Forgiveness: Ought Against a Brother

Tonight lets deal with the things we hold against others: anger, wrath, resentment, grudges, complaints, quarrels and bitterness; for when we hold anything at all against others, we have a need to forgive: *even when others have done nothing wrong*.

**“FORGIVE, IF YE HAVE OUGHT AGAINST ANY”**  
In our day to day lives, we are surrounded by people that fail to live up to our expectations; because they tend to let us down, we end up getting discouraged and we start to blame them for our problems. Whatever the reason though, when we hold something against them, we are harboring un-forgiveness, and we need to let it go:  
  
“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.” Mark 11:24-26 (aught: anything at all)  
  
So whether we have been treated fairly or unfairly, that is not the question. For this aspect of forgiveness deals with the sin in our hearts, rather than the way we were treated. So it doesn’t really matter what others have done: for anything we hold **against** them is wrong; so rather than justify our anger, resentment, and bitterness, we need to forgive and let it go; for the Lord has forgiven everything he held against us, and he expects us to do the same: 

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” Ephesians 4:32  
  
Because our hearts are easily deceived, we need to examine them carefully. When we do, and we find the various “oughts” we hold against others:  
  
Complaints against others  
Grudges or resentments against others  
Anger or wrath against others  
Bitterness against others  
Malice, clamor, hatred, and evil speaking against others  
Anything at all against others  
   
“Husbands, love your wives, and be not **bitter against them**.” Colossians 3:19

**LETTING GO OF OUR COMPLAINTS AGAINST OTHERS**  
As the children of Israel wandered through the wilderness, they complained against Moses and against God, and they started to blame them for their problems:  
  
“And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God, and against Moses. Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, we have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee: pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.” Numbers 21:4-7  
  
The children of Israel became very discouraged with their circumstances and unhappy with their lives; but rather than take responsibility for their misery, they put the blame on others; for they weren’t just complaining about the food and water, but they were indignant with Moses, and they were blaming him for their problems; for they were supposed to be in a land flowing with milk and honey, but Moses had led them astray. Surely if they complained against him, things would start to get better; but they didn’t, and the revelation finally came; “we have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee.”  
  
As the children of Israel wandered through the wilderness, the Lord was trying them and humbling them to see if they would keep his commandments: just like he does with us! (Deut 8:1-6) Even though they were headed to the promised land, they began to lose all hope; but rather than take responsibility for their own suffering, they convinced themselves that Moses was the cause of their problems; and just like the children of Israel, we can feel the same way; because we think others are responsible for our unhappiness we start to blame them for our problems and we want to fix them. In our marriages, we reach a point where we don’t want to take it any more; because we have a complaint against our spouse we end up loathing everything about them, and we feel the need for change; for if we could only change our circumstances, things would get much better. So we want a better husband or a better wife, for surely that would make us happy; because we are discouraged and without hope, we feel the Lord will understand. And he does, but out of his great love for us he wants us to understand; we don’t need to change our circumstances, or change our spouse, we just need to humble our hearts; for the Lord wants us to have the same revelation the children of Israel had: when we **hold a complaint against others**, we too are walking in sin! And that our misery isn’t really caused by our circumstances, but it comes from all the things we hold against one another and our hardened, unforgiving hearts.   
  
“Since Christ is so much superior, the Holy Spirit warns us to listen to him, to be careful to hear his voice today and not let our hearts become **set against him**, as the people of Israel did. They steeled themselves against his love and **complained against him** in the desert while he was testing them. But God was patient with them forty years, though they tried his patience sorely; he kept right on doing his mighty miracles for them to see. "But," God says, I was very angry with them, for their hearts were always looking somewhere else instead of up to me, and they never found the paths I wanted them to follow.” Hebrews 3:7-13 LB  
  
Just like the children of Israel, we can blame others for our problems and look everywhere but to God; so until we find the path the Lord wants us to follow, we will end up miserable and disillusioned and we can even hold it against God. So if we truly want to find rest to our souls, we need to **open our eyes to the** **ought in our hearts**; then rather than justify our un-forgiveness, we need to let go of all our quarrels and complaints that we hold against one another:  
  
**“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrel (complaint) against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” Colossians 3:13**  
  
We all have a strong desire to be loved, and that often rules our lives; so when others fail to treat us the way we like, we let our love fail and we justify our un-forgiveness. Rather than seeing our need to forgive, we blame them for our problems, and we hold a **complaint against them**:  
  
