

1 Cor 13:5d

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[0 : 00] I'm seeking the Lord's blessing. Let's turn to the first letter of Paul to the Red Feats on chapter 15. First Penetreans on chapter 15.

We'll read again at verse 4. First Penetreans on chapter 15, verse 4.

Charity, your love, suffereth long and is kind. Charity, and he is not. Charity, not hath not itself, is not of death, hath not behave itself unseemly.

See, it's not at all, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in the liberty, but rejoiceth in the truth.

Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeeth all things, and vieweth all things. And especially today, we'll look at the last part of verse 5, where we'll read that charity is not easily provoked, and thinketh no evil.

[1 : 31] Here it is. Charity is not easily provoked, and thinketh no evil. Now, we'll be looking at the qualities of Christian love as they brought before us, and these verses, verses 4, through to 7.

And it's worth, I think, just emphasizing this point, don't we? Reliable, perhaps, to God, yet here, when the Apostle speaks of love here, he is talking of love between the brethren.

He's not talking of her love towards God, but rather of her love towards her fellow men. And that's important, because when he says that without love, I am nothing, what he's talking about there is love between the brethren.

And of course, without love towards God, we are nothing. That goes without saying. But what the Apostle is saying is deeper enough, and it's more challenging enough. What he says is, unless this Christian love exists between brethren, then truly we are nothing.

And that's what John says too, in 1 John chapter 4, verse 20. If a man says, I love God, and he is his brother, he is a liar. But he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

[3 : 07] So that's the same truth that the Apostle is bringing before us here. And that reminds us of the importance of it. Now there are two qualities that we have brought to God in the last part of the first time.

And I want to look at the first one very briefly, and at the second one in a little more detail. We're told that love is not easily provoked, and that it thinketh no evil.

Now, first of all, love is not easily provoked. Now, the word provoke comes from the deep word from which you get paroxysm.

Now, I know that's not a very common word, but a paroxysm is when someone is seized in a fit of temper, or a fit of rage. And the Christian has the love that is not easily provoked.

He doesn't easily become seized in a fit of rage, or a fit of temper. In other words, it means that he is to be touched, or to quickly take offense.

[4 : 19] And that reminds us that the word of God often tells us to watch our temper, to pray constantly to God with respect to our temper, that our temper should be controlled.

Now, that doesn't mean that the Christian should never be angry. In fact, Paul says in the letter to the Ephesians that there are times indeed to be angry. He says, but sin not, and let not the sun go down when you arise.

Don't be consumed with anger in such a way that you lose yourself, and that you lose control of yourself. And you make sure that, if in any way you have erred, don't let the sun go down when you arise.

Make every respect, every chance that day, before the whole thing goes out of control when you arise. So be angry, and sin not, and never let the sun go down when you arise.

Now, this word, paroxysm, actively occurs in that dispute between Paul and Barnabas. Because we're told that a sharp contention are roles between them.

[5 : 24] And that's the same word here, paroxysm. It means to be seized in anger. Now, one thing that actually reminds us is this. Really, we have to be careful here.

And I just have the Holy Spirit will guide yourself and myself in looking at these things. Because this is not perfectionist. And in all things, we all control.

This doesn't mean that a person who loses his temper doesn't have love and is therefore not a Christian. That's not what it means at all. It means that these qualities are planted in the heart of every Christian man and woman.

And that they should be constantly striving, as it were, to bring these things under control. But if these things show themselves in any way more sensible person, the evidence is that perhaps that person has not come to a knowledge of God at all.

That's what the Apostles say. All these qualities should be there in some measure in the person who must come to a knowledge of God. But the very contention between Paul and Barnabas reminds us that these things can appeal in the Christian.

[6 : 31] Of course they can. And you remember how small the reason for that contention was. But it appears small. One person wanted to take John Mack, who was a missionary in Deborah.

And the other one didn't want to take him. Barnabas wanted to take him. And Paul didn't want to take him because he had turned back before. And the contention between them became so shaman that they parted one from another.

And that was a very sad thing. It was a sad thing that it should have happened. And I'm sure those men often regret that it had happened in the way that it had happened. Because at the end of the day it doesn't matter who was lying.

In the sense that they were both caught out in a sharp paroxysm of anger. And there's really no need ever for anger to seize you in such a way that you lose your place like that.

Because very often, grave damage can be done with the tongue when a person is caught out like that. You know yourself that if a fit of anger increases you, something is liable to come out.

