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Morning Service

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Teaching Elder

How to Address an Offense

We live in a fallen world full of offenses. It is important that the believer has a right understanding of how to address offenses committed against them as well as addressing others they have offended.

Jesus sets a tone for us when He addresses this subject in Matt 18 instructing us to have the humility of a child or an eager pupil of the Word. This type of humility is rooted in subjection to the Word, not the false humility of the pharisees.

Jesus tells us to approach a brother whom has committed a sinful offense instructing him on what he's done. This is not a command to just forgive and forget, nor is it carte blanc to point out every sin you perceive around you. Recall the need to get the beam out of our eye before helping another with the splinter in their's.

We can make a correct application if we do it with humility, Biblical humility, which puts God's law above our preferences. This will allow us to recognize genuine sin when we see it, and administer the remedy of Love and Grace unto which we have been so richly given. We are walking a narrow road, false forgiveness spurns resentment and sin, being hypercritical assumes self righteousness and alienates. Balance is found through diligent study of the Word with a desire for conformity in our hearts.

Notes

Jesus clearly tells us it is our duty is to address sinful offenses when we see them, he did not make it optional. So we don't have the right to excuse the sinful offenses of others, but we also must be careful not to admonish acts against personal peeves lest we be guilty of adding to the Law. If we don't do it we have offended Christ.

So how can we make sure we are correctly perceiving and addressing sin? Consider the following presuppositions.

Humility

- Jesus uses the love of learning a child has to show us how we must pursue the Truth.
- Humility is not a posture it is a disposition, a disposition to be teachable, to be in subjection the word of God. Think of the money changers in the Temple. This was humility as well. Would it be seen as humility today? But wasn't Jesus the most humble man ever?
- Humility is not a profession or a routine. "Don't be like the Pharisees".. It's not to gain human recognition.
- Therefore humility cannot be a formalism.

Biblical Knowledge of Sin

- We must know what sin is from God's perspective. This only can come through being in love with God's Word.
- Any lack of conformity unto the law is sin. Remember there are sins of both omission and commission.
- We are then responsible for what we have rightly learned to be true for our own lives. This can be different from believer to believer, so we must take heed to learn about our brother's walk with the Lord as well.
- This is not to be our preferences or pet peeves. The Word tells us how to know the difference.

Application

Ask yourself the following questions;

- Do I get offended when Christ is offended? Am I seeking to learn what offends Him?
- Do I act when I'm not sure if what I'll do will be a stumbling block, even though it may be 'lawful'? If in doubt, leave it out.
- Think back on your actions, do you see a connection with Jesus? Or the Pharisees?

Scripture References

Matthew 18:1-35 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (2) And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, (3) and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. (4) "Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (5) "And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; (6) but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. (7) "Woe to the world because of *its* stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes! (8) "If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the eternal fire. (9) "If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be cast into the fiery hell. (10) "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven. (11) ["For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.] (12) "What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying? (13) "If it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray. (14) "So it is not *the* will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish. (15) "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. (16) "But if he does not listen *to you*, take one or two more with you, so that **BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.** (17) "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. (18) "Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. (19) "Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. (20) "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst." (21) Then Peter came and said to Him, "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. (23) "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. (24) "When he had begun to settle *them*, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. (25) "But since he did not have *the means* to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. (26) "So the slave fell *to the ground* and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.' (27) "And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. (28) "But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and *began* to choke *him*, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.' (29) "So his fellow slave fell *to the ground* and *began* to plead with him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.' (30) "But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. (31) "So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and

came and reported to their lord all that had happened. (32) "Then summoning him, his lord *said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. (33) 'Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' (34) "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. (35) "My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

James 4:17 Therefore, to one who knows *the* right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

Romans 14:22-23 The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. (23) But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *his eating is* not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

1 John 3:4-12 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. (5) You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. (6) No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. (7) Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; (8) the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. (9) No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. (10) By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. (11) For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; (12) not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.

Westminster Confession of Faith Chapter XVI

Of Good Works

I. Good works are only such as God has commanded in His holy Word,[1] and not such as, without the warrant thereof, are devised by men, out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intention.[2]

II. These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith:[3] and by them believers manifest their thankfulness,[4] strengthen their assurance,[5] edify their brethren,[6] adorn the profession of the Gospel,[7] stop the mouths of the adversaries,[8] and glorify God, [9] whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto,[10] that, having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end, eternal life.[11]

III. Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ.[12] And that they may be enabled thereunto, beside the graces they have already received, there is required an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit, to work in them to will, and to do, of His good pleasure:[13] yet are they not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty unless upon a special motion of the Spirit; but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.[14]

IV. They who, in their obedience, attain to the greatest height which is possibly in this life, are so far from being able to supererogate, and to do more than God requires, as that they fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do.[15]

V. We cannot by our best works merit pardon of sin, or eternal life at the hand of God, by reason of the great disproportion that is between them and the glory to come; and the infinite distance that is between us and God, whom, by them, we can neither profit, nor satisfy for the debt of our former sins,[16] but when we have done all

we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants:[17] and because, as they are good, they proceed from His Spirit,[18] and as they are wrought by us, they are defiled, and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection, that they cannot endure the severity of God's judgment.[19]

VI. Notwithstanding, the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in Him:[20] not as though they were in this life wholly unblamable and unreproveable in God's sight:[21] but that He, looking upon them in His Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.[22]

VII. Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands; and of good use both to themselves and others:[23] yet, because they proceed not from an heart purified by faith:[24] nor are done in a right manner, according to the Word:[25] nor to a right end, the glory of God,[26] they are therefore sinful and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God:[27] and yet, their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing unto God.[28]

Note: Use this link to follow the scriptural proofs.

http://www.reformed.org/documents/wcf_with_proofs/

We are glad you have chosen to listen to this sermon and pray that it gives you strength, the want for obedience, and a desire to have God's abundant Grace mortify sin in your life. If you have any questions or comments please email chuck_ezell@yahoo.com.