

One Another – Forbearing

Text : **Col. 3: 12-17 ; Eph. 4: 1-7**

INTRODUCTION :

A. Being a Christian is a group activity. (*It's not a matter of personal choice.*)

1. God adds all saved people to His church.
 - a. **Acts 2: 47** – And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.
 - b. **I Cor. 12: 18** – But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.
 - c. Thus, if one is not a part of the Lord's church (*His body*) he is not saved.
2. The very word “church” means people who have been separated out from others.
 - a. Christians are those who have been called out of the darkness of sin. ... **I Pet. 2: 9**
 - b. Christians are referred to as “those who are the called.” .. **Jude 1** .. Cf- **Rom 8:28**

B. Saved people are placed into the fellowship of “the called” because they need the reinforcement of the group in order to withstand Satan's pressure.

1. God warns us that we should expect to receive adverse social pressure.
 - a. **II Tim. 3: 12-13** Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. ¹³ But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.
 - b. If we fit right in this society with no opposition we need to evaluate why.
2. In order to stand against the pressures we need the spiritual support of the church.

Giant sequoia trees the tallest trees in the U.S. reaching heights exceeding 300 ft. Being so tall, one would think they had a deep root system, but they don't.

Their root system is relatively shallow, but they grow in groups so their roots are reinforced by intertwining with other nearby trees. Alone they would fall.

This same principle applies to the Christian's ability to stand in this world.

C. This is why the “one another” principle is so strongly emphasized in the scripture.

1. That's why there are approaching sixty (60) “one another” commands in the N.T.
2. That's also why we're studying “one another” commands in this series of lessons.
3. Thus far we have looked at the doctrines of :
 - a. Love one another
 - b. Encouragement and Edification one another
4. ***With this lesson we'll be introduced to the doctrine of mutual forbearance.***

I. First we need to understand what it means to “forbear.”**A. The word translated forbear (*anechomai*) means to :**

1. To tolerate , To endure
2. To put up with (to bear long)
3. To stand against pressure or opposition

B. It is a present, active, indicative verb.

1. This means that it is something that is to be done now and continue into the future.
2. Thus, it is to be the lifestyle of the Christian.

C. The implication is that there will be some things you don’t like that others do.

1. The natural inclination is to react negatively toward those we don’t like.
 - a. We have a tendency to avoid people who irritate us.
 - b. Some people feel compelled to point out the defects of others.

** An English teacher used to count and list the mispronounced words in my sermon.*
2. Christians are called upon to overcome their natural urges :
 - a. We must treat irritating people as close family members.
 - b. We must love who are not easily loved.
 - c. Remember : Love is not an emotional response, *it’s a proactive decision.*
3. Christians vary in many ways. (*background, education, economic status, etc.*)
 - a. We will all walk, talk, and dress differently. (*boisterous or soft spoken*)
 - b. Some have better manners than other.
4. Different people have different standards they live by.
 - a. For Example, some people don’t bath as often as others.
 - b. *Elderly widow came in expensive clothes, an expensive wig and lots of makeup. She had promised her late husband she would keep herself up after he died.*
5. Some people just generally bug you.
 - a. Perhaps they are immature, **or** pompous, **or** constantly complaining.
 - b. *Elder (Roger) had breath so bad one could tell when he walked in the door. He could do nothing to correct it until he had gallbladder surgery.*

D. Thus, a good working definition of forbearance is :

To put up with irritating, immature and ignorant behavior while waiting for a brother to mature.

II. There are certain limits to forbearance.

A. Forbearance requires that one not pressure others to conform to his preferences.

1. There are differences of opinion about most everything. (*Not like rubber stamps*)
 - a. Song selections (*I know a congregation that split over the singing style.*)
 - b. Format of the assembly (*two songs, a pray, a song, the sermon, ... etc.*)
2. The Christians tolerates others' opinions and doesn't press to have his own way.
3. Those who don't forbear opinions others fall into the sin of division. (**I Cor. 12: 25**)
 - a. *One church almost split over the color of the new carpet.*
 - b. *Families left a congregation because elders assigned ushers to wear colored vests.*

