

Christ and Your Relationships

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Well, with such beautiful pictures ordained by the Lord in our minds from salvation illustrated in baptism, remembered at the Lord's Table, we come to our text this morning which is found in the book of Matthew 7, if you would like to begin to turn there. You know, one of the most important things that we could remember about this salvation that we have celebrated this morning, is that it is a work of God. Scripture says that salvation belongs to the Lord. It is of the Lord and it is a work in which he gives new life to someone who is dead in their trespasses and sins. Ephesians 2:4 and 5 says, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)." There is such an important implication to that in terms of what the impact is that salvation has on a true believer. There are implications that flow from that. If salvation was a work of man, what you would find is, to our horror and grief, is that it would bear the marks of men going forward. If salvation was a work of man, you would find men marked by pride and self-centeredness as being the mark of the life of one who had truly been saved. If salvation were a work of man, because it would flow from the nature of man but, friends, salvation is a work of God. Salvation is a supernatural work by the Triune God in the heart of a dead and lifeless sinner. In salvation, God not only applies the merits of Christ to our account, but he also imparts to us a new life and that's what the passage in Ephesians is speaking of. God made us alive together in Christ, by grace you have been saved. It is a complete break with the past old man and there is a new man with a new life and a new principle of spiritual life in his heart going forward.

New life comes from God and do you know what that means? Do you know what the consequence of that is, of what that new life looks like? That new life bears the imprint of the character and the holiness and the love of God. Because God is the author of salvation, because God is the one who has given it to us, because it is an impress of his very nature on the soul, that has a consequence meaning that the new life that we have is going to bear the flavor, bear the aroma, show something of the characteristics of the holy, gracious, good God who did the work in us, and I think that gives us the proper perspective to think about our verse for this morning, Matthew 7:12. Matthew 7:12, which we introduced last week and we will finish it this morning. Matthew 7:12 says,

12 In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Now what we said last time was that the "therefore" in this verse is very significant because it shows us the ground in which Jesus proclaims what has become known as the Golden Rule, and without rehearsing everything that we said last time, we saw that the "therefore" is a reference to the fact in part that there is a coming judgment; that even for believers we will stand before Christ and give an account of our lives, and at that moment, whether you've thought seriously and deeply about it or not, I can tell you one thing for sure, my beloved Christian friend, the one thing that you are going to most want at that most significant moment is that Christ would deal graciously with you. In light of your life of sin and pockmarked with failures and imperfect obedience and love rendered in response to his salvation, when he is giving out the eternal weight of reward, you're going to want him to deal graciously with you. That's part of the "therefore" flowing from chapter 7, verses 1 and 2. Jesus said in the way you judge, you will be judged, and that reality of coming judgment affects the way that we interact with people here on earth. Christ dealt graciously with us, we want him to deal graciously with us in the future, then it's only right that our lives would bear the imprint of the grace of God as we deal with others, and that the harsh, critical, hateful spirit which marks the unregenerate man would be foreign to the believer in Christ. "I have received grace and I hope to receive more grace going forward in the future. Do you know what I'll do? I'll let the power of that work in my heart so that it affects the way that I view others and the way that I deal with them."

And we saw that principle of grace emphasized in the immediately preceding verses where we saw the grace of God and how he deals with us. We'll just look at verse 11 for now where Jesus said, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!" Part of the experience of the Christian life as you grow in maturity is to realize that we go to God and we ask him for grace to sanctify us, to change us, to make us more like Christ. We realize that we need the help of the omnipotent Spirit of God to conform us to the image of one who is Christ, and that we want to grow in that and we want to manifest the righteousness that is fitting for one who has been redeemed, but we find that we lack the power to do so. So we go to God and we say, "God, help me to live the kind of life that you call me to now that I belong to you." And what this Scripture is telling us is that, of course God answers prayers like that. Of course God will give what is good to his children. It's not a statement that he will give us every earthly material blessing that we want, it's not a statement that he will heal our every disease, it's not a statement that we will avoid hardship in life if we just ask God to do that for us. That's not the point, the point is that we come as disciples of Christ realizing that we need help to grow in this Christian life that he has called us to and we say, "God, help me manifest this in my heart and in my life." And what Jesus says at that point is, "Of course God will answer. That is a good request. That is noble. That is the will of God for your life, your sanctification, and when you ask God to further the work of sanctification in your life, he will graciously answer even when you have fallen short along the way."

