

# SHORT SERMONS

*By*

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All verses unless otherwise quoted are drawn from the International Standard Version (ISV) and New King James Version (NKJV).

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## Forgiveness

A forgiving heart is a heart that is always willing to forgive.

To be willing to forgive means you choose not to repay evil with evil, but welcome reconciliation. As Christians, we must always be willing and ready to forgive no matter the level of offence. The Lord Jesus is willing and ready to forgive anyone who comes to him in repentance (Luke 24.47). We must follow in his footsteps.

To be willing to forgive does not mean to forgive. To be willing to forgive simply means the offended is not going to repay evil/wrong, and he is ready for reconciliation.

To forgive means to discharge the offender of the debt he owes, and to work to restore the broken relationship. As Christians, we must always forgive our transgressors when they repent (Luke 17.3-4). The Lord Jesus forgives all those who repent and, receives them back in his sheepfold. He does not remember their sins. We must follow in his footsteps. To forgive means to forget the wrong and restore the relationship.

If a person wrongs you, be willing to forgive. If he repents, you must forgive him. No relationship can survive without repentance and forgiveness. We will always hurt others. There must always be repentance and forgiveness. Relationships fail primarily because:

People do not communicate their hurt to others

People do not like being told of their wrongdoings

People are not willing to forgive

People do not forgive

People do not repent

If someone hurts you, go to him, and with a forgiving heart (not with a dominating, critical, accusing heart), tell him his wrong or rebuke him. The offender must be careful to listen to the offended and seek to make amends either by apologizing and/or by taking corrective actions. If the offender repents, the offender must forgive him and restore the relationship.

### **What if you are willing to forgive and be reconciled but the offender refuses to repent?**

If the offender is unrepentant after you have told him of his wrong, his debt remains. You should continue to love him, but you must not remain close to him. If you are bound to offender for life e.g. marriage, you cannot divorce him, but you must be careful not to keep intimacy with a serpent or wolf. Serpent and wolves always bite. Keeping intimacy with an unrepentant person would mean:

1. Nurturing a monster. The offender will continue and grow in his evil works. Sooner, it will become more difficult to redeem him or the relationship.
2. Willfully giving yourself to torture. God wants us to be in good health both in body and soul. Abuse (Verbal, emotional, physical) and all wickedness and selfishness are deadly to the human soul.

God is willing and ready to forgive the whole world (he does not want to punish anyone), but he forgives and reconciles to himself only those who repent. We must imitate him.

### **Can I love someone who has hurt me deeply?**

Yes, you can. The repentant offender needs grace, unmerited favor, mercy. Show him unmerited favor and purposely set your heart on him/her again and gradually trust him as you see more changes in him. Love hopes for the best. Always remember that God did not only forgive your wrongs, but he also poured his love on you by receiving you back wholeheartedly. If you are unable to love like God, then you must pray earnestly for God to help you have a forgiving heart. When we forgive from the heart, painful

memories lose power. We must pray till we are able to forgive the offender from the heart (not from the head).

### **What if he apologizes all the time but keeps doing wrong?**

If he apologizes, we must be quick to forgive (Mathew 18.21-35). Many are weak in character and do many wrong things. To love such people means to forgive them always as often as they apologize, while praying to God for them to have a change of character. However, we must be careful on the level of trust we put on them.

### **What is the purpose of forgiveness?**

Forgiveness is love. Forgiveness is a kind of love that works primarily to build, strengthen and restore relationships. Parents, children, spouses, friends, brothers suffer from broken relationships. The world will be a better place to live in if everyone could forgive and repent.

Reconciliation is meant to bring the sinner to repentance and restore him to the path of righteousness. The person who repents is redeemed from the hands of sin and death. Always pray for the wicked that they would repent of their evil ways.

The Lord Jesus paid for the sin of the whole world. He is willing to forgive the whole mankind. He grants forgiveness only to those who repent of their sins. The sinner receives forgiveness only when he repents of his sins and turns back to God. Without repentance, a man cannot be reconciled to God even though God is willing and ready to forgive him in Christ Jesus.

## **Trust in the Shepherd's Protection**

There was a time in my life I suffered intense emotional pain. The people close to me whom I trusted, hurt me deeply. In that season, I cried out to God for help. I did not ask God to free me from the pain and the abusive relationships, rather I asked him to help my heart to love and reject any evil seed of bitterness, unforgiveness and hatred. I wanted to overcome evil with good. I prayed continuously for my tormentors. I prayed for their wellbeing and repentance. God did strengthen me. I rose above evil. I suffered evil without becoming evil, rather, I was strengthened in love.

