



Love Like Confetti

Part 2 – Forgive One Another

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If you're brand new to this series, last week, we launched it with *Love One Another*. This week, we're covering *Forgive One Another*. Next week is *Encourage One Another*, *Pray for One Another*, and we'll end it with *Serving One Another*.

Last week, we had fun on the *Love One Another* part. Here's the first service with Pat Kershaw getting the celebration kit thrown on her. I put balloons in her hands because that's what she came at me with as weapons. She shared a letter with me later that week just simply saying, "I really needed that." I'm just telling you when we do things out of the blue for folks, just the encouragement that is. This was in the second service. This is Martha. This is my favorite one; you lost sight of her in the confetti. Today, she shared the same sentiment as Pat. It's just the craziness of it.

Then we gave kits out. Just a few of them because we're on a budget. We've had a few down weeks in the first part of 2018. Couldn't give everybody a kit, but maybe we can pick this up in the fall. This was one of my favorite pictures. Students in Branson with the celebration kit. That's a good way to make a mess in the classroom right there to honor your teacher. Find a teacher, find a principal, find a boss, find a co-worker, find an employee, find someone this week that you know is needing that abundant, extravagant, immediate, crazy, reckless, type of love and shower it on them.

At the end of the morning last week, the stage was piled and when I say piled, it was literally piled. There was had a foot of confetti in this area and Matt and Katie's daughter, Norah, got up here in it. Every time you picked up a handful and threw it over her, she would just shake. We all got such a kick out of that, so we just wanted to see how long she could do this. We all just gathered around her and every time the confetti came over her, she was just so full of joy that she would shake. This is a picture of Norah from last week. Let me tell you, every single person should leave church like this. Here at the feel-good church, we're celebrating what the Lord has done for us.

Today, we move into forgiveness and we're going to jump right into what the Apostle Paul teaches in Ephesians 4. He says this in two verses. In this passage, we get what we shouldn't have in us and then how we should respond. There's a lot in this text. ***31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.*** Christian or non-Christian, both would say, "Yeah, that shouldn't be a part of our lives. We should get rid of that. It's not healthy for us, individually, and it's not healthy for us in community, and it's not healthy for us as a nation. We should get rid of it."

32 Be kind and compassionate to one another... That even is a Christians/non-Christian message today. You can go to a pagan artist concert and they're going to tell you to love one another, encourage one another, be kind to one another. I've even heard... I think this is on Pinterest: "Throw kindness around like confetti." So, yeah, we get that, but here's where it's different for you and for me, follower of Jesus. We are to be kind and compassionate. Paul's giving us the answer to how you get rid of all this. You get rid of it by being kind and compassionate to one another, ***...forgiving each other...*** And I think even the non-Christian would say we should be forgiving one another, but here's where it's different: ***...just as in Christ God forgave you.*** That is what Paul is driving home in this text and what he's talking about is putting off the old self - the old self being all that leads to bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander, and every form of malice – and taking on the new self. And the new self is we have been forgiven by God, through Christ Jesus. And all God's people said... Amen.

I heard a pastor this week... And I respect him, and I totally get the sentiment behind what he said, so this is not to tear down his illustration because I think it can be a good illustration, but I think it needs to go one step further. He said when couples come into his office... They are in conflict, so a couple, a marriage is dealing with bitterness and rage and anger and brawling, (I hope not too much brawling) slander, and every form of malice. It's just a nasty situation. He asks them to start by writing down all of the offenses on a piece of paper. He said... and it's funny and this is so true and I'm going to, with every breath I have left in me, argue that there is a difference between men and women in almost every way. Male and female, he created them.

He said men will usually take the paper, write down a couple of things and then be done. He said the women will take the paper and start writing, complete one page, and start another. He said it's true every time. He said when they go through this illustration, at the end, once they've written up all of their offenses, he asks them to take the paper, crumple it up, and follow him. They all get up from his office and they go to the bathroom. They go into a stall. I've never been into a stall with another person. I don't know if you can say that, but I can say that. They all three go in and he asks them to throw it in the toilet and then he tells one of them, or asks to see which one will do it, to flush it. I'm sure with the foot. How many of you flush with the foot? We all flush with foot, even at church. I love you and you're a brother in Christ, but I'm flushing with my foot. He said it's interesting when couples are in conflict, they can't even agree on who's going to flush. Finally, they flush it and they go back to the office.

