

# Hating, Forgiving, Loving One Another

by Roy Hession

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*The sermon emphasizes the critical role of forgiveness in transforming relationships from hate to love in the Christian life.*

**Duration:** 50:37

**Scripture:** John 13:34, Ephesians 4:32, Titus 3:3

**Topics:** "Hating"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation in relationships. He shares a story of a boy who had a fight with his brother and encourages the audience to seek forgiveness and mend broken relationships. Another speaker, Dave Wilson, shares his testimony of dying to self and finding love in difficult situations. The sermon concludes with a song and a reminder to take ourselves as we are and seek forgiveness from Christ.

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## Transcript

Let's bow our heads for a word of prayer. Lord Jesus, we thank thee for thy presence here this evening. There are so many things to speak to us about.

Up to now, perhaps, we haven't been able to bear what you've wanted to talk to us about. But in these days, you've drawn us aside especially to hear thee speak. Even as Moses heard thee speak from out of that burning bush.

And we ask, Lord, that that dear, loved voice of thine shall be heard once again saying to us things that we need to hear as you see them. And we ask, Lord, that the very word that has spoken to us may have power in it to accomplish miracles in our lives even this evening, in Jesus' name. Amen.

I want to turn you to two little phrases in the New Testament which I want to put in contrast one with another. The first is in Paul's letter to Titus. Titus comes after Timothy which in turn comes after the epistle to the Thessalonians.

Chapter 3, verse 3. For we ourselves also were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. And the phrase I want to pick out of that verse is that very ugly one. It sounds terrible even to quote it in a gathering like this.

Hating one another. Hating one another. And then I want to put in contrast with that verse a verse from John 13, verse 34.

The words of Jesus to us. 1334. A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another as I have loved you that ye also love one another.

And the phrase I want to pick out from that verse is love one another. Or to make it balance with the other verse loving one another. And there you have two widely contrasted attitudes.

Hating one another. Loving one another. The Christian's relationship with others is of tremendous importance to him in the new life which he has begun.

For if you and I are wrong in our relationship with others or with but one other to that extent we are wrong in our relationship to God. As the spokes of a wheel get nearer the hub they quite obviously get nearer to one another. And if a particular point on the spoke is not near the next spoke you know that to that extent it is not near the hub.

And if the Lord Jesus has brought us to the hub he wants us to see to it that we're right with the others that also have been brought there. And if it should be that we're not to that extent we haven't been brought right back to the hub and there is a separation and alienation between us and him. It's so easy to imagine that we're all right with God things are just fine when things are not right between us and another person.

But it is impossible to be right with God in your relationship and your fellowship unless we're right in our relationship with other people. Both sins have got to be put under the blood not only that between us and God but that between us and other people. Indeed all that comes between us and others also comes between us and God.

And there's no doubt at all that in the matter of our daily living the Christian life this question of relationships with others is of paramount importance. And if you haven't learnt, if I haven't learnt rightly to repent in that area then we have hardly begun. Life is a complicated scheme of human relationships and probably more than half of our sins are in the realm of wrong attitudes and actions toward others.

And when I come back to God in repentance via the cross it's invariably with a whole heap of those things. And the work of the cross of Jesus is not only to reconcile me to God through the death that he died but me to other people. The work of the cross is a two-fold work of reconciliation.

Now these two verses give us two widely separated attitudes to other people hating one another or loving one another. Someone has said the whole world can be divided into two compartments those that hate and those that love. We're more used to having it divided between the lost and the saved and that of course is absolutely basic but here's another possible definition, division those that hate and those that love.

And although we may be truly amongst the saved when we divide people on that this other basis we may have to class ourselves among those that hate. I've said that these are two widely separated attitudes actually I don't think they're so widely separated as they might appear at first to be. Hate is simply the opposite of love.

And everything which isn't love for that brother God regards as hate. We might be shocked to think that God regards us as hating somebody but if I'm failing in love toward that person God regards me as hating

him. If 1 Corinthians 13 the chapter which gives us the great definition of love tells us that love is suffering long love suffereth long and is kind it means then that when I am not long-suffering with another and his ways and am not kind to him God accounts me to be hating him.