God answered my prayer. My tormentors repented of their evil ways. I forgave them. However, things were no longer the same as before. I did not notice that during the years of torture, I had built a wall of protection for myself. Out of fear, I worked to keep some of their sins in mind, to keep watch for any future possible abuse. "If I completely forget the bad things they did to me, how will I detect and protect myself from any similar forthcoming attack?" I would not let myself forget some events of the past.

I did not know how to trust the Lord.

I knew that I must forgive these people as Jesus has forgiven me. His forgiveness was thorough and complete and kept no memory of some of my bad deeds. But I reasoned, "If I forget their offences (especially the recurrent ones), how will I remember their evil behavior to keep watch over myself in the future?"

The Lord reminded me that "Love does not keep wrongs. It hopes all things, believes all things and bears all things". He also reminded me that he is the good Shepherd and the

giver of Wisdom. After meditating on these words, I destroyed the self-protection wall and emptied my mind of painful memories. I decided:

- 1) to entrust myself to the Chief and good Shepherd. To trust him to guard and protect my heart from any damaging experience or abuse. I learnt to trust in his rod (that chases away wolves) and his staff (that guides me). I remembered how His love kept me sane and happy even in hurt. There was a day I was hurt bad within, then, I felt someone (the LORD) give me a strong hug that sent warm feelings of love deep in my heart and nullified the pain.
- 2) to trust the Lord to give me wisdom to deal with all relationships. He sent us as sheep among wolves (Mathew 10.16). He commands us to be wise and innocent. In a wicked world, only the Lord Jesus can give us the kind of wisdom we need to deal with the wicked (James 1.5). I prayed to the Lord to give me wisdom each day.



## Judging Others

To judge means to:

To examine right or wrong

To examine someone and if found guilty, demand repentance

To examine someone and if found guilty, punish

### **Examine an act as right or wrong**

The Lord Jesus encourages sound judgement/discernment of right and wrong.

Right and wrong can be correctly discerned in God's laws. The human conscience can also discern right and wrong. However, the human conscience is no longer a reliable guide because it has been darkened by sin. Every human is in the first Adam, and in Adam, we all have knowledge of good and evil. However, because men love evil, they can easily call evil good and good evil. Those who are in the spirit of Christ can make sound judgments because they see clearly, and their minds are trained in right and wrong.

God's laws still stand as a perfect guide in determining evil and good. If we are to judge anyone, the laws by which the person is judged must be righteous. From God's laws or our human conscience, we discern that, cheating, stealing, unjust anger, sexual immorality, lies, falsehood, murder, greed etc., are all evil deeds.

### **Examine Someone and demand repentance**

*"If your brother sins against you, go and confront him while the two of you are alone. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. But if he doesn't listen, take one or two others with you so that 'every word may be confirmed by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If, however, he ignores them, tell it to the congregation. If he also ignores the congregation, regard him as a gentile and a tax collector" (Mat 18.15-17).*

The LORD demands that we confront our brother for his wrongdoing. Confronting a brother for his wrong deed is for correction, repentance, building up and restoration. It is not for condemnation or punishment. It is meant to bring the erring brethren back to righteousness from the hands of evil. The offended, though in pain, must remain in the spirit of correction, love, restoration.

If the offender does not listen to you, go tell the church. If he refuses to listen to the church, then he will be treated as an unbeliever. If the church decides that the brother is no longer part of the church, then that decision is binding even in heaven.

The role of the church is to bring the erring brother to repentance. The church cannot punish an unrepentant brother, but they can remove him from the Christian community lest he spoils the others.

The church must also judge the people of the earth to bring them to repentance. John the Baptist judged King Herod for the sin of adultery. He spelled out the sins of tax collectors, parents and even soldiers. The disciples spelled out the sins of the people and called them to repentance. The Lord rebuked the wrongdoings of the Pharisees. Christians are generally hated because they do not accept the evil deeds of sinners. The sinner does not like to be judged. John the Baptist was killed by Herod. Many times, the Pharisees attempted to kill the Lord because he rebuked them for their sins (John 8.37, 40). Apostle Paul was "stoned to death" for speaking against idolatry. The world hates Christians for their choice of good over evil. The world throws insults at them for speaking the truth.

We have a duty to judge one another unto repentance. We must all love the loving judgement that comes from our brother or neighbor. If we resist our brother's judgement, we remain in sin. If we remain in sin, we will be judged by God unto punishment on that last day.