I get the sentiment, but that's not how we are to handle our anger and bitterness. Do you know what we're supposed to do? We are supposed to write down the offense and take it to the cross because He is our source of forgiveness. And knowing we are forgiven by God gives us everything we need to forgive other people and to have relationships that are healthy and have a spirit of forgiveness.

Do you want a home where forgiveness... Where it's like you are allowed make mistakes in the home. We try according to Proverbs, as a dog returns to his vomit, so a fool repeats his folly. We try not to have a home where we repeat the same mistakes over and over again, but we allow mistakes. The only reason we can do that is because we also have a home that's full of forgiveness. We desire that.

But, it not about just taking the offense somebody gives you and throwing it away. The problem is we throw it away and then we go looking for it. But, when you take it to the cross, you know where it is. As in Christ God forgave you.

So, here's the bottom line of what Paul is trying to share with us. And this is for me personally. **I must forgive as a follower of Jesus, because I've been forgiven.** Show me someone who has a hard time forgiving a parent, a sibling, a grandparent, a spouse, a co-worker, a boss from years and years ago and I'll show you some who has forgotten how much they have been forgiven. You know what we also need to do? We need to sit down and write all of our offenses against the Holy God. We've taken that to the cross because I took that to the cross when I gave my life to Christ.

You see, when you take another person's offense to the cross, now you're seeing this is where it's dealt with. This is different than just telling somebody, "Find the grit, find the strength to not be mad at that person." I can't do that because I can't create this stuff. I can't manufacture it. I think that's the problem today. "Get rid of all the rage and all the brawling and the slander and the malice." I can't just get ride of that. I've got to do something with it. And, follower of Jesus, rest in peace because we know where we take it. We've been forgiven. I need to forgive because I've been forgiven.

My inability to forgive someone is a source problem, not a people problem. We said the exact same thing last week about love. It's a source problem; it's not a people problem. I have an issue with you and if you've asked for my forgiveness and I can't give it to you then you're not the issue. I've got to go to the true and only source.

I need to forgive and be forgiven. So, there are two sides to this. We're not just talking about the one who needs to forgive someone's offense towards them, but we are also talking about how you've got to go to someone and seek forgiveness. Don't listen to this message just one way, thinking about all the people that have offended you. Maybe another good activity out of this morning is for you to spend some time thinking about all the people you've offended. Then we can live in reconciled relationships, knowing that we have been forgiven by God, through Christ Jesus.

Before we jump into what Jesus is going to give us in Matthew 18 and Matthew 5, which are very practical, clear steps that we can take to live in reconciled relationships, let's look at some roadblocks to forgiveness. I think all of us have dealt with this. If you're married, you've seen all of these roadblocks. If you want a good marriage... I think it was Ruth Bell Graham that said, "A good marriage only exists when you have two good forgivers." When you have two people that are good at forgiving, you're going to have a good marriage because we all know how to offend. We all know how to go at each other.

So here are five roadblocks to forgiveness:

1. Prioritizing an issue over the relationship. It's when you want to be right and prove your spouse wrong. It's when you want to be right and prove your co-worker wrong. It's when you want to be right and prove your parent wrong. So, you gather together, and you live above the line in communication, and you're just sharing opinions, just throwing your opinions around rather than saying, "You matter to me. Being in relationship with you is so important."

It's why in 2 Corinthians 8, the Apostle Paul says we can have conflict over meat sacrifices to idols and whether or not that meat gets sold in the market place. And if I buy meat from the market place, I may have bought meat that was sacrificed to an idol. Some Christians said, "You don't eat any meat from there because that could have happened."

Paul gives his opinion. He says it's not what goes into us that makes us unclean; it's what comes out of us. He says, "I'm not going to sit around and fight you over this. I'm not going to debate you over this." If you read 1 Corinthians 8, he says "You mean too much to me. You matter to me, so I want to be in relationship with you."

It's why this week I just haven't engaged a lot in gun control conversation among Christians. That's because you matter more to me. I'm not going to sit around with fundamentalist and debate wine. I've learned that I can do it, but I'm just not going to. I want to tell them they matter more than that issue. We do this in relationships. We dig our heels in on the issue and we forget the value and the priority of the relationship.

