

Luke 17:1-4. Christ Teaches the Forgiveness of Injuries.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

Christ teaches the importance of forgiveness and not committing offences that can harm weak believers, emphasizing the need for believers to act with care and compassion towards one another.

Scripture: Matthew 18:6, Mark 11:25, Romans 14:13, Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:13, 1 Peter 3:8

Topics: "Christian Forgiveness", "Spiritual Accountability"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer emphasizes Jesus' important teachings to His disciples, warning against causing stumbling blocks for weaker believers and harboring an unforgiving spirit. Believers are urged to be considerate and refrain from actions that may lead others astray, showing grace and forgiveness as Jesus has shown to us. The duty to protect and uplift fellow believers is highlighted, stressing the need for mutual concessions and forgiveness in resolving conflicts within the family of God.

Transcript

When Jesus was alone with his disciples, he dwelt upon those topics that were the most necessary for them to understand. All who believe in the Savior must listen with particular interest to these conversations.

Believers now, like the first disciples, are "compassed with infirmity." The instructions that suited the little flock who surrounded the Lord when he was on earth, will suit the larger flock that wait at his feet now he is enthroned in the heavens.

On this occasion the Savior warned his disciples against two things--committing offences, and indulging an unforgiving spirit.

The "offences" spoken of are stumbling-blocks laid in the way of weak believers. Those who are strong in faith must be careful not to injure the weak in faith, even as the elder children in a family must carefully avoid hurting the tender frames of the younger children. A considerate youth would refrain from performing some feats that he could with safety perform, if he thought that his little brothers might be tempted to imitate his example, and to endanger their limbs or their lives. Believers strong in faith ought to act in the same way, and to refrain even from enjoying lawful privileges, sooner than endanger their weak brethren. In Rom. 14 the apostle Paul points out very clearly this duty.

But if it be a grievous sin to wound a weak believer through carelessness, how dreadful a crime it must be to injure him willfully! No true believer would commit this sin. It would be better to be cast into the sea, (as criminals often are in the East,) than to be guilty of it. To persuade a child of God to act against his conscience, and to break his Father's law, is to commit a worse sin than murder. If you were to induce a person to leap from a high window, you might be the occasion of the destruction of his body, but if you were to tempt him to break the Sabbath, to tell a lie, to join in profane discourse, you would endanger his soul. God indeed could preserve the body from being dashed to pieces, and the soul from being lost, but the person who deceived would be as guilty as if the worst consequences had followed. How watchful we ought to be over our behavior to the children of God, lest we injure those whom God guards with such tender care!

There is another sin that we must strive against, if we desire to please God. It is an unforgiving spirit. The family of God upon earth are so full of defects, that they often annoy each other. If we were surrounded by angels, we should have no temptations to anger. But is there one of us who can say, "I act like an angel to those around me?" Is it not true that we are constantly exercising the patience of our companions? Does it become us to be slow to forgive? When we are conscious that we have wounded another, each of us should say, "I repent;" and when another says to us, "I repent," each of us should reply, "I forgive." But if our brother forget his duty, and omit to acknowledge his fault, we ought not to be rigorous in demanding the confession. Were he to make it, we should find it more easy to forgive; but if he withhold it, we have the opportunity of showing a higher degree of grace by forgiving, notwithstanding his omission. In most differences, however, both parties have something to confess and something to forgive. Mutual concessions and mutual forgiveness are generally needed. He who first says, "I repent," acts the most Christian part; for he shows that he has already forgiven the trespasses of his brother. Had not Jesus forgiven us before any of us said, "I repent," we never should have felt even the desire to obtain his forgiveness. It was the thought that He loved us before we loved him that melted our hearts, and made us feel truly penitent for our sins.

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