If it says love envieth not isn't jealous of the other person then when I am jealous and when I don't repent of that jealousy I'm hating that brother. If 1 Corinthians 13 tells me that love vouteth not itself is not puffed up so it doesn't make the other man feel small then when I am puffed up when I am boastful and I am making the other person feel small can you believe it? God says you're hating that man. He's not encouraged he feels an inferiority complex a failure in love even in such a matter as that is accounted as hatred.

If 1 Corinthians 13 says that love seeketh not her own that is, is not selfish at another's expense it can only mean that when I am seeking my own and am selfish at another person's expense I'm hating that one. If 1 Corinthians 13 says that love is not easily provoked it can only mean when I am provoked to feel hurt or resentful or angry or bitter God regards that resentment in my heart as nothing less than hatred of that person and he requires me to regard it so myself and to handle it as nothing less than the sin of hatred. And this hatred apparently is something mutual.

He talks about hating one another it means that the man who hates is sooner or later hated hating and hated resenting and resented invariably that happens. Jesus himself said with what measure you meet the measure you hand out to others there's an order of life which says it's going to come back to you in the same measure. Be assured the man who hates is himself hated.

The man who resents sooner or later, if not immediately is himself resented. It's something mutual hating one another. And alas this state of things can be seen amongst us Christians.

It can be seen in our churches. It can be heard operating in the church meeting or the diaconate or the PCC or among the leaders of the various organizations you may be such in one and have been involved in these situations. How quick to resent.

At the back of some of the things is really jealousy or wanting ourselves. It can be seen and heard even in our homes of the early church. The world said behold how these Christians love one another but too often today as the world hears of what is sometimes said and what goes on among the churches the world has to say behold how these Christians hate one another.

And it could well be that some of us are in situations where you got involved in hatred. Don't think about the other man hating the other man. We are involved.

We've taken sides. We feel our rights are infringed. Our advice has not been taken.

We've not been given our place or in our homes. The other partner doesn't go the way we want him or her to go. And we may be involved and be classed as those that hate one another.

Doesn't it sound terrible? But there's nothing in between love and hate. This finds me out as certainly as it finds you out. Hating one another.

But oh thank God there's a there's an alternative. There's another relationship with other people which Jesus came to institute among those whom he'd loved so much and that is they should love one another as he has loved them. And oh thank God it could be changed.

And instead of being in an atmosphere where we're hating one another grace can so work in our lives each one of us beginning with us individually so that instead of hating one another we are loving one another. And this too is mutual. For if we love we find ourselves being loved.

If it's true of some they're hating and being hated. The opposite is true of those who are learning to love. Even where there might not be any ground for love they're loving.

And strangely they're being loved. If you find everybody very horrid to you don't look at them, search your own heart. Perhaps they're reacting against something in you.

But you know that can be changed. Grace can change it. And we can be in that other group of people who love and strangely we find we are loved.

Though of course it may not always work out that way at least not immediately. It didn't actually if you'd like to know for the Apostle Paul because when he wrote to the Corinthians he said though the more abundantly I love the less I be loved. But that won't quench the one who loves.

He'll go on loving. But there is this same blessed principle that does work in one degree or another in every life. With what measure you meet it shall be measured to you again.

Happy the one who is measuring out love. If he gives it shall be given to him again. Good measure, pressed down and running over.

And so we see these two possible relationships with others. Hating one another, we're involved in it and loving one another. Now it is not just a matter of stepping from one to the other by say, trying to love where before we were resenting and hating.

Nor even by asking God to give us love or do something for us. There's something in between hating one another and loving one another. And it's easy to bypass it.

Just ask for more love. No, no, we've got to get to the root cause. And so I turn you to a third little phrase which I want to put between the other two.

Ephesians 4, verse 32. Ephesians 4, verse 32. Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.

What is the little phrase that comes in between the two? Listen. Forgiving one another. In other words, between the two comes the cross of Jesus.

Where we learn to forgive one another. And there's no way by which you can pass from hating one another to loving one another save by forgiving one another. Why is there resentment? Why is there bitterness? Why is there this which God calls hatred? Well, it's usually because someone has done something that hurts us by which we feel ourselves to have suffered loss in one way or another because of which we feel we have a claim on them for reparation.

