

Resolving Conflict With Brethren is Salvational

Fred R. Coulter—May 9, 2015

We have to be aware that these things may come along. Notice how Paul writes. Think of the different ones that could have been, because Paul says, ‘Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I.’ Think about those various Jews. Titus says that the Jews were preaching a lot of things they shouldn’t, ‘whose mouths must be stopped.’

There were probably those false teachers coming around, saying, ‘I was there when Jesus was speaking personally. I saw Him; I met Him; I saw Him perform many miracles.’ There may have been some who were Levites, saying, ‘Listen, I’m a Levite and you know the Bible says you tithe to Levites.’ Paul is not a Levite.

Paul was smart. He said, ‘I’m not going to take anything from you. Let’s see how your heart develops. I won’t burden you.’ He finally had to admit that was a mistake, but he did it because of these false preachers and teachers coming in. They didn’t have the Word of God, where we could say, ‘Okay, everybody, open up your Bibles to so-and-so.’

Paul says here, 2-Corinthians 11:3: “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness...” *Satan is crafty!* Remember:

- theses is the Word of God
- anti-theses is attacks against the Word of God, creating confusion
- synthesis is new doctrine

We have the advantage, because we have all the Word of God. They didn’t! “...by his craftiness, so your minds might be corrupted from the simplicity that *is* in Christ. For indeed, if someone comes preaching another Jesus...” (vs 3-4).

We’ve got all kind of Jesus’ today. The Jesus of the Catholics; the Jesus of the evangelicals; the Jesus of the Orthodox; the Jesus of the Pentecostals, all kinds of them.

“...whom we did not preach, or you receive a different spirit...” (v 4). That’s why we covered about why they needed to be baptized. Did they receive a different spirit? Are there demons that are self-righteous and ‘goody-goody two-shoes’? *But of course!*

“...or a different gospel... [there’s a lot of that today] ...which you did not accept, you put up with it as *something* good” (v 4). ‘Let’s hear what you have to say. That’s good.’

Then Paul says that they appear as ministers of righteousness and Satan appears as an angel of God. So, today we have all the things we need to fight against that.

The worst problems that it causes are within the fellowship groups. Sometimes, though those things are not there, there is tension and contentions within the fellowship groups. All of that is a result of what has happened to the Church, plus human vanity and striving after something.

Roy said, ‘I don’t know why I was chosen as an elder.’ I said, ‘Because you showed that you weren’t trying to exalt yourself.’ Not like some people who cloister themselves off and think they can solve all the problems of the world. We all need to realize God has called us because we are weak and we need to use the model of the Church at Philadelphia—being faithful to the Word of God. That’s what’s important.

I recommend that if you have tensions within the group that you do two things:

1. you start going through the series on Love
2. when you have an interactive Bible study, it’s okay for women to talk in that informal thing when you are discussing the Word of God and it involves them

They’re not preaching if you say, ‘What did you get out of it?’ Then that’s perfectly fine.

Once you do that, then you need to know who the problems and the friction of those involved. Spend some time praying about it. Also, let it be *their* responsibility to solve. The greatest cop-out is to go to the minister and have him solve it. Is it really solved? There are some people who have had hang-ups for years and say, ‘There’s still tension here after 15 years.’ Have you really tried to solve it? *You have to let them do what Christ says!* They must get together and learn to solve their own problems and to love Christ and each other. That is imperative! What we are doing, we are dealing with a lot of the spiritually wounded. Some of these things then express themselves in vanity and combativeness, unwilling to give forbearance. I appreciate Steve Durham’s sermon on forbearance.

Please understand that Matt. 18 is salvational. In other words, if you or they, or the individuals, do not honestly before God in prayer, and with each other, come together and solve the problem and put it behind you and learn to love each other, we need to ask the question: If we do not do that, will we be in the Kingdom of God? I can’t answer that because God is merciful. *God makes the ultimate judgment!*

Think of how pleasing it would be to God for these 5, 10, 15-year-old problems to be really solved. To try and do it by avoiding it, is like the whitewash that Ezekiel speaks of in Ezk. 13. When trouble comes, the whitewash disappears and there's that ugly thing again. So, you can't put a dob on it.

You can read the first part of Matt. 18, which talks about offenses. If you still have something that causes tension, you've got an offense somewhere within you, within someone else, or other people.

Matthew 18:15: "So then, if your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault between you and him alone." That's what has to be done. That's hard to do; that's very difficult to do.

You might have to go and say, 'Hey, brother (or sister), I've got a hang-up I need to talk with you about.' Maybe they know it and maybe they don't know it. Lots of times we carry things in our mind that we think other people know, when they may or may not know. You have it in your mind, but you don't let them know. Do they have something in their mind that they don't let you know? If that continues on in the same way, how will there ever be peace?

What did Jesus say? ***'By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you love one another as I have loved you.'*** Did He not say that?