[7 : 35] But you really can't come out. And when it comes out, it's like water poured on the ground. There's no real way of getting it back in. A word is like that.

It's just not just being undone. And that's why Jane says that the tongue is a little member. It's just a little part of the body. But it defiles the whole body.

And it sets on fire the course of nature. It says that the tongue is a fire, a world of inequality. It's a little member and it boasts great things.

We all, he says, how great a matter, a little fire, a kinder. And that reminds us of the importance of the tongue. And the importance of the temper.

The temper moves your tongue. And your tongue causes all kinds of damage between people.

Maybe besides yourself or the other person, it may bring in others. And before you know there's a fire, as Jane says, it's much easier to start a fire than to put one out.

[8 : 37] Now, the Bible tells us often to control those tempers. Now, you may say, well, what about a person who's maybe more inclined towards that temperamentally?

Let's say someone who tends to be often instead of gentle. Well, really, it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter to say the commandment applies. Now, I suppose you and I would be perhaps a little more tolerant of someone that you knew to see to quickly build up a head of air or whatever.

But nonetheless, nonetheless, God's command applies to that. And if you feed yourself more prone to the sin, make more effort with respect to the sin.

Pray to God with respect to the sin. Remember that other people are reminding you of Christian love, perhaps, by the way that you speak and by the way that you control your temper.

And therefore, it's an important part of your own life and goodness not to be seized with a paroxysm of anger in which the tongue lets go of something that it ought not to have.

[9 : 48] Therefore, love, Christian love, is not easily provoked. Learn, profess, and other things. And, as they say, depend.

But I want to look more particularly at thinker, no evil. We're told in verse 5 that he'll have to thinker, no evil. Now, I suppose it doesn't help when the preacher says that something can be taken in two ways.

But really, this can be taken in two ways. But I would strongly urge the second way. And then I just want to give you the first way. Love thinks no evil. And I suppose that's the way, this is the way that you're inclined maybe most quickly to take it.

That love thinks the best of people. Perhaps you can put it this way. But let's say a person does something. And you can think of maybe two reasons why that person did it.

One is that the bad reason and the other is perhaps not so bad, considerably better. Well, love assumes the better. Love doesn't attribute our own motive to somebody unless it can't possibly happen.

[11:05] This doesn't ask us to be stupid. Of course, we know sometimes that there is a bad motive and it's quite clear in our style. But what love says is, is it possible to think of something or someone in a better light, in connection with something that you don't, then think it, think that.

Don't think evil where evil might not be. And don't go around assuming it unless you're absolutely certain that it is there. Now, I think we would all want to be dealt with like that.

And we should all be evil with one another like that, not to assume evil. And of course, you can do great harm to your own soul by thinking evil of other people, not evil.

But sometimes you can even become so caught up in this way of thinking that even when a person does good, you actually begin to think that there was an ulterior motive for doing good.

You assume almost that there was a bad piece of evil for doing good. Now, of course, that makes a person very cynical. And I would call cynicism the cancer of the soul.

[12:14] It's a cancer of the soul, cynicism. And you regard yourself against it. Don't think evil unless you have to think evil. But there's another way of looking at these words, too.

And it means don't arrepnd your evil or don't impute the evil. But maybe to make that more clear, I want to remind you again of a word that you've been looking at fairly recently.

Reckoning. Or county. It's an county word. We've come across it in terms of sin. God reckoning your sins. It's an county gap.

Is it in your debit column? Is it in your credit column? Don't arrepnd the evil. It means real evil. Don't write down the evil in your book.

And it refers to an evil that's done to you. Or something that's done to you. Something wrong. But this verse is saying, Jesus, don't impute it. Don't put it into the book.

[13:22] Don't keep a record of it. In other words, forgive it. Forgive the evil. Don't reckon it. Don't reckon it. Forgive it. And as we were thinking last Sunday, I blot it out of the book.

Instead of writing it, putting it in your memory, you'd rather blot it out and do away with it. In other words, it brings before us the duty of forgiveness.

Yes. Now, there's no doubt that this was a problem in Corinth, too. We're told in chapter 1 that there were contentions among the people.

He says, I beseech you that you speak the same things, that there be no divisions among you, but that you be joined together. Because, he says, it's been told to me by the household of holy that there are contentions among you.

Now, that's paroxysms in a way. It's not exactly the same word. But it's anger and divisions. Because one says, I am of all. Another says, I am of all.