2. Stubbornness. This is simply pride. "I know I'm supposed to forgive you; I just need you to hurt a little bit longer." "I know we aren't in a good place in our relationship, but I've been miserable for the past couple of months because of what happened and if I forgive you, that will end. I've been so miserable, and I don't think you've been miserable enough, so let's go another month with this." That's pride and stubbornness.

3. Fear of condoning the offense. "I don't want to forgive you because I fear I'll condone the offense. If I forgive you, you might think what you did wasn't that big of a deal and what you did was a big, big deal." So, we say, "I'm going to hold the forgiveness until you can clearly and articulately give me the exact reason why I'm hurt and what you said and how you'll never do that again. When I hear all of that and I believe it, then I'll forgive it. But, I need you to know the weight of what you did. It will just minimize it if I forgive you right now."

4. Compounding anger. For years, in our marriage, we had something called the Quarterly Marriage Realignment. What happened was we allowed offenses to build up. We didn't put it on a calendar; that's just how it worked. We allowed offenses to build up for three months. We didn't deal with things. I'm what you might call a flight guy. I like to get out of the room. I feel like if we don't talk about it, it will eventually go away. Not true. If you notice compounding anger... something so trivial then sets you off. If you're the type of person that goes off on someone and that person's like, "Wow, what I just said? Both of us could probably agree wasn't that big of a deal," but you're making it a huge because you've added that thing to what's happened the last three months. You've just brought it all together, piled it all on, and now there's an explosion. You spew it out.

5. Blindspots. "I'm not going to forgive you because I have blindspots of my own." Here's what we know about forgiveness. I need to forgive you because at some point, I'm going to need to ask you to forgive me. The person who withholds forgiveness in a relationship is one who believes "I've got it all together; I would never do this." And it's why we make bad Judges.

It's because whatever I'm holding against you, one day, you could hold it against me. I'm going to lead out right now and take the first step and this relationship is going to be reconciled.

Paul says this in Colossians: ***13 Bear with each other...*** I love that because that's what we do as Christians; we bear with each other. We endure relationships. You might think that's not a good relationship, but when someone is going through it, you bear with them. ***...and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*** Forgiveness always comes back to the source. Go back to the cross and be reminded of all of your sins that have been forgiven and then weigh the offenses or the grievance against the sin the Father has forgiven you because of his Son Jesus. But, we bear with one another.

Amy and I have this term; we picked it up years ago, probably 20 years ago. I won't tell you what it stands for yet, we just simply say EGR. We'll get out after a meeting or something or even after church some Sundays and we'll get in the car and we'll just sigh and look at each other and go, "EGR." EGR stands for that person who is Extra Grace Required. Do you know someone like that? Some of you right now are looking at the person beside you. You're sitting next to them. If extra grace is required and you continuing to lean in, do you know what you're doing? You're bearing with one another. You're forgiving one another. It's interesting that we don't get the text that just says, "Never again in Christ Jesus shall you have a grievance or an offense against your brother." We get "When you have that, here's what you do in the name of Jesus Christ. Here's how relationships continue in a messy world. Here's how relationships continue with you still in flesh." You remind yourself, when I'm in this mode, that's old self and I put off old self. I put on new self.

There are extra grace required people in here. I'll repeat that. There are extra grace required people at Woodland Hills Family Church. Let me tell you, the Lord has convicted me of this in recent years because when someone would get mad and have an offense or a grievance, young, stupid, inconsiderate Pastor Ted would say, "Don't let the door hit you on the way out." That's not bearing with one another. Do you know what that's called? The old self. People would go at me and I'd be like, "That's fine. There are plenty of churches in this town; go find one." That's old self. New self is "Let me try to listen and understand what's going on." And it can be difficult, it can be challenging.

I have a friend and I don't need to say his name, but David Nasser is the Campus Pastor at Liberty University. I've always been shocked on social media at how he responds to people. He was born and raised in a Muslim family. He came to know the Lord and now God is using him as a prophet, a preacher, and an unbelievable evangelist. He's the Campus Pastor now at Liberty.

I had dinner with him a couple of weeks ago when I was at Liberty. I said, "When people come after you on social media, your response is not only out of the ordinary, but it's overwhelming for me to think about. I need you to help me understand how you do."