B. Forbearance does not apply to sinful practices.

1. God's people are required to speak out against sin. ... **Ezek. 3: 16-21**
2. We are commanded to reprove, rebuke and exhort one another. ... **II Tim. 4: 1-5**
3. Christians are commanded to share their struggles with each other.
James 5: 16 – **Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.**
4. One of the reasons we are grouped together in the church is to monitor each other's spiritual progress and faithfulness. **To help one another grow.**

C. Christians do not have the option to ignore the sins of a brother or sister.

1. To be clear ... this is not judging the heart of another, but observable sin. **Matt 7:1-5**
2. The Corinthian church was condemned for tolerating sin in their midst. **I Cor. 5: 1f**
3. Christians are commanded to go to the brother or sister who is in sin.
Gal. 6: 1-2 **Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore** such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. **2** Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

D. There are areas of doctrine where we can have valid differences of opinion.

1. The Holy Spirit and the Apostles classified some things as essential and other as not.
Acts 15: 28 – **For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials:**
2. There are some things that are absolutely essential, e.g., :
 - a. Faith ... **Heb. 11: 6** , **John 8: 24**
 - b. Acceptance of the gospel ... **I Cor. 15: 1-3**, **Rom. 6: 15-18**, **and others**

III. Forbearance is a condition of heart, not an attitude of grudging tolerance.

A. A forbearing heart is the fruit of love. (*agape : commitment above self*)

1. **Eph. 4: 1-2** Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,
2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience,
showing tolerance for one another in love,
2. Notice the motive for tolerance is love (*tolerance : same words as forbearance*)

B. Tolerance flows through the filter of humility. (*Has to do with one's self-image*)

1. **Eph. 4: 2** *ibid*
2. **Col. 3: 12-13** So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.
3. This is the direct application of **Phil. 2: 3**.
 - a. “with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;”
 - b. Forbearing stems from the value your heart has place upon the object of tolerance.

C. One cannot truly forbear others until he comprehends how much forbearance God has exercised toward Him. *We are saved totally by grace, not by merit.*

1. God has and is putting up with more from us than we will ever tolerate from others.
2. **Rom. 5: 6-11** For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. ¹¹ And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.
3. You could have no relationship with God were it not for His forbearance.

D. We must learn to have the same attitude toward each other that a parent has toward an irritating child.

1. The parent loves and puts up with his child no matter what he does.
2. No matter how irritating a brother or sister may be, they remain our spiritual sibling.

IV. The objective is to be able to live ever closer with fellow believers for a lifetime.

A. Forbearance is a positive exercise of love.

1. **I Cor. 13: 5-7** Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, **5** does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, **6** does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
2. **II Cor. 5: 19** ... Christ doesn't count our sins against us. ... We give what we get.

B. It's normal that we'll sometimes irritate each other.

1. Faithfulness to the N.T. pattern requires that we spend more time together.
 - a. The more time we spend together, the more we can get under each other's skin.
 - b. Some seek to get along by staying aloof from the group.
2. *It's like some husbands stay away from the house so they won't fight with their wife.*

C. Everyone has personal idiosyncrasies that make them who they are. (*good thing*)

1. When all of these are blended together they make the personality of a congregation.
2. The differences they create are much to be desired.
3. *When you make a stew, you don't want all the ingredients to taste the same. Some ingredients are not so appetizing when alone, but are essential to the stew.*

CONCLUSION :

A. The unity of the church depends upon our ability to forbear one another.

1. We all get irritated at others and sometimes they deserve it.
2. Just as often we are the source of irritation to others.

B. The love that define us as Christians is the root of forbearance.

1. **I Cor. 13: 5** ... Love “does not take into account a wrong suffered.”
2. **I Pet. 4: 8** – “... love covers a multitude of sins ...”

C. Have you formed a relationship with God so that He will forbear your sins ?

INVITATION :

Lesson Texts :**Colossians 3: 12-17**

12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;
13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.
14 Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity. **15** Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. **16** Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. **17** Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Ephesians 4: 1-6

1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, **2** with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, **3** being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **4** *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6** one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.