

On Eagles' Wings Pt 20

by Don Courville

The sermon focuses on the necessity of seeking forgiveness and maintaining a clear conscience to experience God's blessings and spiritual renewal.

Duration: 26:32

Scripture: Luke 15:18

Topics: "Radio Show"

Description

In this sermon, the pastor emphasizes the importance of having a clear conscience before God and men. He encourages the audience to consider the consequences of not being right with God and others, and suggests asking for forgiveness from those we have offended. The pastor then discusses the parable of the prodigal son, highlighting the lessons on repentance and the father's forgiveness. He concludes by urging the listeners to examine their own lives and seek cleansing from God, so that the unbelievers around them may be inspired to turn to Christ.

Transcript

Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard? That the Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary, there is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increases strength. Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall.

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.

We welcome you to own eagle's wings. A church revival ministry for encouraging the pastor in the local church for revival. Trust that God has used this in your life.

We've been talking the last couple weeks about the conscience, and we might do a little bit more today on our conscience. So important to be right before God and before men. So let God use this time to minister to you.

Well, we've been talking about the conscience, the importance of getting right before God and man, and I was wondering, have you ever considered the consequences of your not being right with God and with men? Maybe you need to ask somebody to forgive you. You might begin with those whom you've

offended the most. Now here's some reasons why.

God is the one whom we've offended the most. If we fail to understand this fact and to act upon it, God's blessings will be missing from our lives. And when we go to ask forgiveness of others, asking forgiveness of God requires that we trace our offenses to violations of His commandments.

I know of Christian workers who are trying to serve God, but yet they've never taken the time to get something right in their life. Maybe if I shared some things with you to put it into a different light, maybe if I said this, suppose you've stolen, then you've broken the commandment, thou shalt not steal. You see, we think we're pretty good, but yet you broke a commandment.

And if you've lied, you've broken the commandment, thou shalt not bear false witness against your neighbor. And if you've caused a weaker brother to stumble, you've broken the commandment that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way, Romans 14, 13. And you see, by breaking God's commandments, we confirm the fact that we do not love Him.

It's serious, my friend, to have sin in our life. And I have found out that I have all the capacity of doing any kind of sin from anybody in this world, and that's what Paul discovered. He said, I know that there dwells within me no good thing, that is, in the flesh.

And so if we break God's commandments, and we do it habitually, one, maybe we're not saved, and maybe you just need to get saved. Or two, we're backslidden. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, John 14, 21.

So by not loving the Lord, we break the greatest of all commandments. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. Do you have room in your heart for bitterness or hatred or selfishness, and at the same time say that you're loving the Lord with all your heart and with all thy soul? How about it? And with all thy mind.

This is the first and great commandment. When we offend another Christian, we also offend Christ. Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

If a man say, I love God, and hate his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? First John 4, 20. It might be good just to stop and pray.

Now after gaining a good conscience with the Lord, and after receiving His forgiveness, you go to the most offended person. This individual should be listed in the first column of your worksheet. Remember we were talking about that a couple of weeks ago.

The individual you offended the most may be the hardest one to approach. Now if you avoid this person, the guilt will hinder your objectivity and gain a good conscience with others. My friend, it's not worth it to go through life with guilt and a plugged conscience.

The Bible talks about the conscience and where's behalf has a good book out on the conscience. I can't remember the name of it right now. If you go to your local Bible bookstore and ask them for the book, By Where's Beyond the Conscience, they'll be able to find it for you.

Now we need to separate guilt from blame. One of the greatest hindrances you may experience in asking forgiveness is the feeling that the one you wronged was also guilty. You may even feel that he or she deserved what you did.

It will be your tendency to magnify the blame which you have toward the one you offended just as it will be his or her tendency to magnify the blame toward you. But mixing guilt and blame will not only stop you from gaining a good conscience, but listen, it will also cause these two spiritual poisons to eat away at your soul and reduce the spiritual potential which God has for your life. Now if you're clean, you're full of the Holy Spirit, you're joyful, and life to you is exciting because Jesus is exciting.

But you know, the Bible says a little leavened, leavened the whole lump. He's talking about the illustration of the church, by the way. Just a little sin in the church is going to contaminate the church.

What about your own life? Just a little sin in your life. Just an argument with your wife? It's not just an argument with your wife. Let me tell you this, my friend.

