

## **BAIT OF SATAN #3**

### **“The Sin Of Unforgiveness”**

#### **I. The Most Famous Prayer In The Bible**

**(The Lord’s Prayer Is Really The Disciple’s Prayer!)**

##### **The Lord’s Prayer**

After this manner therefore pray ye:

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Matthew 6: 9-13

#### **A. Familiarity Can Be A Problem!**

1. We can overlook the obvious: like **the relational nature of the Lord’s Prayer:**

- a. There are SEVEN plural pronouns in the prayer
- a. OUR Father-indicates a relationship with GOD
- b. Then 6 more plural pronouns in the prayer reflecting our relationship with each other.

2. **The Christian faith is not about religion; it’s about relationships:**

- a. First with God; then with each other
- b. Think about the Cross of Christ: 2 parts, vertical and horizontal.

\*The vertical piece is foundational; it pierces the earth and supports everything else; it speaks of our relationship with God; the horizontal speaks of our relationships with each other. Through the Cross, Jesus makes brings God and man together relationally.

3. Our prayers and our Christian life must never be self-centered.

a. Prayer presupposes a relationship with God; but it anticipates challenges to our relationship with each other:

### **Matthew 6**

**11 Give us this day our daily bread...**

**12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.**

4. The whole prayer is amazing...but Verse 12 is the only part of the prayer Jesus expands upon.

#### **B. There's A Postscript To The Lord's Prayer!**

1. After Jesus taught His disciples the prayer, He added a "P.S."-commenting on one line:

#### **Matthew 6:14-15**

**14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:**

**15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

2. He changes "debts" to "trespasses", which means "offences"! They might have prayed...

**"Forgive us our offences against You, as we forgive those who commit offences against us."**

3. We cannot maintain a healthy relationship with God unless we ask His forgiveness of our sins; we cannot have a healthy relationship with each other unless we are willing to forgive their sins against us.

4. ***But it's more than that: withholding forgiveness from others causes God to withhold forgiveness from us!***

5. Jesus is consistent: when He taught His disciples about “mountain moving” faith:

**Mark 11:24-26**

**24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.**

**25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.**

**26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.**

**God does not bind Himself to always forgive!!!**

**Unforgiveness is the sin that costs us our own forgiveness!!!**

**C. Offences Are The Bait Of Satan!**

**The “Skandalon” is the trigger mechanism on a trap!**

**1. Jesus said “offences must come.” And they do!**

Minor Offences

Stood up for an appointment

Spouse forgets anniversary

Unkind words

More Serious Offences

Someone stole from you

Broken Wedding Vows

Covenant breaking

- a. In every case of offences, you are victimized.
- b. There is a violation of your personhood; or a betrayal of trust
- c. You hurt me...you OWE me!

2. That is why Jesus used the metaphor of debts and debtors because we can all relate to money! When someone offends us, sins or trespasses against us, offends us, it creates a relational debt!

a. They OWE us

b. An offence creates a spiritual I.O.U.

3. But Jesus demands we FORGIVE THE DEBT!

a. He commands us to tear up the I.O.U.!

## II. Matthew 18: Jesus Goes Into Detail About Offences

### A. Offences Must Come

**Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!**

**Matthew 18:7 NKJV**

1. You cannot avoid offences!

2. Make sure they don't come from you!

### B. Offences Are Sins That Can Cut Us Off From God

1. Don't hate your brother...hate SIN!

**Matt 18:8-9**

**"If your hand or foot (OFFENDS YOU causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. 9 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.**

\*In 2003, Hiker Aron Ralston was hiking alone in the Utah mountains when a boulder fell on him, crushing his right arm, trapping him in an isolated canyon.

**After 5 days surviving the elements, he discovered he had the courage to amputate his own right forearm with a dull pocketknife, climb up a 65 foot high wall and walk 8 miles to safety.**

a. His life became more important than his right arm; so it must be with us!

b. Our offences can trap us so badly they can kill us...unless we're willing to cut ourselves free of them by forgiving offences!

### **C. Jesus 3 Step Process Of Dealing With Offences (Matthew 18:15-17)**

#### **Matt 18:15-17**

**15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.**

**16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.**

**17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.**

1. Go to your brother privately and tell him his fault.

a. If he hears you, the relationship is restored.

b. If not, don't quit!

2. Get 2 or 3 to hear the case; let every word be established.

a. If he hears you, the relationship is restored

b. If not, don't quit!

3. Tell it to the church...and treat him like a heathen!

a. Offences are such a serious threat to the church Jesus requires excommunication!