We may not know exactly what reparation we we feel ourselves entitled to but we feel we have a claim on them against them. And they seem to do nothing to meet that claim. And we hate them.

And it's quite obvious we can never love that person until we forgive the thing that they have done by means of which we've suffered loss. But you can't forgive without foregoing your claim upon them. No

forgiving without foregoing.

No forgiving without consenting to have suffered that loss. As long as you feel it isn't right, it shouldn't have happened, I'm not going to stand for that sort of thing, you'll never be able to forgive them. You and I will only forgive another when we consent to have been treated as they've treated us.

Until we've consented to forego our claim against them, until we've consented to suffer that loss. For instance, if you've lent somebody a hundred pounds and they're embarrassed because they can't pay it back, you might find it in your heart to forgive them that debt of a hundred pounds. But that means you're going to be a hundred pounds out of pocket.

You might say to myself, but I can't afford it. I'm not willing to be the loser by a hundred pounds. Then you can't forgive them the debt.

If you do forgive them the debt, you write it right off and you suffer the loss yourself. And so it is with our forgiveness of others. This is why forgiveness is not so easy as it might seem.

It does mean submitting to loss. It does mean accepting what they've done. It does mean letting it go.

Suffering the loss yourself, losing them, from any sense that you have it against them and forgiving them. You end up with having suffered the loss of that indignity. But you always gain peace with God.

And from in the heart of that one who thus forgives, strangely there comes love. For the one is forgiven. The one at whose hands he suffered loss.

And that can be mutual. And there can be a wonderful healing. This is why to forgive is such a struggle.

And what losses, some have been made to suffer. What wrongs? Wrongs they are and no one would disagree. And sometimes I've seen someone with a struggle to forgive that.

I've had to avert my gaze to consent to that. But she's got to do it. She'll only tear herself apart if she doesn't forgive or he doesn't forgive.

And at last the battle's over. It's the battle with self. It's the battle with pride.

The willingness to suffer the loss in order to extend to that one a forgiveness that perhaps they don't deserve. Even before they've repented. Of course it can't be made two-way until there's repentance but it'd be certainly one way, your way to them.

It's potential to be in your heart but it can't become even potential unless I fight this thing out and I face it and I lay in dust life's glory dead and my rights in that matter. After all, who are we? Who am I? Why should we always be treated with respect due to our position? Jesus wasn't. And more than that and most important of all, this is exactly what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

Our sins, rightly understood, are to be regarded as personal wrongs against God because of which he has suffered grave loss and therefore has a claim on us for reparation. That was the state of the man who owed his king ten thousand talents. Someone's estimated it taking account of inflation a debt of five million pounds.

And because he had not with wherewiths to pay he was going to cast him into prison and sell his children to be slaves. And you and I are in debt. It's very interesting in the German language and sometimes I go to Germany my message is translated into German and I hear my German translator and I pick up all sorts of words and you know the word for guilt and debt is the same word, one word in German, schuld.

And guilt is simply the fact that God has a claim on you for reparation which you can't meet. It's a debt, an unpaid debt. But that man in the parable, Matthew 16 said, have patience with me and I will pay you all.

He couldn't. He'd have to live a long time to pay so much out of his wages each week to pay off that vast debt. And that king did a wonderful, beneficent act.

He had compassion on that man and his little family. And he decided he'd let it go. He'd bear the loss himself.

And he forgave him. But what a loss! At what a cost! Of course, the parable doesn't tell us about that. Though my friend William Lagenda did add to the parable once and describe, I remember in Brazil when we were speaking together of how that king had to sell all the treasures in the palace.

And how his wife, the queen, had to go out cleaning houses to raise a little money. And when that man asked why, he said, because I forgave thee that debt. He suffered the loss himself! No other way! Who can tell the compassions of God towards sinners who confess they have nothing to pay? There's nothing they can do to put things right! Then it is he takes this last, wonderful option that the king takes.

He consents to forgo his claim and to suffer the loss himself to forgive us. And in order that he might actually suffer the loss and seem to be suffering the loss, he sent his son to die between two thieves with God in Christ suffering the loss himself, the indignities himself to which we've subjected him in order to forgive us. And all he wants you to do is to do the same to other people.