When they don’t live up to our expectations  
When they let us down  
When they embarrass us  
When they make us jealous  
When they don’t listen or understand  
When they don’t care or appreciate us  
When they use or manipulate us  
When they are rude or disrespectful  
When they mistreat others  
When they try to control or take advantage of us  
When they don’t give us our way  
When they speak unkindly  
When they don’t love us  
When they don’t make us happy  
When they don’t respect us  
When they cause our misery  
When they are not a good friend  
When they are lazy, slothful, or inconsiderate  
  
Even though we don’t want to give up our quarrels and complaints, it is for our OWN BENEFIT that we do; for everything that happened to the Israelites was written for our example; for the same destroyer that destroyed the children of Israel is alive and well today: and when we don’t let go of the things we hold against one another, we give him a way to destroy our lives:  
  
“Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them tempted and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, (complain against) as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” 1 Corinthians 10-11-12  
  
The Lord wants to change our circumstances and make us happy, but first he wants to change our hearts; for he wants us to lead us into all his promises and give us rest; but first, we need to let go of our quarrels and complaints and quit blaming others for our problems!

**LETTING GO OF OUR GRUDGES**  
When John the Baptist told Herod that it wasn’t proper to be married to his brother’s wife, Herodias held a grudge against him, and it eventually cost him his life:   
  
“For Herod himself had sent forth, and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias’ sake, his brother Philips wife; for he had married her. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother’s wife. Therefore Herodias **had a quarrel (an inward grudge) against him**, and would have killed him; but she could not; For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man.” Mark 6:17-20  
  
When John the Baptist corrected Herod for committing adultery, his wife didn’t like the things he said. From that time on, she held a grudge against him and she wanted to kill. Her husband though, being a just man, stood in her way; but when the time was right, and opportunity came along, so did the murder: “And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lord, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee; And when the daughter of the said Herodias was come in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the King said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give thee, unto half of my kingdom.” Mark 6:21-25  
  
When she asked her mother what to request, Herodias knew exactly what she wanted; for her grudge had continued on, and she wanted the head of John the Baptist:  
  
“And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oaths sake, and for the sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.” Mark 6:26 

Like Herodias, many of us resent those that rebuke us or bring correction in our lives; because we don’t like being told what to do, we hold a **grudge against** them in our hearts. Even though we might tell others that everything is just fine, from that time on we set ourselves against them, and live with un-forgiveness in our hearts:  
  
“Thou shall not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke him; thou shall in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord.” Leviticus 19:17-18  
  
Whatever the reason might be, if we’re holding a grudge against those that brought correction, or with those that have rebuked us or challenged us we need to let it go. For when we don’t, we end up paying a price:  
  
**“Grudge not one against another brethren, lest ye be condemned; Behold, the judge standeth before the door.” James 5:9**

**LETTING GO OF OUR WRATH AND ANGER**  
Most of us have seen an explosive anger in action. Without warning, the fuse gets to short, and the fireworks begin; but as quickly as it began, the display of wrath is over, and the anger starts to subside. Damage is often done, so as Christians we need learn to master our temperaments and put away our anger and wrath.  
  
“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that rules his spirit better than he that takes a city.” Proverbs 16:32  
  
On the other hand, there is also an anger that is much more subtle. It tends to be more silent than explosive, and we can quietly hide it away. When we do, our anger becomes un-forgiveness when we hold it against others, and we don't want to let it go.  
  
When the disciples saw a woman break an expensive alabaster box of ointment, and pour it on Jesus head, they were moved with indignation: “For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been give to the poor. And they murmured against her.” Mark 14:5 Because her actions seemed to be wasteful, the disciples were filled with indignation. And like the disciples, we can feel the same way. When others do things we don’t agree with, we can get more and more upset; but when we continue to hold our anger against them, we are walking in un-forgiveness and we have a need to forgive.  
  
**“Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil.” Ephesians 4:26-27**

Because anger is to strong of an emotion to suppress or ignore, we need to learn to “give it place.” For when we don’t, we give Satan place, and we give him the advantage in our lives. So whether our anger is hot and boiling, or passive and deeply hidden, we need to  give it to the Lord; for our place is to walk in forgiveness, and His place is to be wrathful and the one that takes care of any vengeance:

“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay saith the Lord.” (Romans 12:19)   
  
Because we are not capable of handling our wrath in a righteous manner, we need to leave all wrath to God. So rather than justify our anger, and excuse our un-forgiveness, we need to let it go:  
  
**“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let ever man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” James 1:19-20**  
  