## **Examine Someone and punish**

### **1. Condemnation**

*But the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery. After setting her before them, they told him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the very act of adultery. Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women to death. What do you say? They said this to test him, so that they might have a charge against him. But Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger. When they persisted in questioning him, he straightened up and told them, "Let the person among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her. Then he bent down again and continued writing on the ground. When they heard this, they went away one by one, beginning with the oldest, and he was left alone with the woman standing there. Then Jesus stood up and asked her, "Dear lady, where are your accusers? Hasn't anyone condemned you?" No one, sir," she replied. Then Jesus said, "I don't condemn you, either. Go home, and from now on do not sin any more." John 8.3-11*

The Pharisees examined the adulterous woman and condemned her to death, but Jesus examined her and demanded of her, repentance.

The Lord Jesus does not permit anyone or authority to condemn another. None is without sin. As such, none should condemn his brother to death. No one, no authority, body or government, has the right to condemn anyone to death. Life was given by God and only Him can take it away. Let the man who is without sin be the first to shoot, stone, knife, or hang his brother to death. Who are you to condemn your brother when you are also guilty of sin? All of us need mercy, so we should give mercy to others.

*Condemn not and you shall not be condemned. Be merciful and you shall obtain mercy. The measure you use on others, that same measure will be used on you.*

If you killed others for their evil deed, you too will be killed for your evil deed no matter how small.

### **2. Evil for Evil, Eye for Eye**

***"Stop judging, so that you won't be judged, because the way that you judge others will be the way that you will be judged, and you will be evaluated by the standard with which you evaluate others.***

Evil for evil or eye for eye is when a person receives in the same or reasonable measure the damage, he inflicted on another. We must be careful not to cause others harm simply because they did harm. Such judgement of vengeance should be left in the hands of God. On that day, He will repay each person as he deeds demands. Vengeance belongs to God (Rom 12.19). He will grant justice to all those who are crying to him night and day (Luke 18.2-8).

### **3. Discipline**

If we must judge, then we must judge righteously (*John 7.24*).

*"Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye but fail to notice the beam in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when the beam is in your own eye? You hypocrite! First remove the beam from your own eye, and then you will see clearly enough to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Mathew 7.1-5).*

We can judge right, if we see right. The laws of the state or the family by which people are judged must be godly. The people in authority must be careful not to judge when they themselves are guilty of the very offence. Government authorities sanitize the society by disciplining the evil doers. Parents build up a godly character in their children when they discipline them. Discipline, whether imprisonment or use of rod should not cause undue damage but should bring the sinner to repentance. Discipline should cease once there is repentance and change of conduct.

## **Husband & Wife**

A man and a woman become one flesh by the bond of marriage (Math 19.5-6). Once married, the man is the husband and the woman, the wife. Marriage must be between one man and one woman (Gen 2.20-25). Marriage must not be between people of the same blood (Lev 18). The marriage bed must not be defiled (Mat 5.27-28). The marriage must not be dissolved except for sexual immorality or illegitimate marriages (Mat 5.32). The primary purpose of marriage is raising a family unto the glory of God.

### **Submission and Love in Marriage**

Christians, both man and woman, must submit to one another (1 Peter 5.5) and love one another (John 15.12). In the body of Christ, we are all brethren and we submit to Christ, the head.

In Christ, man and woman should submit to one another. In Christ, the man should submit to the woman even if they are married. The body of Christ (God's family) is bigger than the body of the man (man's family).

In Christ, man and woman should love one another. In Christ, the woman should love the man as Christ has loved us, even if they are married.

If we love and submit to one another, there will be no need for more laws. Love fulfills the law, even the laws of marriage. Love submits to and serves another. Love respects another. Love shows affection. Love is not selfish.

Due to the weakness of the human nature (little ability to love), emphasis must be made in the key areas of marriage:

*As for you, let each one love his wife as himself, and let the wife respect her husband” (Ephesian 5.33).*

The husband, because he is head, must be obeyed by the members of his household. The respect of obedience or submission is gained by one’s position, not by his deeds. Even bad husbands must be obeyed. A bad king must always be obeyed as king even if he is bad. In marriage, the wife submits to (obeys) the husband (Eph 5.22).

The husband, because he is the head, must love the members of his household. The elder serves the younger. He who is the greatest is the servant of all (Mat 23.11). Respect can be obedience or admiration. Obedience is earned by one’s position, but admiration is earned by love (sacrificial and affectionate love). The man wins the admiration of his household by love.

A couple that obeys the law of Christ, will satisfy the law of marriage. Both submits to one another as commanded by Christ and both love one another as commanded by Christ. Humility and selflessness is the garment of all Christians whether man or woman. The wife will always feel loved and respected and the husband too will feel respected and loved. The law of Christ is meant to bring all men (whether man or woman) to the complete image of Christ.

In the flesh, the woman is more inclined to receive love and the man more inclined to receive respect. However, our bond in Christ is higher than all fleshly bonds and we should let ourselves to be ruled by the bond we have in Christ. The life of the spirit should prevail above the flesh.