[14:29] Another says, I am of seethas. And another says, I am of Christ. And in chapter 6, that was the beginning of session this way. But whenever the brethren had a dispute, instead of trying to sort it out between each other, what they did was, they arrayed themselves along party lines.

And they wouldn't even come before the church courts. What they were doing was according to each other constantly to law. In other words, let's say that someone in Peter's camp had offended him, and someone in Paul's camp.

Now, if I would have to go into these camps in the rows, there are many ways in which people do. But if one in Peter's had offended somebody in Paul's camp, well, there was a meeting. He has turned them. Instead of coming together to sort it out, what happened was, they were in two different camps to begin.

And they wouldn't even go before the rulers of the church, in case the rulers of the church would be on someone else's camp. And so what they would do is, they would bypass these courts of the church all together, and they would run to law with one another.

And Paul is reminding them in chapter 6, right? Brethren all to sort out their own differences with one another. And then if they can't, then they're before the church courts to be solving these

differences.

[15 : 47] Whenever there's any spiritual disagreement, it is before the church court that these matters are to be sorted out. But these contentions were tearing the church in college apart.

Paul reminds them that love isn't easily provoked for one thing, and it doesn't record, it doesn't keep a record of wrongs for another. Now, I want to say something about this duty to forgive.

Trust me, I know. It is extremely important. I'm sure you all pray the Lord's Prayer. And the Lord's Prayer has this petition.

Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Or as we have it in Matthew. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Now, if you're wondering why you have the two different thoughts, debt. Forgive us our debts and forgive us our trespasses. The reason for that is quite simple.

[16 : 57] In the idea which the Lord spoke most of the time, it's the same word that you have for debt and for trespass. It's the same Aramaic word.

Because a sin and a debt in many ways are the same thing. I'm not going to elaborate on that. There's a connection between the two and the sin and the debt. The important thing to notice is this. Notice the petition. Notice it clearly. Forgive us our trespasses even as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Or forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. You notice that there, what we are doing is calling out of God to give us his own forgiveness.

And we're using this as one of the basis of our pledge or our traditions. That we ourselves forgive those who are sinning against us.

[17 : 59] Now, the implication there, obviously, is this. That if we are not forgiving those who sin against us, neither will God forgive our sins.

Now, if you think that's a good stat. You notice again, the law is clear. When Christ gives it in Matthew chapter 6, it's interesting that this is the one petition that he picks up on.

He tells the Lord to pray. After this manner, he says, pray. And he gives up the whole Lord's prayer. Though God, the church in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

And when he's finished, he says, Thine is the King and the power and the glory forever. Amen. And then, he picks up on one petition and one alone. And it's this one. For, he says, it's as though as the petition that is third time.

For, if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly father will also forgive you. But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses.

[19 : 12] Now, if you look, the first text was blunt or stark. The number was even more stark. It couldn't be more profound and it couldn't be more plain.

Unless you have a forgiving spirit to men, you can never expect that God will have a forgiving spirit to you. So, that's emphasized in this parable that we read together in Matthew chapter 18.

And I think the rest will say, and if you just turn back to that passage, Matthew chapter 18. And the parable of the un-nourished will say that.

Matthew chapter 18. Now, that came because of the argument that kept appealing amongst them as to which was the greatest, or who would have the greatest position.

And I remember saying some kind of rule that there were different reasons for that. It was possibly due to the fact that more privileges were given to James, Peter and John. They seem very often to be taken apart for certain things.

[20 : 35] And of course, Christ had also said to Peter that he would be given the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And so on, he was called that off. And disputes arose as to who would be the greatest.

And the Lord encourages them and reminds them that not only do they have to go with humility, but unless they are humble, they cannot even enter the kingdom of God at all.

And he reminds them that they are not to offend each other. They must be careful not to cause each other to stumble. And he also says in verse 10 of Matthew 18, Take it and don't despise any of my little ones.

And it's easy for a despised spirit to come into the heart too. And then he urges them to be careful, especially when their brothers sin against them.

Because that's a position in which it means that you begin to despise a person and they sin against you. Or you could maybe try and cause them to stumble. If for some reason they are done wrong to

you, then maybe then you can cause them to stumble or offend them or whatever.

[21 : 41] And Christ says, be particularly careful, man. And he begins to describe what you should do if your brothers should test us against you. And he says, make sure that you don't tell the spot between yourself and yourself alone.