It's sin, and sin is what nailed Jesus to the cross. We're talking about the seriousness of an uncleansed conscience. The only solution is to determine what percentage of blame you have in the matter.

Then see that blame through the eyes of the one that you offended. Say if you're wrong ten percent, let's suppose that you're responsible for just five or ten percent of the offense. Realize that the one whom you offended probably feels that he is also only five to ten percent to blame.

We don't like to accept the blame. You know, that's the way it is. If something goes wrong, the first thing we're doing is looking for somebody to blame it, even if you bite your tongue.

Right away you're mad at whoever's around you. Realize that the one whom you offended just feels about the same way you do. That's in many conflicts the vast majority of blame is not claimed by either party.

You know, we go back to the old Garden of Eden thing. Well, the snake made me do it. You know.

Adam, what about this? Well, the woman you gave me. And the woman, what about it? Well, the snake. We always want to pass the buck.

So it may be that from your viewpoint your offense is like the splinter in the eye of the one you offended. However, from his perspective, it probably feels like a beam. And when you see your offense through his eyes, it became the beam, which Jesus referred to in Matthew 7. So relive your offenses through their feelings.

You must have a genuine spirit of repentance before you go to a person and ask for forgiveness. If the one whom you offended does not detect such a spirit, and they can tell it, I can tell it, you can too. That individual may withhold forgiveness or even take further steps to bring you to repentance.

So you've got to have a clean heart before God, before you go to somebody else. You can experience genuine repentance by reliving your offenses through the feelings of the ones whom you offended. Just put yourself in their shoes and see how they felt.

You say, well, they don't deserve to feel good. They deserve what they got. That's not Christ-like.

Now, without knowing how hurtful your words or actions were, the request for forgiveness will be shallow. What we need today is a brokenness. You know, the thing about the Lord Jesus Christ is he was broken.

He was a broken man, I think. All of his life he had a broken heart. That broken heart comes from a God that has a broken heart.

He's broken over our sin. And here we are, living childish, selfish lives. And we let things go on in our lives for years without making it right.

How about it? What about your brother or your sister? You've got something between them that you've had there for years. Would you get it right? And when you do, would you write me and let me know how things turned out? I might be able to share some of these things on the radio about how God is working. Let's see God work in our area.

Let's believe God to cleanse us. The unbelievers around here won't get saved until they see the church getting right. Be sensitive.

Now, how do you relieve your offenses? Well, picture yourself as the one whom you offended. In your mind, reenact the circumstances leading up to the offense. Now, try to imagine how they felt when the offense came.

And think through the consequences that have come into his or her life because of the offense. Maybe it's a married couple, a close friend or family member. Maybe somebody around you can help you relive these offenses.

You might ask some questions. What you did which offended me. How I felt when you did it.

What I did in return. What God is teaching me through the offense. This is such an important step that if you do not accomplish it yourself or you have the other person to help you to do it, God may allow you to experience the same offenses too.

You ever had that happen? You did something to somebody else and God allowed the same thing to happen to you to show you how it felt. Now, let me give an illustration to you here. There was a second born son.

And he watched with hatred as a despised half-brother approached him at the job site. And he said to his brothers, let's do away with this proud half-brother of ours. And his older brother tried to reason with him, let's not kill him ourselves.

Let's arrange it so that he will die on his own. And all their brothers agreed and carried out their evil plan. For years they lived with their guilt.

But one day they relived their offenses through their half-brother's feelings. They were falsely accused and thrown in prison for three days. It was because of this prison experience that they said to one another, quote, we are verily guilty concerning our brother in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us and we would not hear.

Therefore is this distress come upon us. And of course you know I'm talking about Joseph now. And even though they acknowledged their guilt, they still did not have a genuine spirit of repentance.

You know that? Instead they began to blame each other. And for this reason they experienced more anguish, false accusation and imprisonment. Look at the scriptures on it.

This is in Genesis 42 and 50. Well, it was not until several years later that they finally came to the place of asking forgiveness of their half-brother with a genuine spirit of repentance. Forgive, I pray thee, now the trespass of thy brethren and their sin, for they did unto thee evil.

And now we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. You know, they lived in fear. They lived in guilt.

Those are terrible slime pits to live into. He's talking about the fear of Moses a little bit back. I might talk about it some more sometime.