4. Testimony: In 40 years of church life, this rarely happens; we aren't making disciples who "observe all the things (Jesus) commanded us to do"

**"Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive."**

**C.S. Lewis**

5. When God opens our eyes to the seriousness of the skandalon, we can hardly take it in!

#### **D. Forgiveness Is Not An Option!**

1. But surely there's a LIMIT!

**Matt 18:21-22**

**21 Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"**

**22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."**

2. Why? Jesus illustrates with a famous story:

#### **The Parable Of The Unmerciful Servant**

**23 Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. 26 The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' 27 Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.**

**28 "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' 29 So his fellow servant fell down at his feet\* and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.'\* 30 And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. 31 So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. 32 Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. 33 Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' 34 And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.**

**35 "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."\***

### **3. Lessons from the parable:**

- a. God is the King; we are the debtors God forgives
- b. The greatness of the offence of our sin before God is so great that we can never repay it...our only hope is the grace of God that forgives the debt.
- c. If God has forgiven us such a GREAT debt, how can we withhold forgiveness from those whose sin against us is so SMALL in relation to our sins against God?

#### **d. IF WE DO NOT FORGIVE...**

- **God is angry**
- **God allows us the trap to shut**
- **God allows the “tormentors” to torment us**
- **And we can’t escape until we forgive!**

### **III. How Can I Forgive When It Hurts So Much?**

#### **A. Forgiveness Is Not Easy!**

1. But when we do it, everybody wins!
  - a. God is glorified-we are never more like God than when we forgive those who trespass against us
  - b. Our enemy is released from the spiritual debt to us created by their sin against us
  - c. But most of all, forgiveness of others actually sets US free!

**“Forgiveness is unlocking the door to set someone free and then realizing you were the prisoner.”**

**Max Lucado**

2. If we don’t deal with UNFORGIVENESS, become a root of BITTERNESS!

- a. Bitterness is “root that springs up and defiles many!”
- b. It can ruin your life.

a. **Nelson Mandela** was the civil rights leader fighting against apartheid in South Africa. He was arrested at age 45 and spent 27 years in South African prisons. On his release in 1990, he said...

**“As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew that if I didn’t leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I’d still be in prison.”**

**Nelson Mandela**

## **B. Conclusion: The Charleston Story And The Power of Forgiveness**

On June 17, 2015 a 21 year old white man named Dylann Roof, drove 2 hours to a prayer meeting at **Emanuel A.M.E. church in Charleston, SC** where he killed 9 African Americans, including the Pastor. It was later discovered he was influenced by the teachings of white supremacy and neo-Nazism. He hoped his great offence would ignite a race war. But it didn’t work. Instead of starting a war, he received forgiveness.

1. Opinion writer Michael Gerson, writing in the Washington Post 5 days later...

**When many relatives of those cruelly murdered in Charleston — by a man who talked and prayed with his victims for an hour before systematically gunning them down — publicly offered their forgiveness, it was stunning and admirable in many ways.** Not least of which, it provided a contrast to our political culture. So many are engaged in a search for evidence of their victimization in order to justify their anger.

**Here, genuine victims of a horrible crime responded with mercy.**

The killer chose a historic African American church for a reason. For centuries, black churches have been a place of refuge, a voice for social justice and a target of racist violence. The alleged gunman, Dylann Roof, drove two hours to Charleston, S.C., because he undoubtedly wanted a symbol — and he got one. Against all his intentions, it is now the symbol of a living faith. The killer set out to defile a sacred place and ended up showing why it is sacred.

**At the heart of the Christian faith is an impossible demand: to “love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for**

**those who mistreat you.” This teaching was demonstrated by its author. The Christian novelist George MacDonald wrote: “ ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,’ said the Divine, making excuse for his murderers, not after it was all over, but at the very moment when he was dying by their hands.”**

When we see this type of extreme grace reenacted — as in Charleston — it has a tremendous power and appeal.

**The killer was welcomed by the ones he murdered, and then forgiven by the people he deeply harmed. These victims and their families have shown what it means to be followers of Christ. And many of us now feel awed and honored to share the same faith as these remarkable Christians.**

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### **PHOTO OF MEMORIAL SERVICE**

A daughter of one victim told an interviewer that everyone, including the killer, deserves a “second chance.” She made her point confidently and without bitterness.

2. This political pundit says it as well as any preacher...

**Forgiveness is also a form of freedom — a refusal to be ruled by anger or resentment. It is like laying a burden down.**

C. Altar Call And Prayer

**TITLE SLIDE**