

**Frank E. Coleman Jr.**  
**Sermon: Luke 17:1-10 “Forgiveness Verses Faith”**  
**CD601OA – Professor Dr. Scott Ream ATS**

Luke 17:1-10 NIV

- 1- Jesus said to his disciples: “Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come.
- 2 It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble.
- 3 So watch yourselves. “If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them.
- 4 Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them.”
- 5 The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”
- 6 He replied, “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you.
- 7 “Suppose one of you has a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, ‘Come along now and sit down to eat’?
- 8 Won’t he rather say, ‘Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink’?
- 9 Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do?
- 10 So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.’”

Introduction:

Brothers and sisters we can all agree today that each and everyone of us make mistakes, fall short, do wrong and find ourselves selfish at times. In other words, we all are guilty of sin and fall prey to our sinful nature.

But just because this is an undeniable fact, does not mean we are to rest in it and not resist it as much as we possibly can. For though it is our nature to sin or do wrong, it remains unacceptable in the eyesight of God.

For sin hurts, sin harms, sin dismantles, sin destroys; when God wants us to heal, God wants us to help, God wants us to build, God wants us to love and become One!

So in spite of our frailty of sinfulness, we are to be obedient to God’s mandate to love right and live right. He says it clearly in John 13 and 34, A new command I give you: Love one another! As I have Loved you, so you must love one another!

And then in Matthew 6 and 33 he says, “Seek first His kingdom and his righteousness and all things will be given to you as well.”

So in spite of ourselves, we are called to be obedient to God’s instructions and mandates.

Body of Sermon:

In light of this premise, we find Jesus in our text sharing instructions on how one is to relate to another who may cause another person harm.

What is it that you do, when someone wrongs you or sins against you?

And so as we walk with Jesus and the disciples this morning, Christ puts forth the undeniable fact that sin in the midst of us is absolutely going to happen. There is no doubt that sin is going to raise its ugly head in the midst of us. But woe unto the person that is the *cause* of the specific act of sin.

In other words, the committing of sin by an individual is bad enough all by itself. But the sin is gravely worsened when that sin committed causes *others* harm; causing *others* to fall into sin.

For causing others to fall includes luring them, and baiting them into something that they would’ve never been involved in had it not been for the sin revealed, exposed or advertised before them!

In fact, it’s not only worse than the sin act itself, it actually falls into the dreaded category of condemnation.

For Jesus says of the one guilty that its better for you to be thrown into the sea with a millstone hung around your neck than to cause someone to fall to sin. It’s actually better for you to be executed, put to death, drowned, than for you to cause someone else to fall into sin.

And so Jesus relays the importance of speaking *up* against sin. Sin is not to go forth without rebuttal from those of us who know what it is. We are not to remain silent when wrong is wrong, and exposes itself.

And yet how many know that in the disposition of the world today, standing against wrong will get you in trouble.

But the late John Lewis reminds us when standing up against wrong to go ahead and get into good trouble, necessary trouble, and help redeem the soul of America. Of course I would adjust it by saying redeeming the soul of this world!

Jesus says this; if your brother sins, rebuke him. In other words, let your brother or sister *know* they’re wrong. And if they respond with repentance rather than denial; if they respond with

repentance rather than excuses; if they respond with repentance rather than being defensive; Forgive them. Period!

And to convince and confirm that what he was saying was not misunderstood, Jesus further expounds that if this same person sins against you seven times and they come back seven times sincerely repenting; Jesus says, Forgive, Period!

And church, the disciples respond, with “Lord please, increase our faith!” Brothers and sisters, Jesus gives a directive on what to do when an individual sins against you, but upon rebuke repents; and the disciples respond to his directive to Forgive, with please increase our faith!

In other words, Jesus in order for us to do what you’re asking us to do in this situation, you need to give us some more faith; because Jesus we don’t know if we can do what you’re requiring us to do with the faith we presently believe we have!

Forgiving after one repents once is tough enough. But for you to ask us to continue to forgive them no matter how many times they sin against us as long as they sincerely repent? That’s too much to do on our own. We need more faith for that!

And Jesus responds with a word which grabs hold of a level of responsibility we likely have not noted in our lives.

For in essence Jesus reveals that there is no need for *further* faith, if you have faith-filled focus on Him. For with just a *little* faith-filled focus on Jesus; the mere size of a mustard seed; you can say to a mulberry tree be uprooted and planted in the sea, and it would obey you.

So you don’t need further faith. What you need is the willingness to be obedient and the understanding of what God says is your duty!

And so Jesus goes into giving the analogy of a servant master relationship where the servant is told what to do; does what he is told, because he just knows that’s what he is suppose to do.

He doesn’t need anymore thanks. He doesn’t need anymore faith. He just needs to obey, because the master said so.

The servant understands that with what the master has already provided, what the master has already supplied, what the master has already given for the servant to maintain existence, the least the servant can do is be obedient and carry out what is his duty!

So disciples, if you are truly who you believe you are, then forgiveness is not a matter of more faith, it is a matter of your duty and obedience in light of what the master has instructed; the master who has provided for you; the master who has supplied your needs; the master whom has maintained your existence.

Conclusion:

And so what Our Master is telling us today, is with the faith we have already exhibited, do what is our duty, and that is to be obedient to His directives.

You've got enough faith - to follow His directives. You've got enough faith - to follow his instructions. You have enough faith - to forgive your brother or sister even seven times - upon their repentance.

For if you have faith - in the one who came down through 42 generations. If you have faith - in the one who was willing to lay in a manger. If you have faith - in the one who lived 33 years healing the sick and raising the dead and giving life through His teachings. If you have faith in the one who died on the cross for your sins and mine and rose again on the third day with all power in His hands - and now upon our repentance forgives and saves us.

The least we can do - is live in obedience, in duty, in love, and in oneness as God's loving people.

For we've come this far by faith, leaning on the Lord. We're trusting in His holy Word. He's never failed us yet. Lord O Lord, we can't turn around. We've come this far by faith!