As the old hymn says, Have you had a kindness shown? Pass it on. Have I been gracious to you? You be gracious to that other man. Oh, that servant was acting very rightly in insisting on his debt.

But God says, I don't want you to act rightly toward that other person, but graciously, as I've acted graciously to you. And so this is the way. The simple step by which those who hate one another may pass to loving one another by forgiving one another.

Please turn the cassette over now. Do not fast-wind it in either direction. The simple step by which those who hate one another may pass to loving one another by forgiving one another.

By going back to that cross where God, for Christ's sake, suffered the loss and confessing how wrong the attitude should be and then, there you go! Suffer the loss yourself and forgive it. So that he knows you're no longer holding it against him. Now this is our grand privilege and it's a way out of the tangled skeins of wrong relationships of all by which love comes in.

The other day, last week, I was coming a little late to the meeting and I saw a boy of eleven. He'd been involved in one of the children's meetings or games and he was coming along crying. So I went up to him, what's happened? He had an accident? No, he said, I haven't.

I said, what's happened? He said, my brother. And I saw his fists were clenched. That brother of mine! He'd had a fight with his brother.

The trouble was his brother was older than him. I said, what did he do? He's mimicking me! And you know, I tremble to think what that boy might have done had he had a knife in his hand, eleven that he was. And I put my arm around him.

He's such a lovely looking boy. I put my arm around him. I said, do you know what you can do? I'll tell you what you can do.

What? He said, you can forgive him! Oh, that brother of mine! I said, I'll tell you what you can do. You can forgive him! And your little smile came. He said, I'll try.

I was once involved in trying to help a certain church in America not so long ago. There was a faction that felt the minister had acted in a wrong way in a certain matter. And this issue was threatening to split an otherwise lovely church.

And one day, I found myself speaking to the man who was at the heart of it. And he was telling me how wrong the minister was in that matter. I said, brother, there's something you can do about it.

What's that? He said, forgive him! But he was so wrong! He never should... Listen, granted, I don't know whether the rights are wrong. I wasn't at all sure myself which way it was. But all right, he's wrong.

Now, your next step is forgive him. Even if you suffered in the process of what he's done, just forgive him. Suffer that wrong yourself.

Let it go. And I said, I want to tell you, if you do forgive him, you've never acted so much like God as that. And this is our great, grand privilege.

Forgive him. And you know this forgiving is mutual, forgiving one another. You know, Christian fellowship isn't a bunch of Christians amongst whom nothing goes wrong.

Things do go wrong. Hurts are inflicted on one another. But when a man is hurt, he forgives.

And when he sometimes is the one who inflicts a hurt, he asks to be forgiven. Forgiven and being forgiven. And oh, I don't know any other fellowship.

That I call revival's fellowship. It's the sweetest fellowship because where there's mutual forgiveness, then we love one another. For the love of God for one another flows.

And the group that were so much in variance or two people find themselves knee-deep in love. But only as they go through the narrow gateway at the foot of the cross and forgive the other person as God, for Jesus' sake, has forgiven us. Some people say, why should it always be me who does the forgiving? It isn't always going to be you.

It'll be you one day who's called upon to forgive. But unless you're very different from me, the next day it'll be you asking somebody else to forgive you. It's mutual.

Forgiving and being forgiven. And so it goes on. And as we're prepared to go this way, we love one another.

Just one little story. And then I'm going to ask my brother, Dave Wilson, to come and add a word of testimony to this theme. In East Africa, in Uganda, the Tia state at Namu Tamba, where many African

Christians live and work.

One African, not a Christian, wicked man, seduced the wife of one of the Christians. And she went to live with him. And this dear godly Christian, every day he went to work, had to go past the house where his wife was living with that other man.

While he himself had to make do and get by on his own. He was surrounded by much love and fellowship of the brethren. And God helped him in a wonderful way, as was seen by the sequel.

Some time later, the wind of the spirit blew afresh in those parts. And the gospel came to many people afresh. And people were saved.

And one day, that particular man who'd seduced the other was saved too. Beautifully saved. He found Jesus.

And the first thing he did was to go to that man whom he'd so wronged. And say, oh brother, forgive me for the bitter wrong I've done you. And do you know what that African said? There's nothing to forgive.

I forgave you the day you did it. In other words, he faced it. He didn't say, I'm not going to have this, I've got a claim against that man.