And Jesus says, "Remember coming judgment. Remember the gracious way that God deals with you and, therefore," Matthew 7:12, therefore, verse 12, look at it with me

again in light of that little summary, "therefore in everything treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets. God, I want you to be gracious to me. You've been gracious to me in Christ, I want you to continue being gracious to me. I won't be like that wicked servant that Scripture talks about that Jesus described where a king forgave him of a massive debt and the man went away with his massive debt forgiven, and then he came across someone who owed him a paltry amount of money and grabbed him by the throat and said, 'Pay back what you owe!'" Jesus said that is utterly foreign to the spirit of true salvation. That's not how it works. Beloved, if you have been a recipient of grace, it changes you into a dispenser of grace.

Now, what we're talking about, just to be clear. I think that we've been utterly clear on this point but just to emphasize it one more time: what we are seeing here in Matthew 7:12 is not a plan for you to go about earning God's favor. This is not the way that you earn salvation. It's not the way that you keep salvation. We have made that so clear this morning that that should not be foggy in anybody's mind. We have emphasized that salvation comes by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, based on the testimony of Scripture alone, and that's all for the glory of God alone. So we are not talking about earning God's favor with this lifestyle that Christ is describing here. What Christ is describing in verse 12 is the response that the believer makes to men with his heart having been transformed by the grace that he has received from Christ. This is the natural overflow and implication of what it means to be a believer.

Look at it there in verse 12 again as we start to dive into the text. I want to keep the text fresh in your mind. Jesus says, "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets." Now, what does this mean? What does this verse mean? We've kind of set the context, perhaps having belabored the point. I don't mind that, having belabored the point. It's an important point to make. What's he saying here? Well, many commentators have noted that other religions besides Christianity have their own form of a Golden Rule, but they tend to state it in the negative saying, "Don't do to others what you would not want them to do for you. Don't do that if you don't want it done to you." Negative form of the statement. Now, beloved, what I want you to see is, there are two things I want you to see: one is that that is not what Jesus is saying here; that purely negative statement is only a statement designed to restrain bad behavior. You don't want somebody to do something bad, don't do something bad. Do you realize that that's not at all what Jesus is saying? Jesus' teaching includes that negative command but it goes further.

Think with me. If the Golden Rule were simply, "Don't do to somebody what you wouldn't want them to do to you," think about what you could do. Here's how you could fulfill that: you could get out a piece of sidewalk chalk and just kind of circle around and draw a circle around yourself and stand inside that circle, inside that selfish circle around yourself, and shut the world out. "Just don't mess with me and I won't mess with you. Leave me alone inside my circle," and you could fulfill that truncated false version of the Golden Rule. You could just shut out the world and say, "I'm not doing anything bad to you, therefore I am meeting the standard required."

Well, that might work in other religions, it's not what Christ is talking about at all. Look at the verse with me. Christ requires positive action. Christ requires a positive engagement. In verse 12 he says, "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets." He says there is now something for you to do as a believer, as a disciple of mine, as a citizen of the kingdom of God, and it requires positive action. So you say, you start to understand and process it this way: if you enjoy being loved, if you enjoy being on the receiving end of kindness, then go love and go show kindness. That's the positive duty of it. If you like to receive things, give to others. That's what Jesus is talking about in a very simple way. I want you to see that there is a positive obligation being placed on it.