But fear's a terrible place to live. And guilt, could it be that God is wanting to do something in your life? Cleanse you? Take a few moments and just think. Just think about it.

Ask Him, God is there things in my heart I need to clear up? Well, what about it? Choose the right wording. If you're going to go to someone, the importance of selecting the right words for your confession cannot be overemphasized. For the ear trieth words as the mouth tasteth meat.

Job 34.3. It would be wise, as that one fellow did, to write out the words that you plan to use in asking for forgiveness. The scriptural precedent for doing this appears in Jesus' parable, the prodigal son. You remember the prodigal son? He carefully chose each word, he said, and he even said it ahead of time.

He said, I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants. That's from Luke, the book of Luke, chapter 15.

And the words which you choose should focus only on your part of the offense. In no way should they project blame to the other person. Now, we're talking about trying to get something done the right way.

Now, this would rule out any statement that would imply, I was wrong, but so were you. You're going to have to leave that alone. Let God take care of them.

We're just working with you. And neither should the words project justification or excuses. We like to excuse ourselves.

They should directly acknowledge guilt and genuine repentance. Many times you'll see a brokenness come in the other person as they see it in you first. You might say something like, God has helped me to realize that I was wrong.

In this attitude, or this offense to you, would you forgive me? Now, you evaluate this wording. It's concise. It's to the point.

The longer a confession, the more danger there is for self-justification, so keep it short. It does not blame by implying I was wrong, but you were too. It does not communicate pride by the statements like, if I were wrong, know it was I was wrong.

It does not suggest flippancy, such as I'm sorry. It acknowledges guilt the correct way, by saying I was wrong. It focuses on the rude attitude first.

It explains how wrong actions grow out of wrong attitudes. It does not demand forgiveness, but instead pleads for it. You can't demand for forgiveness.

It requires a direct answer rather than a general response. They've got to say something to you. It calls for a verbal response, and it identifies the basic offense.

It was very simple. God has helped me to realize that I was wrong. Would you forgive me? You could say I was wrong in this or that or that.

Would you forgive me? Now, it might be that you need to determine whether you need to make a phone call or a visit best. Maybe you're not even saved and God is speaking to you about something you did. Action or attitude with your parents, brother, or sister.

Maybe God will use this even to restore your relationship. Maybe you need to consider about going to Him, the Heavenly Father, and saying, I was wrong in thinking that I did not need to be saved, and ask Him to save you, to forgive you. Now, the natural tendency at this point is to simply write a letter in which you ask for forgiveness.

The appeal of this wrong method is that it avoids any personal confrontation. You need to phone them or visit them. I believe visiting is the best.

And the lack of a personal contact also eliminates the possibility of gaining one of the most important benefits, a verbal assurance that you are forgiven. That's why it's good to have a personal contact. It's normal for those who receive a letter which asks for forgiveness not to respond to it.

There are many other benefits which are lost by a letter. The one you offended does not get the benefit of sensing the sincerity of your voice. That's important.

So think about just doing it in person. And then timing is important. It's like the best time to ask for forgiveness.

The closer you come to approaching the person whom you offended, the more difficult it will probably become to ask for forgiveness. The following rationalizations may prevent you from humbling yourself. Each one of these need to be rejected.

If you're going to have a conscience clear, one thing that we like to say is, well, it happened before I was a Christian. Well, becoming a Christian should only increase your motivation and ability to clear your conscience. So maybe you stole before you were saved.

Well, this should increase it, not decrease it. It will also glorify God by giving witness to the fact that the Holy Spirit has given you new discernment into right and wrong. And they'll say, hey, this guy's different now.

And then another thing is sometimes we want to say, well, aren't all my sins covered by Christ's blood? Well, when you became a Christian, the blood of Jesus Christ cleansed you from all sin. He removed your transgressions, as far as the East is from the West. He blotted out your transgressions.

And we'll remember them no more against you, Psalms 103, 12, 79, 8. The difficulty is that what happened to you spiritually does not remove the bitterness or damage to those whom you offended. God forgets, but they remember. Each former offense becomes like a handle of guilt on your spiritual back.

Each time you desire to walk forward in your Christian life or come closer to the Lord, it's as if Satan reaches out and grabs hold of this convenient handle of guilt on your spiritual back and states, just where do you think you're going? Don't you remember what you did? One of the most powerful things in a believer's life is a clear conscience. And then another thing we might say, well, hasn't Paul told us to forget those things which are behind? Well, this is in Philippians 3, 13, 14. And he says the things which Paul referred to were his former achievements, not his offenses.

