

“Necessary Traumas – Forgiveness”

Genesis 50:15-21; Matthew 18:15-22

February 4, 2024

Meta Set up

- Necessary Traumas
 - First, you're the problem unless you're in an authentic and real relationship with Jesus Christ.
 - Second, even after you join and participate in a church, you're still the problem if you're not in a real and authentic relationship with Jesus Christ.
 - Third, if you're not practicing forgiveness, your part of the problem.
 - Today's lesson doesn't deviate very far from the formula.
 - There are these necessary steps in growing up, necessary traumas that help you navigate the world more appropriately.

The Misery of the. Middle

- Cream cheese story
 - Cheesecakes need cream cheese, looking to save money, I went with an alternative – the one priced seductively in the middle
 - Seductively? Here's why – it attracts the value conscious
 - Anyway, the cream cheese priced in the middle was worse
 - More fillers, more gums, less flavor
 - It was Cream Cheese IN NAME ONLY
- IN NAME ONLY
 - We recognize this as a category from political talks, so and so in a Republican or Democrat, IN NAME ONLY
- Here's a real problem in the church
 - CINOs – Christians in name only
 - Draft you into some hyper-evangelistic form of the religion, it is instead to pay attention to some facts
 - The church that changed the world in a particular way was a robust, functioning
- Early church
 - People walked two years with Christians to determine compatibility and fit.
 - You differentiate by their deeds
 - Matthew 7:15ff – “They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit
- IT's not whether they give or attend meetings, the real mark of a Christian is that they forgive!
- Where the RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD
 - FORGIVENESS
 - Are you practicing forgiveness?
 - What does Jesus say about forgiveness
 - Talk about the confirmands class – what does Jesus actually say?
 - **Matthew 6:12, 14-15:** “And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors... For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

- And then, how does Jesus live His life?
 - o Knowing that His friends will betray them throughout the entire story, He still loves them, still shows them mercy even after they abandoned Him
 - At the point of His death, as He's dying. Final words y'all – those are important
 - Luke 23:34 - And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide His garments

- AT the heart of the Church stands the forgiveness Christ extends us all and that wonderful and wondrous power extends now through us into this world, LIGHT SHINING IN THE DARKNESS
 - o I've seen churches blown up by a lack of forgiveness

Three Really Great Decisions

- Marrying Natalie – slam dunk, right? I'm kind of bumbling and disorganized and along comes someone who helps keep me MOSTLY aimed in the right direction
- Coming to Cook's Church – No kidding, I'm as happy in ministry here as anywhere I've ever been
- An act of forgiveness
 - o 20's – young and dumb
 - o In a group, I liked a woman. AH, but she liked another in the group, a guy I also liked as a friend.
 - They got together, I was hurt, I was mad
 - Romance sometimes doesn't work out the way we want.
 - o HE comes to ask for forgiveness. Said yes, but really more for convention's sake than anything else
 - o Read the Bible, made a decision. Forgave
- Now come back to the top two best decisions I ever made?
 - o Guess who was there advising me?
 - My friend.
- I profited/the system profited

Forgiveness

- Now understand why we do it
- First, it benefits us over the long run
- Second, it benefits the group providing strengthened ties, harder bonds so that when things get tough the group doesn't separate!!!!

Tough Times Ahead

- Maybe, just maybe, things aren't going to be so bright?
 - o We've enjoyed a long period of prosperity, maybe it scales back a bit. But, regardless, if things get tough who do you want around you?
 - Resilient, strong, FORGIVING PEOPLE
 - Why, because none of us are ever going to be perfect all the time.
- The Church needs to be the Church
 - o Yes, it needs Bible study and worship and good deeds
 - o But before it can get ANY of that OFF THE GROUND, there has to be forgiveness practiced