The Lord Jesus submits to the Father in all things. The church submits to the Lord in all things. The brethren in church (both man and woman) submits to one another in all things. In marriage, the wife should be quicker to submit to the husband because he is the head of the body. The entire church should submit to earthly authorities in all matters that do not contradict the will of God.

The Heavenly Father loves the son; the son loves his bride (church), the church must love another as Christ has loved us. In marriage, the husband should be quicker to love to his wife. The entire church should love their unbelieving neighbors.

### **The Curse of Adam and Eve in marriage**

God punished Adam and Eve for their sin of disobedience in the garden of Eden. Adam would toil to get bread for his family. Eve would suffer birth pangs when bringing forth her children and she would still desire her husband. Do these curses affect our marriages? If they do, can we be set free?

#### **Adam's curse:**

Before the fall, the earth tilled and watered itself to bring forth food for man but after the fall, it stopped. Man began toil to get food. Man is the breadwinner of his home. He must till the soil and bring out food for his family. The curse was true and binding until the coming of the Lord Jesus, the last Adam. All who are in Christ are free from the curse.

*It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep (Psalm 127.2).*

*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you (Mat 6.33).*

Though the earth no longer tills itself, the LORD blesses the handwork of his children. They do not have to toil as much as the sinners do to get food.

If we pursue obedience and faith in God, he will meet our daily needs.

#### **Eve's Curse:**

Eve was cursed with pain in childbearing. Can a woman be free from this pain?

*Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth (Mat 9.23).*

All things are possible to those who believe in the Son of God. You can have a pain free delivery if you believe without doubting in your heart.

## **Self-Control of the pleasures of Manhood**

The church of Corinth faced carnal issues on sex and self-control. Apostle Paul gave his opinion (not God's commandment) on how to tackle their problems (1 Corinth 7). He said;

1. Since the people have strong desire (lust)for sex
2. Since sexual immorality is rampant among them
3. Since they lack self-control

They should:

1. Marry than burn
2. They should not refuse one another in bed
3. They should not stay away apart from each other for a long time except for prayers.

They should do these so that the devil will not tempt them to sin because of their lack of self-control. Still, he would wish that all believers will remain unmarried as he were so that they can give themselves entirely to the Lord.

Paul's advice was directed to a carnal church. The church of God is not supposed to be carnal. There is no other word that can be given to a carnal church except that they stop being carnal. As the church, they must do away with their strong sexual desire and lack of self-control.

Apostle Paul's counsel is an opinion, not based on God's word and thus, it is not the standard for the church to follow. The word of God on the matter was for them to stop being carnal. If they crucify their flesh, they will no longer be tempted by it. They should deal away with the lust and lack of self-control in their hearts. Marriage, frequent sex, not refusing your spouse in bed, as Paul suggested, will not treat the lust in their heart. People must not marry for sexual gratification, nor must they give themselves to sex nor burden their spouses with it. Unrestraint bodily desire is not a fruit of the spirit of Christ but of the flesh. The fruit of the spirit of Christ is self-control and selflessness. The life of the spirit of Christ can strengthen us to control our sexual desires.



God created air, food, water, sex, etc. for survival of humanity. He did not create only these things, but he also created human appetite for them. The primary purpose of the appetite was not for enjoyment but to enable us to do them. It is not easy to eat, drink or sex if you do not have the desire or appetite.

To the best of my knowledge, female animals, including the woman, go on heat during ovulation. Ovulation is a natural time where a female desires sex for pregnancy. During ovulation, the woman desires sex without any stimulation from the man. The female animal does not accept a male animal no matter the extent of his appeal except when she is on heat. Women were not created as sex objects to satisfy the men. They are created to bear forth children to the glory of God.

The man's sexual desire is usually stronger than that of the women because he is by nature created to ensure continuity of his lineage. However, both men and women should exercise self-control over all bodily appetites and watch against self-indulgence, lest we become slaves to our own human desires.

We cannot put a thumb rule on how many times sex is appropriate, but we can say that we must keep in mind the purpose why God created sex and regulate ourselves accordingly.

He who loves the world makes himself an enemy of God (James 4.4). The things of the world (1 John 2.16) are:

The desires of the eyes

The desires of the flesh (the human nature)

The pride of life

It is a sin to live to self-pleasure rather than to live for God. Do not set your mind on enjoying sex, rather set your mind on things of heaven.

If you are in a marriage that is not very sexual, instead of working to increase the sexual satisfaction, drive your energy towards self-control, love for your spouse and the things of the Spirit of Christ.

If you are in a marriage that is not at all sexual, and your spouse will not respond to you, you must not think of divorce, but run to Christ for grace to deny self and to stay

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