So you can't use that one either. And you can't use the one where it happened so long ago. Well, if it did, how come you remember it? We tend to forget the things we do wrong.

But therefore, the fact that you can still remember this says that you need to take care of it. Remember, he says, if you bring your gift to the altar and you remember. What about this one? Things haven't gotten better between us.

And they won't. This is why you need to go get it right. Even though the relationship hasn't, I mean, excuse me, suppose you say, well, things are okay between us now.

Well, they may be. But yet you still have that in the back of your mind. And they probably do too.

And this may ultimately keep that relationship from being even better than it is. You think about these things. Let God work on you.

Let God cleanse you from those secret faults. Now, write out the results. When you ask for forgiveness, you don't know what's going to happen.

Most of the time, you'll hope you'll be forgiven. Sometimes you might be surprised. So do not expect to receive forgiveness.

There are several reasons that the person you offended may not grant it, including the fact that you may be increasing his load of guilt. So they may not like it. And if you do receive forgiveness, express genuine appreciation for it.

But don't be surprised if they don't forgive you because you're reminding them of their part in it. And so it's sort of like, you know, fooling around maybe with a stick of dynamite. Write down any special situations you encounter in the column for results.

You can put a result column on your sheet. And if needed, discuss these with your group at the next meeting. When you get together with someone, you're talking these things out.

Now, the prodigal son. It'd be good maybe to take a few minutes in closing and look at the prodigal son. You know, the prodigal son's father forgave him.

But the son faced the continuing classroom of limitations and disciplines. In Christ's parable, the prodigal son contains rich insights about the real essence of repentance. Here's one of these insights.

Repentance begins by coming to our senses. He came to himself, the scripture says. And he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bred enough? The prodigal son had demanded his own way, remember, and lived in excess of sensual pleasure.

And when all his resources were gone, he came to his senses. How about it? Is God bringing you to your senses? Have you just got your way and got your way and it's become more and more miserable because you've gotten your way? Something else. Repentance is admitting that I have sinned.

He said, I will rise, go to my father and say, Undeemed father, I have sinned. Those who fail usually blame people or circumstances for their misfortunes. One of the characteristics of the flesh is we don't want to receive the blame.

My friend, our churches are full of people that are blaming others for their problems and their sins. Just say that you did it if you did it. So you'd have a clear conscience.

Something else. Another insight is repentance recognizes personal unworthiness. He says, I'm no more worthy to be called thy son.

We're in Luke 15 if you want to turn there. When the prodigal son recognizes unworthiness before God and his family, he was ready to receive the enabling power which God gives to overcome a sinful way of life. So he worked out the wording of his confession and he went back.

He was going to be a slave when he went back in his mind. And repentance accepts new limitations. Make me as one of thy hired servants.

See, he was willing and he realized that by repenting of his sin that he didn't he wouldn't get back to his position that he had. He was willing to accept the limitations that would be put on him. And then repentance will not react when tested.

You know what? His elder son was in the field. He was angry and he would not go in. Therefore, he came to his father out and treated him.

And he said to his father, Lo, these many years I do serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time the commandment, yet thou never gavest me a kid. As soon as this thy son was come, you go and you kill this cat, calf for him and everything. The prodigal son did not sin only against God and his father, but his sin affected every other family member.

So a confession to his older brother might have mellowed out or removed the older brother's anger. And then repentance will convince the skeptics. And he said to him, Son, thou art ever with me and all that I have is thine.

It was meet that we should be married and be glad for this thy brother is dead and is alive again, was lost and is found. The father restored his son the full fellowship. However, he did not restore his inheritance.

With his loss, the prodigal son would one day be under direction and accountability to his older brother. So there is consequences, but there is a great joy in being clean and free. How about it? Are you willing to let God cleanse you, lift you up? Are you willing for him to set you free, to have a clear conscience? I hope these programs have been helpful to you in this area.

May God lift you up on Eagle's Wings, teach you to walk by grace, ask him to forgive you, ask him to cleanse you, and get right with others. May God bless you. And if we can help you, you write us here at Box 1100.

You can write to Own Eagle's Wings, Box 1100, Web City, 69870.

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