We can avoid it for a long time. We can try and put it in the back of our mind, but it's still there. The solution is to get it out of your mind; get it out of your emotions.

You can't say to yourself: She doesn't understand it; or he doesn't understand it. How about if you help him understand? You think that would be too difficult? You think it would be too difficult to go up to a person and say, 'I have something to tell you. Can we get together privately and discuss it, alone?' That's what it says.

That doesn't mean you tell someone else before you go do it. That doesn't mean you talk behind the person's back before you go. You go alone. You may even have to say, 'Now that you're sitting down, I really need to confess to you that you have offended me and I have never gotten over it.' I bet the answer would be, 'Really? I never knew that.'

Maybe in your own mind, you thought for years and years, 'He knows it; she knows it. I can tell by the look on their face.' I've got one of those kinds of faces that.... Dolores tell me, 'Fred, smile.' So, you need to do it. It's going to take some spiritual courage. You're going to have to talk about. You're going to have to pray about it before you go.

Everything should be solved there. If he is willing to hear you, you have gained a brother or a sister.

Verse 16: "But if he will not listen, take with you one or two others, so that in *the* mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."

I've never seen v 17 take place, yet. Then it goes to the whole Church. Maybe some of these things even the whole Church knows and you don't think they know. Have you ever thought of that? They don't know that.

Then we have the parable here, v 18: "Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on the earth will have already been bound in heaven..."

- Does God want us to reconcile?
- Can you bind that by going to your brother and sister and asking forgiveness and teaching that to the brethren that they need to do the same thing?
- Why should we constantly have tension and problems and unforgiveness and hostility, or whatever degree, and never resolve it?

That's like saying, look at this serene water out there, how beautiful it is. Then when you look at it, someone turns on a whole bunch of underwater fans and then it starts boiling. There's no serenity.

"...and whatever you shall loose on the earth will have already been loosed in heaven" (v 18). You forgive each other and put it aside. God wipes it away.

Verse 19: "Again I say to you, that if two of you on earth shall agree concerning any matter that they wish to request, it shall be done for them by My Father, Who *is* in heaven." You want forgiveness? *Request it.* God will do it! God will change the attitude! He'll change the heart!

Verse 20: "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there, I am in *the* midst of them."

Sidebar: If you're alone on the Sabbath, you're not alone, because the God the Father and Jesus Christ are with you. Living in today's world, with so many offenses out there in the world and the churches falling apart at an incredible rate... I've held back a lot of prophecy because I didn't want to preach a lot of bad news between the end of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost.

I've got a stack of stuff: churches that are endorsing same-sex marriage, banks are in trouble, businesses are in trouble. The whole thing is sitting on a precarious thing, so much so that one of the ads that we're going to run in the Washington

Times/Internet advertising is: *Flash: Is America Too Big to Fail?* Then the book, *American and Britain*. That's how close we're getting to it. We need to understand.

Then Peter said, 'Aha, let's find out the limits of this,' v 21: "Then Peter came to Him *and* said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?'" I bet he thought he was being generous.

Sidebar: How often do you ask God to forgive your sins? *Every day!* That's 365 times a year. If it's just once, you ask.

Verse 22: "Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you until seven times, but until seventy times seven.'" That's 490 times! That is symbolic of limitlessness.

I do not know of any person, yet, that within one day that they needed to be forgiven 490 times. You take it in a seven-hour period, that's 70 times in an hour. That's about probably every 45 seconds you have to forgive.

What does one of the Psalms say concerning the mercy of God? *His mercy endures forever!* Every verse in that Psalm ends with that. Remember, ***there are no vain repetitions in the Bible!*** We need to think about that.

Then He gives a parable about the one who owed a lot of money. I'm sure that there are a lot of students out there praying that they're that person, to get rid of their debts. Might be interesting. Let's see if one of the Republicans come up with that. 'I know how to get the millennial vote, we'll forgive 75% of your student loan if you make one-quarter of the payment.' Bet they'd get a lot of votes, but they'd have to add it on to the deficits.

So, you know what happened. The master forgave him 10,000 talents. That's a lot of money. Then he went out and he wasn't merciful. He found someone who owed him just a few pence and he said, 'Give me the money or I'll throw you into jail.' He said, 'Have mercy upon me. I don't have anything in which to pay.' So, he threw him in jail. Think about the contrast in the attitudes.

You can't forgive one because you like them and love them and then you refuse to forgive someone you don't like as much. That's very human—isn't it? 'It's very hard for me to forgive him, because I don't like him. I remember what he did to me. I remember what she did to me. I remember the words that were said.'

If that comes into your mind, what did Jesus say, the first thing when they raised Him up on the cross? Father, forgive them for they know not what

they do. Have you had anything like that ever against you? *No, indeed!*

Notice it becomes very salvational. Then the word got back to the one who had been forgiven the ten talents and here's what he said:

Verse 32: "Then his lord called him and said to him, '*You* wicked servant...'" Think about that for a minute. What is the lack of forgiveness? *Wickedness!* Have you ever thought of that? You may be absolutely right in your condemnation, just like he was absolutely right that he was owed all this money. You need to think about that.