At the beginning of every school year with 12,000 to 13,000 evangelical students gathered in the Vine Center, he puts his mobile number up on the screen and tells them to call or text him if they ever need anything. What? And then they come after him on Twitter saying, "I'm leaving this school. I'm done with this."

They are ripping him, and he responds back with, “Hey, could we get together for coffee? I’d love to hear more about what you’re thinking and feeling.”

I asked him, “David, how do you do that?” I am quick to the block button, unfriend, get rid of it. But, guess what? That’s the old self.

You don’t have to show up to every fight. That’s true. I do believe that to the core of my being, but I said, “David, you’ve got to explain to me where that comes from.”

He said, “It was a few years ago. The Lord deeply convicted me.” He said, “More than you, I was a ‘don’t let the door hit you on the way out,’ and the Lord convicted me of that old self thinking. I had to put on new self to say we’re called to bear with one another and to love one another and to forgive one another and to care for one another.”

Here’s what I love: He says, “I get into a lot of face to face meetings where the issue cannot be resolved. We’re never going to agree on it. And it can get heated. Then we just come to a point in the relationship...”

I believe you read this between Paul and Barnabas, where their disagreement was so sharp. They both continued in ministry, but just not together.

He said, “We just look across the table and say, ‘Is it okay that we recognize right now that we’re never going to agree on this, but can we still love one another?’”

Do you have any idea how hard this is? I’m sitting there going, “Yeah, I’m not going to do that; that’s a lot of work. What else you got for me, David? There’s got to be some other strategies.”

He said, “No. This is all I ask. If we can just agree to love one another and forgive one another and just care for one another and not agree on this, can we just keep it between us and not take it out for thousands of other people to engage with?”

I don’t believe that’s the church. That’s not how we’re to live as followers of Christ. That’s why I think the scripture is very clear. When you’re dealing with an offense, a grievance, or a sin in the church, you go to the person one on one and then if it continues, you take a couple of people with you. You don’t just start by blabbing it to everybody.

He said, “Ted, it’s really worked. I’ve won over some new friends. We’re never going to be best of buddies, but we’re followers of Jesus.”

When I walked away from that conversation, I thought, *That’s called bearing with one another.* Let me just put one word behind it: work. It’s work. It takes time. It takes energy.

Peter comes to Jesus with a question. I think we sometimes lose the context of this passage in Matthew 18 because we think Peter is missing the whole point, but really the heart of Peter in asking this question

is he really believes he's being generous. Because of the teachings of the Rabbis... The Rabbis taught from the Prophet Amos that you should forgive someone up to three times. So, think about what Peter is doing. He's saying, "Okay, up to three times. I'm going to double it and add one." So, he's just coming at it from a mind that says, "Lord, is this the right way?" And this is speaking to, "Is there a limit to forgiveness?"

21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?"

22 Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

It would be better interpreted as seventy times seven. Jesus is not giving a number so you and I will keep count. He's giving a number so we don't count. He's giving you a number to say, "No matter how many times you flip this paper, forgive as in Christ God forgave you." **Forgiveness defined is me giving up the right to hurt you for hurting me.** "I'm feeling miserable and I need you to feel miserable too."

Beth Moore wrote that book years ago. I think it's called *Out of the Pit*. I know the premise of the book. She said, "Isn't that how it is. We are in a pit and we want people to join us. And when someone starts crawling out of the pit, our first thought is, *How dare you! Who do you think you are? You think you're better than me? No, you're staying right down here with me.*" That's what anger, bitterness, rage, malice, slander, brawling is. It's saying to people, "I've made myself miserable with what's going on inside of me; I'd like you join me. I'd like you to feel this too." And it ticks you off if they don't feel what you're feeling. Forgiveness is saying, "I'm giving up my right to try to make you feel the way I feel right now." When you give up that right, watch what it does for you. When you are reminded to take off the old self and put on the new self, everything changes.

Jesus says in Matthew 5... Whenever you see Jesus say this in Matthew 5 in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is not speaking against the Old Testament. He's speaking against the interpretation of the Jewish scholars and how they taught. **21 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.'** **22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment."** Again, Jesus goes right to the heart saying, "You can pat yourself on the back for not being a murderer, but let me tell you where murder comes from." It comes from the heart and he is passionate about the heart, your heart and my heart.

Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca...' I love that because that means "empty head." Isn't that one of the greatest... We don't use that term today. We're not going after somebody in a fight saying, "You empty head!" That just doesn't fit with how we do fights in our culture, but in that day, this was going to the core of a person. This was a word of great contempt. We would eyeroll at somebody when we just don't care to even hear their name mentioned. **...is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.** Again, it's not that if you call someone a name you're going to hell. The idea here is in Jerusalem, in that day, it's where they put the garbage when they threw it out. This is where your relationship is headed. It doesn't mean a believer loses their salvation when they're dealing with this.

It goes on to say, **23** *“Therefore...* Every time we see therefore in scripture it means we’re coming out of teaching and the principle and we’re going into the practical way to handle this, like real life application on how you and I should handle putting off the old self and putting on the new self, getting rid of bitterness, anger, rage and taking on bearing with one another, loving one another, forgiving one another, being compassionate to one another at the cross where we have been forgiven by God. *...if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you...* This text is implying it can be one of both sides of that coin we talked about. You can be the innocent one or the offender. Either way, if there is brokenness in a relationship that you're thinking about right now, **24** *leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them...* Again, reconciliation is about relationships. Resolution is about issues. Don't go resolve the issue, be reconciled, heart to heart in relationship with the one that has an offense against you. *...then come and offer your gift.*

So, when should I go and do this? Here's what I would encourage you to do this morning. We say this almost every time we talk about forgiveness. At this next point, if you need to get up and leave to go be reconciled to someone, this is one of those services where we encourage you to leave early. We encourage you to stand up and walk out that door and if you can get face to face, get in your car and go to that brother or sister and be reconciled.

We're preparing to take the Lord's Supper today. And as our hearts are moving toward the Lord's Supper right now, my encouragement to you is to begin to think about who you need to be reconciled with. Here's the bottom line of what Jesus is saying. Stop what you're doing and go to the person. Get face to face if you can. If you can't, leave and make a phone call. If you can't get face to face or make a phone call, write a letter. I hope you see that email and text is way down at the bottom of the list because in email and text and even in letters, unless you're a great letter writer, you're going to struggle. You can't communicate that body language in that phone call or text. You want them to see your heart for a reconciled relationship. Do it now. Leave. Leave this service.

You're like, "Well we're in America and this the 21st Century. We finish the service, go to lunch, and maybe around 2:00..." You American Christian, leave. Stop your act of worship now and go be reconciled to your brother or sister. Or you can stay if your sitting next to the person you need to be reconciled to. You can stay, and you can tune me out for the rest of the morning. You can lean over and seek reconciliation right now with a child, with a parent, with a spouse.

Let me tell you, I've pastored here long enough to know there should be a lot of little conversations going on right now. Again, your like, "No, after lunch."

If you are a follower of Jesus, we take the life and teachings of Jesus to heart every single time. We have to stop reading passages like "stop what you're doing and go be reconciled to that person" and then doing nothing with it. Why don't we take it literally? Leave. Go be reconciled.

It goes on to say, **25** *“Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court.”* Don't wait. We've had services like this over the last 16 years and I love the stories I'll start hearing tonight of people saying, "I got up and I went to another church where I had a problem with so and so." "I got up, I

left, and I found my ex-wife and I said, 'Today I discovered the reason why I hate you so much.'" It's there that he's able to tell her it's because he has not received the forgiveness that has been extended to him. "Today, I am forgiven and that hatred against you had nothing to do with you; it was in me. And I'm going to ask you to forgive me for everything I've ever said to you and everything I've ever done wrong to you."

We hear these stories all the time. Don't wait. If you wait until 2:00, it's going to be lessor. I say lessor, but you're going to have more of an ability to turn around. But if the Holy Spirit is calling you by name, go find your ex-wife and seek her forgiveness. Go find your ex-husband and quit being stubborn and ask for his forgiveness. You're like, "You don't know him." I don't need to know him. I'm not saying your relationship will absolutely be reconciled because he might not receive it. He may slam the door in your face. She may slam the door in your faith... in your face, but you... Maybe that was right: slam the door in your faith. Maybe she will. Maybe he will. But, I just want to encourage you. You make every attempt. There are adult children in here that need to leave this very minute and go call Mom or Dad. You've been stubborn with your parents and you need to seek their forgiveness. It doesn't matter what they've done. I'm asking you... Don't write down their offenses, write down yours.