This is something that I'm going to go on a tangent here, and that's all right. There could be nothing that is more foreign to the true spirit of Christianity than someone who says, "I am a Christian. I believe in God. But I'm going to keep that as a private matter to myself. I'm not going to engage with people. When I worship God, I'm going to go out and sit among the trees and worship God in nature all by myself not to be bothered by men." That's not Christianity at all. Jesus gives a positive command here. In 1 John 4 it says, "Beloved, let us love one another for love is from God and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." And it says in 1 John 3, "Let us not love simply in word but in deed and in truth." You see, there is no room anywhere in Scripture for an approach to Christianity that says, "I am going to be isolated. I will be my own man. I do not want to interact with others. I don't want to be involved with the people of God. I want nothing to do with them. My Christianity is a private matter and I will stand alone and be right with God." Beloved, that's not true. That is a delusion that has nothing to do with true Christianity. You cannot fulfill what Jesus commands in Matthew 7:12 by standing alone isolated and refusing the interaction and fellowship of the saints. It's just not true.

So what we need to see as we go through this verse this morning, we want to see four aspects of the Golden Rule so that you would have a sense of what the implications of a vertical salvation received in Christ from God has for your horizontal relationships going forward in obedience to our Lord and Savior. Four points that I want to show you. First of all, I want you to see its broad application. Its broad application and you see this broad application right from the start. And let me just say one other word by way of preface: this when you understand it, is a staggering verse. The implications of this verse are immense. They are incalculable. They are humbling to realize what Jesus is saying here.

Look at what he says there in verse 12. He says, "In everything." Stop right there. In everything. This word, this phrase here, is so dramatically emphatic that it's hard to express. The underlying Greek in the original language literally means, "In all things whatsoever." Jesus uses three Greek words to say what we have translated in English, what our translators have said, "everything." One word would have worked, the Greek word *panta*, all things. That would have worked. He could have used a two word construction that was also available to him, *hosa ean*, meaning whatever, but what he does here is he combines these three words where one would have done to make a very broad and a very comprehensive general statement about the entire way that you think about human relationships. In all things, in everything whatsoever, in all of your

interactions, in all of your relationships, what follows is the approach that is to be applied.

You know, the emphasis is even greater in the original text because Jesus takes this idea and puts it at the front of the sentence. It's emphatic by its position in the sentence. It's emphatic by the words that he uses, by the multiplicity of it. Here's what I want you to see: this is a statement of very broad application. Let's put it this way: there is nothing, there is no relationship in your existence that is outside the comprehensive umbrella that Jesus has placed over us in what he is saying here. All things whatsoever. You could translate it this way, you could state it this way, understand what Jesus is saying this way as he starts what's called this Golden Rule, you could express it in English this way and say, "In everything, and I mean absolutely everything about human relationships is governed by what I'm about to say." Every relationship in your life is brought under the umbrella of what Jesus says here and that's what "everything" means.

So, beloved, good relationships and bad relationships, family relationships and work relationships, close friends, general acquaintances, in church, in school, in all the circumstances surrounding them, Jesus says, "I want you to understand that I am talking about everything in your life in what I'm about to say." That's the broad application. Everything. And we have to kind of let that kind of punch us in the solar plexus to stop for a moment and realize that this is not some little spiffy, little moral maxim designed to give us a little perspective and then we move on from it. This is comprehensive in every aspect of our lives and it reminds us of something about our Lord Jesus. Jesus Christ comes to us and saves us, Jesus Christ is Lord and when we say Lord, it means that he is sovereign over all. To be in union with Christ is to be under his sovereign authority in absolutely everything and here Christ is working out one of the implications of his Lordship and what we should see is that Christ is not someone to trifle with. Christ is not someone that we speak to on equal terms. He is over us and he speaks to us as one who asserts authority over our souls and over our lives and says, "This is how you must be. I command you as the Lord of the universe. I command you as the Lord of your salvation. This is what it means to be my disciple in this realm." There is not an option to opt out on this. "Lord, I'll take your blood but I don't want this kind of authority in my life. I want to live like I want to live, okay? So Lord, that's the terms on which I will be your disciple." It doesn't work that way. We come to Christ as beggars and we receive his terms in a spirit of absolute surrender, unconditional surrender. "Yes, Lord, save my soul. Whatever you say to me, I'll do." That's the spirit in which we receive him. So as Christ says, "In everything," we step back and say, "There is a lot at stake here. I am in the presence of one who is asserting complete dominion over my life." Only then do we begin to enter into the spirit of what Jesus is saying here. That's the broad application.