He said, God's allowed this thing for some wise purpose. I accept it. I suffer the loss.

And the day he did it, forgiveness was there for him. It was potential. The battle, the real battle, was finished in that man's heart.

Of course, it couldn't be made mutual. Until that man repented as he did. But it was there all the time.

And everything that passed between us and God was potentially finished at the cross. Father, forgive them. Yes.

Of course, between us and him, it's not actual until we repent and confess. But the loss hasn't got to be suffered again. It's been faced and suffered.

And you and I don't have to wait even till the other person sees what they've done. We can face this matter with Jesus. And on our part, at least, it can be finished.

Because we're willing to bow the head, suffer the loss, for, go our claim. And forgiveness is available. And so there are our three little words.

The terrible distinction between hating one another and loving one another. What way can we pass from one to the other? By the way of the cross. The way of the blood of Jesus Christ.

By forgiving one another. We find ourselves in an area of mutual forgiveness. Because sometimes we have, as I've said, to ask to be forgiven.

But in that way, things are healed. Mending things. Mending things.

A lot more rewarding than ending things. And he's still around. Some people have found.

Just going on. Mending things. I'll ask Dave to add what he has to say.

Dave Wilson. The testimony that I have to give is a testimony because I'm a father with teenage children. And I think that probably makes me one of the average here tonight.

I don't really quite know where to begin. This morning, following the Bible study, I had to have a little funeral service because I realised I had to die again to self. Last night, following the testimony, I saw someone else dying.

Jesus, for me. Yesterday morning, following the Bible study, I stood at the grave of my past sins. And all this is very relevant because Monday, I had a terrible day.

It might not have appeared to have been so terrible to those who perhaps saw me and heard me and sat at table with me, but it was. In the morning, I was playing tennis. I like tennis.

It's one of those things that we don't get enough of at home. And so once we come here, tennis becomes one of the things we really do most of the time. I said I'm a father of teenage children.

My daughter is 17. She'd been into town on an errand for mum. So naturally, as soon as she came back, she wanted to explain what she'd done and how much the postage was on the present to grandma and what she'd bought for this and that and the other.

And we were playing tennis. And so she waited until we'd finished that particular game and then she ran straight on to the court and said, Mum, I've done this, I've done that, I've done the other. And I said, Do you mind? We're playing a game of tennis.

Come on, come on. And she was a bit shaken by this, but being a little bit stubborn like me, she continued with the account. And I went straight to the other end of the tennis court and picked up the ball and said, Well, if you're not playing, I am.

And we were playing doubles at the time and so it wasn't too difficult. The two at the other end were waiting and so I served and started to play. And when my wife had finished the job in hand, she joined me on the court and we carried on and Deborah went off up to the house.

I played the rest of the set like I've never played tennis before. I really hit that ball. And it went in.

I don't recommend bad temper unless perchance you count tennis more important than a daughter. And I felt pretty rotten. And so I joked about it, as I invariably do, and said, Look how good I'm playing.

Now I'm in a temper. You'd better put me in a temper every day, then I'll win. But I was sick inside.

And I knew I was wrong. And I didn't want to do anything about it because I'm a father. I'm a big boy.

I'm a grown-up. And it hurts to say sorry and I wasn't going to do it. And she was wrong anyway.

She shouldn't have walked on the court. And, you know, where on earth was she brought up? But, you know, I couldn't enjoy the rest of the game and thankfully it was nearly lunchtime. I don't know whether it was my wife who said, It's only a game of tennis, or whether it was my own heart that told me it was only a game of tennis, but as I came up out of the hard courts, and it's quite a hike up there, I knew I'd got to say sorry.

And I didn't want to. And I'd worked out the speech all the way across the croaky lawn. But it wasn't the right speech at all because it was going to be the speech that said, You shouldn't have done that, but I'm sorry.

But apologies with butts in them aren't apologies. And so I hoped perhaps she wouldn't be on our table. But we met long before we got to the dining room.

In fact, we met on the lawn outside Clough and the Lord was very good. He gave me a heart instead of the large lump of stone and I don't know where it came from, but I just said, I'm sorry. Please forgive me.

And we just hugged each other. Nothing more, just a hug. That's all it needs to say you're forgiven.