Isn't it funny how we can listen to a message like this and think about all the people who hurt us and then when it turns to all the people we've hurt, you're like, "I'm not turning the page on that one." Go and be reconciled. Take yourself out of prison. Your ex-husband has moved on. Your ex-wife has moved on. Your co-worker, your boss, whoever it is that you're unreconciled with, they've moved on, but you haven't. Go, ***"Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary... Now, watch how this progresses. ...may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. 26 Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny."*** In other words, unreconciled relationships do not get better over time. We think that if we just let it go, there'll be a moment we'll forget what we were fighting about, and we'll be back in harmony together. It doesn't work that way. Go now and settle matters quickly.

"Ted, if I leave right now and I go to be reconciled with someone I hate, where does it start?" It starts with **listening for feelings, not opinions**. Don't go get hysterical and historical in a reconciliation meeting. You don't need to bring up every single thing they have done, and I would even argue that before you even get into the list of everything you've done, just start with, "Here's my heart: I don't want to hate you anymore."

I was at an event... I'll never forget this lady that came up to me at a marriage retreat in Florida and she goes, "I didn't want to be here."

I'm like, "Well, glad you're here."

She goes, "Sitting through a bunch of marriage talks all weekend. And then last night when you prayed, it was the only good thing you said."

I'm like, "Okay, what did I say?"

She goes, "You prayed something that's what I think about almost every single day."

I go, "What was that?"

She goes, "This is my prayer to the Lord every day, 'Lord, you know how much I hate him (talking about her ex-husband) and I hope you kill him today.'"

Do you know what that's called? Bitterness, rage, slander, I'd put it in the brawling category, and every form of malice. And there she stood next to her new husband.

I'm like, "Bro, you better sleep with one eye open." I told him the same thing I was taught years ago, "This is eventually going to come out on you. That's how anger works. You never bury it dead; you always bury it alive. She could end up hating you worse than this guy she wants to see dead."

I always love new people to our church going, "We should probably find a church with a pastor who is ordained. I don't think he's ordained."

I am ordained. I don't know if it's still good, but it was good 20 years ago when I got it.

Listen for feeling, not opinions. Please don't go into a reconciliation meeting to be right.

Craft a good apology without creating new offenses. Do this before you go. And where does that start? It starts at the foot of the cross. You've been forgiven. You can start listing the sins that God has forgiven in you and now you can go and seek reconciliation. But, do it without creating new offenses. How many of you have ever apologized to someone and you created three more things you needed to apologize for?

When Amy and I were first married... In the early part of our marriage, I struggled with this for like the first 18 to 19 years. I would come with these quick little words that we think are good words, right? The words are "I'm sorry." It was my tone and my body language, but I would throw "I'm sorry" out there to end the conflict. I would throw "I'm sorry" out there to just be done with it and act like it didn't happen and move on...

There are two ways to know my "I'm sorry" is worthless. The first one is I have this... You will never need to put me on a polygraph machine because I have one built into my body. You're thinking the Holy Spirit. Yes, but it's also a nerve that runs from my stomach up to my lower lip. When I'm speaking from a place of truth and this is the real me, this is my heart... We just talked about focusing on the heart and not the issue and relationship. When I'm speaking from that place, my lower lip quivers and I can't control it. I hate it. If I say "I'm sorry" without a lower lip quiver, that's my way of knowing this means nothing. That's for me.

Then the second way I know my "I'm sorry" isn't working is when Amy simply asks "For what?"

"I didn't get that far in the planning process. I don't have the exact words because..." This was early on. That was Amy's way of saying, "I know you're apologizing, but just give me the reason. What did you do?"

The only apology you ever need to make... There are only two apologies. "I'm sorry for what I said." And "I'm sorry for what I did." You only need to apologize for what you say and do. Your part of the offense, your part of the grievance is what you're apologizing for, not the feelings of others.

To close out our time, let's focus on five bad apologies. I've used them all and so have you.