And this refers to a serious thought. I mean, there are lots of thoughts that you should not enter before the courts of a church. And really it's a sign of disarray if you're going to other people to complain about other people.

Nine times I have 10. If not 99 times I have 100. Would you long suffer any wrong that is done to us? But sometimes there is something that is so wrong done to you.

Something that is so wrong. And something that has glaring consequences that you must take it further. Well, the Lord says, this is a subject to be further. Then first of all, he says, tell them this thought clearly between yourself and yourself alone.

Privately. Now, if there's no real love there, it won't be private. Because what you will do is you'll first of all come and tell them. Sell them to other people to make sure they're everybody else knows what this person has done.

[22 : 58] That's not Christianity. Christianity goes direct to the person. And the person then, he says, if he listens to you, you have gained the brother.

In other words, it assumes all this that you love. You're trying to gain and to win. But he says, if he doesn't listen to that, take with them one or two more, so that every word may be established.

And if he doesn't even listen to that, well, he says, take it formally to the church. Of course, that doesn't mean that you'll write a letter to everyone that you know is associated in the church.

What it means is that you take it to your elder. You take it before the courts of the church. Where everything is meant of this kind to be kept by the elder. You take it before the courts of the church. And if that person doesn't listen to the courts of the church, then they are to be a heathen man and a publicer. Now, that was a technical Jewish expression, which meant that somebody was to be under the privileges of the church.

[24 : 07] In other words, he wasn't to receive communion. He was to be kept by the elder. But even that didn't mean that the obligation of the love ceased.

It didn't mean that. Paul tells us very clearly in 2 Corinthians that you should keep time yourself to bring such a person's brother to a better state of mind.

And even if he doesn't repent, you should always keep the spirit in your own heart of being willing to forgive such a person. In other words, you never reach a point where you are in your own heart with respect to that person.

That's what you do to say, go to sin. You must always have the heart that will say, yes, I'm not person's purpose. The Lord will be in us.

I will be one with him. And it will be a store that sits near the walls, a store that never been done. In other words, even if he's not brought back to you, you must always be willing to come back to him.

[25 : 09] And let the more you have let us warn yourself to you. It's sometimes easy to think you have that spirit when you don't. The Lord says you must forgive from the heart. Not in that free tense, but from the heart.

Now Peter's listening to this. And Peter thinks that this is a poor order. And Peter, as he usually does, comes up to him when I'm saying it's not so nice.

Lord, he says, for how often shall I ever sin and I forgive? Seven times? Now Peter knows the Jews are old. The Jews had a brother.

I don't mean a little bit of a rule, but the Jews had a brother. First time forgive, second time forgive, third time forgive, fourth time punish. That was the Jewish brother, three times.

And when Peter was listening to Christ's words, he thought, well, this is obviously the wrong word. Maybe seven times is what's expected. And I don't think he puts seven out of a year as a random number.

[26 : 10] I think he has an idea that seven is associated with forgiveness in the Bible. And it is. The number seven has an association in the Bible with forgiveness.

And as it plugs it up as a suitable number, it's going as to wear twice as far as the Jews would. The Lord says, no, not seven times, but 70 times seven.

Now you don't need to tell you that the Lord doesn't mean 490. As such as to say, on the 491st time, you can then punish. Because he doesn't mean that.

But the Lord means this forever. In other words, 70 times seven, what is that? The 10 times seven times seven. Now the numbers 10 and 7 in the Bible both speak of fullness, completion, perfection. 10 and 7. And the Lord says, it's 10 times seven times seven. Go on. Go on and forgive. As many times as you, brother, sins against you.

[27 : 15] Go on, forgive. Now that may have said that even more staggered to Peter. And therefore the Lord tells Peter why. And he tells the truth in this very powerful parable.

And the parable really is designed to say this. It's very simple. Deal with people like this because God needs me to do like this. That's what the parable says.

But that's so often the point that we forget. We forget that point. And the spirit of God, when it brings you back to that point, it changes the whole perspective on everything.

Deal with people like that because God needs me to do like that. Now the parables, in a way, it's very simple too. Here's our king.

And he's going to a record with all the servants. In other words, he's going to bring them all to our country. He's going to exile. He's going to hear us in the kingdom. And he calls his servants in before.

[28 : 18] Now you shouldn't think that these servants are just meaningless or household servants. These servants are governors of the regents of the king's kingdom.

In other words, this king is an emperor. He represents God. He has a last empire. And these servants have powerful positions. They're ruling over provinces.