Even though there is a righteous anger that is grieved and upset with sin, it is not a righteous anger when we hold it against others or we refuse to let it go; so if we want to handle our anger in a righteous manner, we need to be careful:  
  
  
-not to direct our anger against others  
  
-not to hold onto our anger  
  
-not to judge or devalue others  
  
-not to condemn  
  
-not to speak against others  
  
-not to protest against others  
  
-not to be malicious or do harm  
  
-not to hate or kill with our hearts  
  
-not to be bitter against others  
  
-not to hold a grudge  
  
-not to let our love fail

**AUGHT AGAINST THEE**  
When we are angry or bitter, it is just like a blinding beam. So rather than go to those we hold things against, and try to straighten them out, we just need to forgive and let the matter go; for when we don’t, all of our efforts to “fix them” only make matters worse, and we both end up in the ditch; but when we are the first to forgive, it becomes a different matter; for now the Bible tells us to go to any brother that **is holding something against us**; for we are called to reconcile with those are angry or bitter with us; or with those that have anything at all against us; and when we go to them without anger in our hearts, we might even be of some help.  
  
“Therefore (because your brother is in danger) if thou bring thy gift to the alter, and there rememberest that thy brother has **aught against thee**; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to they brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” Matthew 5:23-24

**THE CORRECT RESPONSE**  
Whether we agree or disagree with the things that have been done to us, that is not the issue. For when we forgive and let the matter go, it doesn’t condone what others have done, it simply frees our hearts. So whether we have hatred against our father and mother for the terrible way they raised us; or we are holding resentment against the pastor of a church for offending; or we are holding a complaint against those we work with for being rude and mean; or we are bitter against God for letting a loved one die; that is not the question; for this is the time we need to examine our own hearts; and when we do, if we find **anything at all against others**, we have a need to forgive; so whether we are holding onto a grudge, or harboring feelings of wrath or anger; or whether we are deeply bitter; whatever the aught might be: malice, hatred, grudges, clamor: anything we hold against others is from un-forgiveness in our hearts and we need to let it go.   
  
“And when ye stand praying, **forgive,** **if ye have aught against any**: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.” Mark 11:24-26

WHEN WE HAVE A NEED TO FORGIVE, WE FIRST NEED TO PUT OFF OUR UN-FORGIVENESS:  
  
Put off being proud; stop focusing on the sins of others  
  
Put off trust in ourselves; thinking we are more righteous  
  
Put off a hardened heart  
  
Put off judging others and thinking less of them  
  
Put off condemning others or showing our strong disapproval  
  
Put off making others pay for their sins  
  
Put off our complaining against others; blaming them for our problems  
  
Put off our setting our hearts against them  
  
Put off being resentful   
  
Put off our grudges  
  
Put off rehearsing the matter over and over  
  
Put off evil speaking  
  
Put off our anger and wrath  
  
Put off our malice and hatred  
  
Put off our protest and clamor  
  
Put off trying to straighten others out or trying to remove their beam  
  
Put off our controlling ways  
  
“But now ye also put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy (speaking against) , filthy communication out of your mouth.” Colossians 3:8

AFTER WE LET GO OF THE THINGS WE HOLD AGAINST OTHERS, WE NEED TO PUT ON THE DEEDS AND ACTIONS OF FORGIVENESS; WALKING IN THE DESIRES OF THE SPIRIT:  
  
  
Put on humility; focusing on our own sinful hearts  
  
Put on trust in God  
  
Put on prayer; fervently praying for those we held things against  
  
Put on goodness; blessing those we have been against  
  
Put on a tenderhearted  
  
Put on kindness  
  
Put on encouraging speech  
  
Put on a heart that is for, rather than against  
  
Put on speech that is for them, rather than against  
  
Put on peace and pursue after it  
  
Put on forbearance  
  
and above all else, put on love.  
  
“**Put on therefore**, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a **quarrel against any**: even as Christ forgave you, do also so ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfect-ness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.” Colossians 3:13-15

**SCRIPTURE GUIDE**

Leviticus 19:17-18  
Numbers 21:4-7  
Mark 3:5  
Mark 6:17-26  
Mark 10-14  
Mark 14:5  
Luke 23:34  
Romans 5:1-21  
1 Corinthians 10:11-12  
Ephesians 4:31-32  
Ephesians 5:20  
Colossians 3:8-19  
2 Timothy 1:13  
Hebrews 3:7-13  
Hebrews 3:17-19  
Hebrews 10:26  
James 5:9  
1 Peter 3:11