Point 2. I want you to see its deep examination. Its deep examination. Jesus here probes our hearts as he sets the standard for us. He is probing our hearts. This is not something that is judged by external matters. He goes to your inner man. He speaks to who you are inside and addresses you at that level. He has asserted dominion over all of your external relationships and now he comes and asserts dominion over your heart.

Look at what he says here in verse 12, he says, "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way," here's the word, a simple little four letter word, "treat them the same way you want them to treat you." You want. He is addressing your desires. He is commanding you to treat other people as you yourself want to be treated. So you can't respond to this verse until you say, "Well, what am I like? What is it that I want? What are my expectations, my priorities that I bring into relationships?" And realize that those heart desires are going to the core of your character. He has gone as broad as he possibly can on the horizontal level as we deal with men, and now he goes as deep as he possibly can saying, "Let's talk about the desires of your heart." He has taken a surgeon's scalpel and with precision opened us in every direction and laid before us what he asserts over our souls.

So we are left with questions, we are saying, "Okay, well, what is it that pleases you? What do you like? What do you dislike?" And what Jesus is saying is that, you know, if you like to be treated with grace, with respect, with kindness, understand that that sets the course for your own conduct toward others and the way that you interact with them. And I want you to know, I want you to think about, beloved, how contrary that is to the spirit of our age and to the spirit of the unsaved man. This is not the spirit of the world of which he speaks. This is something alien to the world that comes from a kingdom outside of this fallen world because the spirit of this world can be expressed colloquially in a casual way. The spirit of this world is, "You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours. You hit me, I'll hit you back." And Jesus says that's not the standard at all. Jesus says if you like to be treated according to your desires, then you treat others according to their desires, even if they do not reciprocate.

Some of you do this more naturally than others. I include myself in the "others" category here, to my shame. You find joy in making other people happy. That's great. Excel still more. Some of you are like me, more self-centered, more processing life in terms of what you want, what I want. This is how you will treat me, and you set those expectations and punish people when they don't meet them. To us, Jesus' words here are a call to repent and to change your ways as an implication of what it means to be a true believer.

Beloved, understand, I'm going to use a homely example here, understand that this idea of saying, of giving people what they want, treating them as you would want to be treated, it's not like the little boy who gives his mother a baseball glove for her Christmas present and says, "Well, that's what I would want. So here you go, mom," with the expectation that he's going to get the glove back in return. That's not the idea. You want to be treated according to your desires. What Jesus is saying here, you process what it is that this other person in front of you, what is it that they respond to? What is it that ministers to them? And you shape your interaction with them according to what would please them and shape them and be a blessing to them.

And the penetrating, deep examination of this in our hearts is this, beloved, it's unbelievable. Well, it's believable but it's hard to comprehend the depth of what Jesus is saying. If you and I are not willing to deal with people on that basis, we want a certain way to be treated, we react against it if we don't, if you want to be treated according to your desires, then you have a responsibility to treat others according to their desires. Your

own heart becomes the standard by which you are judged and here's the thing that I find so staggering in this, to realize this: any other approach to life and relationships makes you a hypocrite. "Here's what I want, but I'm not going to give that to you. You will deal with me as I wish, and I will deal with you as I wish." That's twisted. Perverted. Wrong. Sinful.

So we are left with ourselves exposed here and realizing that what Christ is calling us to is to an elevated noble character, an elevated noble approach in human relationships that is utterly foreign to the world around us and foreign to our own heart desires. That's why the way we started things at the beginning is so important, to realize that somehow there must be grace involved in becoming like this and being like this. There must be grace, there must be power, there must be strength given from outside us that God gives as we ask because this don't come naturally. This is not human, in a sense. This is not native to the sinful selfish heart. But it's right, and it's when you realize that it's right and you're not like that that you are left with a conviction of sin. Beloved, this is not something just superficial, "Oh, I should have given that guy my piece of candy." This is addressing the totality of who we are and how we think about ourselves in the context of grace and in the context of relationships. This is fundamental to everything else. This is the portal, this is the port of entry, this is the turnstile through which we go that determines the entire realm in which we deal with relationships. Everything else is a subset of it.