1. "I'm sorry you feel that way." That's the world's worst apology. You never need to apologize for another person's feelings because you're not responsible for them. You're responsible for your words and actions that flow from your heart. Apologize for what you say and for what you do. What that's saying is, "Your feelings don't matter." When you apologize when you have caused an offense or grievance, you are saying, "You matter to me and that includes your feelings matter to me. I am sorry I hurt you. Would you forgive me for..."

2. "If I offended you, I'm sorry." Do you know what this is saying? "You shouldn't have been offended at that."

3. "If I hurt you, I'm sorry." "That's crazy." "No, you took that wrong. That's not at all what I meant." Which leads to the fourth apology.

4. "I'm sorry you took it that way." "That's not what I intended." The problem is the words "I'm sorry," said in a way... Your spouse, your friend, your parent, your child, they're reading your body language, they're hearing your tone and your saying, "I'm sorry you took it that way. You shouldn't have taken it that way. That's not how it was intended." Then the next one sounds about the same, but it says something completely different.

5. "I'm sorry I said it that way." What are we saying? "What I told you was truth and you needed to hear it, but maybe my tone wasn't right." If *probably* and *maybe* are ever in your apology, it's not a good apology. "Well, I probably could have said it better." No, you *could* have said it better. "I maybe..." No, that's just dismissive.

Ask for forgiveness. "I'm sorry I said... Will you forgive me?" You've got to follow up with that question. Sometimes in reconciliation we forget to ask for the forgiveness. We give the apology, but then follow it with "Will you forgive me?"

Ask for forgiveness, but don't demand it. You're making every effort, but you're allowing that person to process it. For you, you have time to think it through, you've have time to process it. You're on your way. You've taken it to the foot of the cross. Your heart is there. You're ready to go. But, they may need some time with it. Don't, with your apology, try to manipulate or control or change the other person.

If you've received a well-crafted apology, but you can't forgive, I want to take you and end with 1 John 1: 9. I keep going back to this text. When you're doing notes all week... I was moving it around to fit it in just the right place and then it was like, *no, that's the very last verse as we take the Lord's Supper together.*

1 John 1 - *9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

You have taken all of your sin and you have asked your Father in heaven to forgive. In the scriptures we see, he is the source, and in Christ Jesus, you are forgiven. The reason some of you right now have a difficult time forgiving a loved one is because you don't feel forgiven. You may know it. You remember the moment of your salvation where you were declared righteous and you placed faith in Jesus. I hear people put it this way. I had several after the first service say this. "I have a hard time forgiving myself." Quit trying and continue to go back to the cross and remember he is faithful and just. He has forgiven you, he continues to forgive you. You confess your sins before your heavenly father, you're forgiven. I think sometimes we talk about forgiving ourselves like cuddling our inner self. Your inner self is a mess. Take it to the cross. If you will confess this before your heavenly father, he's faithful and just and will forgive you of your sins and purify you from all unrighteousness.

With that, I'm going to ask that you pray. Just bow your head right where you are. As 1 Corinthians 11 says, examine your heart. Some of you during this time, here at the castle, over at the chapel, you need a time of examining your heart. I would encourage you not to take the Lord's Supper with an unreconciled relationship. Go settle the matter quickly and then come back and take the Lord's Supper. In this case, I will encourage you not to prepare the elements. You can set them in your purse, or you can put them in the pocket of your jacket.

Go be reconciled and then sometime later today or tonight or later this week, you take the Lord's Supper, but you remind yourself, *I didn't take the elements because as I examined my heart, I realized with my hatred towards this person, I was not prepared for the Lord's Supper, but Lord, would you do a work in me as I go to seek face to face reconciliation with my mom, my dad, my son, my daughter, my brother, my sister, my grandma, my grandpa, my grandchild, my co-worker, my boss, my pastor, a former church member.* Be reconciled. Let yourself out of prison today.

If you've never placed faith in Jesus, today is the day of your salvation. The scripture says we would not have you drink judgment upon yourself, so if you're not a Christian, we ask that you not participate in this part of the service. However, you can most definitely participate if today you head to the foot of the cross and ask your heavenly Father to forgive you of your sin because Jesus died and rose again. He breathes life into dead people and he will breathe life into your dead soul. If you will confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that he was raised from the dead, you will be saved. If today is the day of your salvation and you have confessed your sins to your heavenly Father and have placed faith in Jesus, we encourage you to take the Lord's Supper.