So that was lovely. But it didn't stop there. I then upset a member of the staff.

I was being funny and made a little remark and it wasn't kind. And I didn't know I'd upset her. I found out later on.

Then I upset a friend that I'd made an arrangement with to play a game and called it off and blamed the friend. Then I discovered that it was me again. And I had to say sorry to the friend and then subsequently find the member of staff.

In fact, it was only when I found her that I discovered I'd upset her. By the end of Monday, I felt rather like the wide-mouthed frog. I began to ask myself why.

It's foolish to ask ourselves why we go wrong. We don't know. And when we ask ourselves, Satan is eavesdropping.

And he told me. He told me very clearly what was wrong. You see, it was the past.

It was all the sins of the past. And he showed me all my past sins and he began to stir the water and it got very muddy. My past has got a lot of mud in it.

Particularly when Satan stirs it up, he seems to make much out of little and what he makes out of much doesn't bear telling. And I didn't know what to do about that until the Bible study the next morning and I realized that what I was doing, I was digging up the dead Egyptian. And that's why I was in such a foul mood.

Because I'd listened to Satan and then I panicked and I didn't know what to do. Foolish, isn't it? That I didn't know what to do with these voices of Satan and these ghosts from the past. And then in the evening we heard that testimony which was so simple.

And I'm very simple too. I needed to hear very simply that the blood of Jesus which cleansed those sins in the past had washed them away. And that now that same blood was powerful and could stop Satan accusing me over something that was dead and buried, that was washed away.

And so I was free. And it didn't end there either. I went to bed last night rejoicing because I was cleansed and Satan had been dispelled and that nasty ghost had gone.

But it was only this morning that I realised where those problems of Monday began. And they began because I was still there. And there was so much of me.

And I wanted this week to be seen as a successful Christian. And I wanted people to respect and regard me. But it was so subtle.

It was trying hard to be what I wanted people to see and being completely unwilling to be known as I really was. And so this morning there was a very happy funeral service just down there when the Lord in His grace bowed to me and said, I forgive you. So I just give that testimony to His glory.

Amen. Amen. Praise the Lord.

We live on forgiveness ground. Forgiven for Christ's sake so much. And because of that we forgive others.

And where necessary we ask to be forgiven. And that's the ground where love reigns. Amen and Amen.

Thank you Dave. Now we are going to sing a lovely song to finish with. Number 436.

436 Jesus my Lord, to Thee I cry. Unless Thou help me, I must die. We are going to sing well, I don't know.

Yes, we'll sing the first three verses. I'd like to finish promptly at nine o'clock. Jesus my Lord, to Thee I cry.

Would you like to stand? Jesus my Lord, to Thee I cry. Unless Thou help me, I must die. O make thy peace on me, and take me as I am.

And take me as I am. And take me as I am. My only King, I cry for Thee, the Spirit.

And Thou canst take me off the whip. And take me as I am. We must sing the last verse.

Behold me, Saviour, at Thy feet. Here with Thee as Thou seest me. Thy Word within, Thy Word complete.

And take me as I am. And take me as I am. Lord Jesus, we thank you, you do just that.

Lord, we've got such funny things in our hearts, bitter things, hard things, scores we still feel against others. And then too, Lord, we're also conscious of where we've hurt others. Lord, we not only need to forgive, but we need to be forgiven.

And thank you. You begin it by forgiving us. Then in the strength of that we can be gracious to the other man.

As you have been gracious to us. Now, Lord, we pray Thee, apply these words we've listened to, to each one of us. Indeed, Lord, we know we've been eagerly making our own applications this evening.

And, oh Lord, may we get through to victory. May we get through where we know the burden's gone. We know Thy blood has cleansed us.

We don't need to have any more ghosts accusing us from the past. Oh, how we thank Thee that Calvary covers it all, my past with its sin and shame. And so, Lord, deal with us as our need requires, Lord.

May none go to rest with a concern, a burden, an accusation unconfessed to Thee. And, Lord, may there be this sweet forgiving one another and loving one another. May love reign where up to now perhaps hate and resentment has been.

Lord, do this lovely thing amongst us all for Thy dear name's sake. Amen. The grace.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the power of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.  
Amen.

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