And I would dare to say, let me give you a little quickie quiz here that you can use to see if you understand it or not, if you understand what's being said or not. If you understand what Christ is saying here, there has to be a measure of conviction in your soul about it. "Oh, oh, I fall short. I'm not like that. That's not how I think. I am one selfish man and the word of Christ has utterly exposed me." That's the deep examination it should provoke, some level of conviction.

Now thirdly, we've seen its broad application, its deep examination, thirdly, I want you to see what we could call its long implementation. Its long implementation. What can I say? I got caught up in multisyllabic rhymes here for this message. Its long implementation. Look at what he says here, he says, "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you." There is the command in it, treat people this way. You could say do also to them. And here's what you need to know about that command to help you see what its importance is. In the original language, this is a present tense imperative, meaning that it is calling for continuous action, for repeated action; that this is to be what you are like over the course of a life. The continual outworking of this command is what you are to see. One writer, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, puts it this way. He says, "We must be careful to do and not to do all the things which we have found to be pleasing or displeasing to ourselves. You do not like unkind things said about you, well, do not say them about others. You do not like difficult people, well, do not let your behavior be such that you become a like that to them." Jesus is calling us at a very profound level and yet, in one sense, it's very simple. It's very plain. It's very direct. What this is telling us is that you cannot follow this command simply with those people who treat you well. Jesus made it plain that even sinners can show love to those who show love back to them. Sinners do that. Surely, you must think in your mind, surely Christ is calling us to

something that goes beyond what the natural man could embrace, and that's precisely the point. This is something supernatural. This is beyond fallen humanity.

Look over at chapter 5, verse 43 where Jesus makes the point that I just said. I got the idea from Jesus, not vice versa. Jesus said in Matthew 5:43, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?" You see, he's pointing you to that eternal reward. Think about the reward that's going to come to you in the future. What reward is it to love someone who loves you back? "Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?" This is a call to character. This is a call to the way that you live life. This is a call to the way that you fundamentally think about your place in the whole matrix and complex of relationships that the Lord has placed you in.

Jesus is calling us to think, to respond at a level that many of you don't go to as you live in kind of a superficial way. What we need to see is that this is deep, it's broad, it's long, in what Christ is calling us to. And for those of us who live in a way where we demand more than we give, spouses, let me just go right there, these are things that play themselves out especially in our most intimate relationships, beloved. What kind of spouse are you? What kind of parent are you? What kind of child are you? Would you like to be treated in a sullen, disobedient, defiant way? Would you like for every word that you say to be pushed back against? To manifest anger in these close relationships? Is that the way that you like to be treated? Is that the way you want the people closest to you to treat you? The answer is obvious, isn't it? Well then, beloved, I say this in love but I've got to say it clear. I've got to get this straight. Then how is it, on what basis do you justify yourself in interacting that way? If that's not what you want to receive, why is it that that is so often what you give? There is a word for it, it's called sin. It's called s-i-n. It's sinful. It's wrong. It's rebellion against God for you to live that way, for you to be that way, especially if you name the name of Christ. If you are someone that claims Christ and you have gone through the waters of baptism and, "I'm a Christian," and you're waving your hand to call attention to that, well, understand that that comes with implications in the deepest, most intimate, human relationships that you have. If God has dealt graciously with you and you want to be dealt with graciously, then it is your spiritual duty to give that freely, generously, regardless of the response that you get in return. This affects parent/child, it affects husband/wife, it reflects and deals with the entire way that children respond to their parents. Some of you young people would never want your parents to treat you like you treat them and yet you go on your own blissful way living as you want. On what basis do you think that that is going to bring the blessing of God in your life? Are you even a Christian? It needs to be asked.

Now, final point, point 4: we'll see its high authorization. Its high authorization. The amazing thing about all of this is that it's all consistent with what was previously revealed in the Old Testament. Look at chapter 7, verse 12, with me again. Jesus says, "In

everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets." This is the law and the prophets. This is what the Old Testament calls us to.

