? Are you tormented? Are you free? You can't get along with everybody all the time as you walk in the power of God.

The prayer room's available. We'll be playing music, but I sense God here tonight and I sense Him plumbing the depths of our souls. Thank God for this work tonight.

Some of you have been bound by your past, all these hurts, misunderstandings, and you've tried your best, that's your trouble. You've been trying, you haven't been trusting in the blood and in the power of the Spirit. And for God to give you a strategy how to express that love to people, releasing them from prison.

Why? You never mention them in negative terms again. Never. Unless it's for the express purpose of simply saying, let's pray for the brother, they're bound.

But nothing in the negative where you say, oh, that hurt me. How many of you have experienced the process of divine compassion in that you've already been forgiven and you're saved tonight? Can you say amen? Then if you're saved, you have no right under God's heaven to be mad at anybody for any reason. And so, you need to admit how wrong you are tonight.

Let's bow together in prayer.

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