

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Forbearance and Forgiveness

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Paul writes, “Put on therefore, as God’s elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye...” (Colossians 3:12-13).

God envisioned a people who would manifest certain characteristics in their relationship with others. As a people separated from the world and beloved of God, we must therefore be forbearing and forgiving towards others. Forbearing will demand that I “bear up under” certain things in my relationship with others, while forgiving will demand that I “let go” the wrongs that others do.

When sin occurs, we as God’s people, cannot ignore it. Jesus directs us to do the following: “Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him” (Luke 17:3). Jesus even gives us direction in matters of sin committed against us personally. “And if thy brother sin against thee, go show him his fault between thee and

him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother” (Matthew 18:15).

While we in love and kindness should always be ready to forgive others, forgiveness cannot take place when repentance is absent. The Lord does not forgive us of our sins apart from repentance (Acts 2:38, 8:22), and therefore we must manifest the same mind toward others. “..As the Lord forgave you, so also do ye” not only teaches us that we must forgive others, because the Lord has forgiven us. It also enjoins us to forgive “as” the Lord forgives us. Forgiveness comes when repentance is manifested.

In our “live and let live” world, many do not want to confront others with their sin. Some are even advocating that when your spouse has been unfaithful, you should just ignore it as if the wrong did not occur, because the pain of confrontation is worse. If we just ignore the sins of our husband or wife, we are not truly loving them. First, fornication and adultery will keep one from the inheritance of Heaven and send one’s soul to eternal Hell (Galatians 5:19-21, Revelation 21:8). How are we showing love

when we ignore soul damning sins in others, especially the sins of our mates -the love of our life, and do not urge them to repent? Their sin needs to be brought before their eyes so they can repent and be forgiven first by God and then by you.

Just forbear it and not confront it is not God’s way for peace, even in sins committed against us. Showing the fault, acknowledging the wrong, and repenting of the sin is the way unto “letting it go” in forgiveness and restoring peace with God and with one another. If this process is ignored, resentment builds in relationships until they are destroyed.

While we are not to ignore sin, we may have to forbear others until they acknowledge their sin. Paul reminds us that the Lord’s servant must be “...forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves, if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth...” (2 Timothy 2:24-25). We may have to hold up under the sadness of the wrongs of others, but not without confronting the error. Hopefully, our loved ones will repent so forgiveness can start its healing process.