Now, let me state by way of just a preliminary clarification here: Jesus is not reducing all of the Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi in our English Bibles, the order is different in the Hebrew Bible, he is not reducing all 39 books of the Old Testament to this one single verse. That's not what he's saying. The Old Testament commands a lot of things that don't have to do directly with human relationships. It commands the worship of the one true God. It interprets the history of Israel. It promises the coming of Christ, just to name a few. Matthew 7:12 speaks to none of that. What Jesus is saying here when he says this is the law and the prophets, he says Old Testament teaching on human relationships has a unifying thread that is found right here in what he has just said, Matthew 7:12.

To see that, I want to invite you to turn quickly to Exodus 20. The 10 Commandments. I want you to see the thread in what Jesus means by what he says when he says this is the law and the prophets. There is a vertical dimension in the first four of the 10 Commandments, there is a horizontal dimension in the final six. What Jesus says here in Exodus 20:12, as we look at the human dimension of it, look at what he says, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house." All of these individual commands addressing different areas of sin and obedience in life. Beloved, here's the point that Jesus is making, here is something that simplifies our perspective on biblical ethics greatly. Having seen those six of the 10 Commandments ever so quickly, go back now, with your finger still in Exodus 20, go back to Matthew 7:12 and hear what Jesus says. He is the most brilliant teacher, the most brilliant preacher that ever lived and in Matthew 7:12, he says, "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets." Now think about the genius of what he just said and think about what we just saw. "Honor your father and mother. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. You shall not covet your neighbor." Do you realize that the principle which Jesus expounds in Matthew 7:12 would automatically fulfill all of those? If you like to be honored in your relationship, respected and treated well, and you understand what Jesus is saying, you'll extend that to your father and mother. If you don't want to be betrayed in your marital vows, if you don't want to be lied to, if you don't want to have your things stolen, do you realize that if you would just live as Jesus says, obedience to the Golden Rule would fulfill all of those commands. That's what Jesus is saying. There is a unifying thread of love in everything that is expressed in the 10 Commandments and elsewhere in the Old Testament about human relationships. If you want justice, you will deal justly because you'll treat others the way that you want to be treated.

I'll close with this quote from Sinclair Ferguson, and he draws out, I'll preface it by saying this, he draws out something really wonderful. You know, in 1 John, which we

studied years ago together, it says that his commandments are not burdensome. That spirit helps us pick up what Sinclair Ferguson is saying when he says this, and I quote, "For Jesus, the word of God is not an impossible complex of rules and regulations placed on men's shoulders as a heavy burden. Rather, it is the outworking of this principle of love. Grasp this and everything falls into place." He's exactly right. He goes on to say and I close with this, he says, "The Christian life is, indeed, demanding, but in essence, its principle is simple. It is knowing the grace of God working so powerfully in your heart that you are freed from the mastery of sin and self over your life. You can now serve others and bring blessing to them as the Lord has brought blessing to you. This is the kind of clear-sightedness that arises from living in the light of the judgment of God your Father." And I would only dare to add to the esteemed pastor and theologian, that also arises from living in the light of grace.

Judgment is coming. Treat others the way you would want them to treat you. Grace has been given to you, my Christian friend, treat others in everything the way that you would want to be treated as well. That is the principle that guides all of our human relationships as we walk with Christ as his disciple.

Let's pray.

Father, what a wonderful day we have enjoyed together. Thank you for these dear friends who have been with us, who have borne so patiently under lengthy teaching. Thank you for Eliana's baptism, the sweetness of her testimony, the heartfelt way that she delivered it, Father, giving us a window of insight into what true faith looks like, what true faith loves, what true faith wants. Father, we thank you for the remembrance in communion, the body and blood of Christ given over for our salvation. He loved me and gave himself up for me with tangible reminders that real, human, precious blood was spilt that I might be saved. Thank you for that and in response to these windows of grace that you have flung open and the fresh air has blown through our souls, O God, help us gladly to embrace that principle of grace that would now animate our relationships going forward. Bless each one. Forgive us of all of our many many sins against you and give us grace that we might live in light of the things that we have heard. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

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