"...*You* wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt, because you implored me. Were you not also obligated... [to God to have compassion upon your fellow servant] ...to have compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had compassion on you?' And in anger, his lord delivered him up to the tormentors until he should pay all that he owed to him" (vs 32-34).

Remember, he forgave it to him. But because of his lack of forgiveness, it was put back on the list. Think about that and help the brethren to see they've got to do the same thing too, or it's back on the list.

Verse 35: "Likewise shall My heavenly Father also do to you... [this is why it's salvational] ...if each *of* you does not forgive his brother's offenses ***from the heart***"—with no reservations.

This, then, may be a good situation to follow to help get rid of some of the stress and internal distress that affects a lot of brethren. But it's one of those things.

In your prayers, when you're on your knees, you've got to be honest with God and you've got to be honest with yourself. You have to ask God to help you. Remember, ***Christ died for you, as well as for the one who offended you!*** Maybe he doesn't know that he did. Maybe she doesn't realize that she did.

I think with those that would do a lot to help. You have to do it in tandem with the *Love Series*. Somewhere in the *Love Series* bring in the forgiveness. Forgiveness from God is rooted in His love. Likewise, forgiveness from us must be rooted in our love of God and love of the brethren. Let's hope and pray that will really bring a lot of peace.

Maybe we need to stop and think. Look at all the fighting among all the Churches of God. That's why I'm not interested in church wars. God doesn't want us to compare ourselves among ourselves, because we're stupid. It says in the Bible we're not wise, but that means we're stupid. We don't need to do this. That's why we need to pray for all the

Churches of God, that God will lead them to repentance.

There's the whole world out there that the Gospel needs to be preached to. Wouldn't it be better if all the Churches of God did it the way it should be done? This is what we need to look to and to do.

It was brought up, what if the people are not able to get together themselves without feeling as though they're still in a boxing match and hitting each other word for word and blow for blow. Maybe they need an intermediary and a peacemaker. If you need that, then work it out. It doesn't have to be a minister or elder, it can be someone who knows both of you. He may have to bring a fire hose with him. If you can't agree to forgive and forget and put it behind you, then turn the fire hose on. I'm just joking, of course.

That may be necessary in some cases. That's why it's important that before they attempt to go to each other, that they inform them that 'I'd like to get together with you because I have something we need to discuss. Before we get together, let's pray about it and let's come together in an attitude of love and mercy and quit being judgmental,' which then is think you know what I'm thinking. That's an impossibility! That's judgmental! 'Without taking offense, because I have something serious to discuss.'

After all, is not eternal life serious enough a project and proposal and gift from God to us, that we can have enough self-control to set aside those things and listen. Some of them will be very hurtful. But listen! You don't have to give long, detailed explanations. You can just understand, 'Yes, I hurt you. I'm sorry. I really prayed about what this would be and so let's pray about this for forgiveness for each other. Let's bury the hatchet and let's love one another and put all of this aside.' That's what God wants us to do.

What happens if it's so far down the road from when it first happened and neither one of them want to get together with each other and neither one are interested in solving it? *Then they need to study the things for forgiveness!*

Remember what that last verse says: Likewise shall My Heavenly Father also do to you if each of you does not forgive his brother's offenses from the heart. That's in Scripture. We say we're to believe all the Word of God. Are we to believe this? *Absolutely!* Is it salvational? *Yes, indeed!*

Then they can be encouraged. 'Isn't it time we grow up in Christ? How do we think we can rule the world if we can't even forgive one another?'

If it looks like it's an impossible thing, remember, *all things are possible with God!* Just admonish them. I think if they understand that God's not going to forgive them, just ask them: What does this Scripture say? *It says God won't forgive you!* What are you going to do? That's salvational. You've got to do it. You have to just tell them. 'Listen, if you don't want to do it, then you're carnal. If you don't want to do it, then you don't love God. If you don't want to do it, you don't love your brothers and sisters as Christ has loved us.

- Do you expect Christ to forgive you your sins?
- What is your behavior really if you are so stubborn and adamant that you will not get together?
- That you will not forgive?
- That you will not have a humble spirit?
- Where is your life going?
- What is going to be?
- What is Christ going to say at the resurrection?
- Which resurrection will you be in?

Sometimes you just have to lay it out. You can't have any apologies and being wishy-washy if they're that stubborn. Again, nothing against the Ephraimites, but I can think of the problem between Sibboleth and Shibboleth.

They were so stubborn that 30,000 lost their heads. Was that stupid or not? *Yes!* I don't know what else to tell you.

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2-Corinthians 11:3-4
- 2) Matthew 18:15-16, 18-22, 32-35

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Ezekiel 13

Also referenced:

Sermon Series: *Love Series*

Book: *America and Britain* by Philip Neal

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