And the king is bringing them in because he suspects that there's some mismanagement. And one of these servants is brought in before. And it's discovered that he goes between 10,000 countries. Now, that is a large sum of money. And that illustrates the point that this man is a governor himself. 10,000 countries runs into several millions of thousands.

I don't know exactly how many. I just don't know. Let's say 10,000,000 pounds, approximately. That's the worst this man is a judge.

[29 : 24] In other words, he's had an acquisition of trust himself. He's been rather than go out of his own province. But instead of making sure that it goes out to the king in the way that it should, he's been siphoning it off himself.

And he's built up a hoard from the revenues of his brothers. And so the king deals with them in this way.

He just says that payeth never. And the man, of course, is an experiment. He says, I can't. But give me time to have pay. And the Lord said, no, of course, sell immediately.

And his wife and children and all he has, so that payeth never will be made. In other words, gather up every kind of asset that he's got, including himself and his own family, so that he will pay.

And then he falls down and says, have mercy, have mercy, and I will pay everything. And then the king was moved with compassion, and he loosed him and forgave the debt.

[30 : 26] Then a very good picture. The last hard little bit of the king's presence when he sees somebody who almost owes him a hundred tenths. Now, consider the fact that this man has siphoned off 10 million pounds of the king's fortune.

He would think it's strange that he would take to do with someone more than three hundred pence. That was our pittance. But he grants him by the thought. And demands instant preparation.

And the man did what he had done before. He fell in front of him and said just to be patient and that he would pay everything. But he wouldn't be patient. And he arranged for them immediately to be cast into prison until he should pay the debt.

And the people were so aghast that they went back into the king and told him what he had done.

And the king, in this wrath, took him back into his presence and said, I have compassion on you.

But why, he says, did you not have compassion on him? And so he delivered him to the tormentors. Now, who are the tormentors? Well, this tells us that the Lord is in trouble with a Jewish court.

[31 : 31] He's talking about the Anitra court. The tormentors, and it sounds terrible to us. People who think that the Lord was always worse should consider some of the practices that were going around then.

The tormentors were people that if he couldn't pay a debt, he went into prison and they had license to talk to you. Until you either told where hidden or sales of money where you were at telling her.

Or even if your friends or relatives could stunt the WPR. And the torture would go on until something like that happened. Deliver it to the tormentors.

And they would pay all that was due to them. The Lord says, so shall my deadly father do to you. If you don't forgive from your heart, you'll burn his sins.

Now, what does this teach us? Well, first of all, it teaches this. That God very often reckons with every single one of us. This isn't the final reckoning that we have here.

[32 : 34] It's the team taking various servants before to give up care of how they're living their lives. God is up with you too. There are various points at your life in which God brings you to an account.

It's when God is examining you and searching you. Maybe it's when somebody you know is converted. Maybe it's when you become sick. Maybe it's when a family life goes drastically long. Maybe you've disturbed your chair and an ill. God awakens with you. Suddenly, suddenly, you have to give an account to God as a prayer of your life.

God has broken into your life. Yes, you're not dead, but it's a time of accounting. A time of reckoning. It's not that the judgment seat above, but it's a kind of judgment seat below. It's the failure of your conscience.

It's when your soul is being searched and examined by God. And suddenly, you see that you're in debt. And you're not in a small debt. You're in massive debt. And your first response is to say, yes, well, I'll pay everything.

[33 : 39] In other words, I'll put it all right. I'll amend my life. I'll afford. I'll say, sorry. I'll do this. I'll do the next thing. I'll do that. You'll pay everything.

But the Lord says, he's moved with compassion. He loses that and forgives in the debt. This is as though you're hearing the Christian message, which is free forgiveness in the Lord Jesus Christ. And you take that message towards yourself. You claim that free forgiveness towards yourself. And you say, yes, this is what forgives my debt.

This is what puts me right before God. Yes, I'll take it. I'll take your pardon. I'll take your forgiveness. In the Lord Jesus Christ, I am no longer in debt.

I'm free from guilt. And I'm free from my sins. But you haven't really taken it. You haven't really taken it. You haven't taken it as something that really affects your life and that determines the direction you go.

[34 : 50] You've just taken it as some kind of grant from the king that gives you a license to go on the way you were before. That's the spirit in which you've taken it. And the thing that shows the spirit in which you've taken it is the way you conduct yourself the minute you leave the king's presence.

You sometimes hear of people who accepted Jesus as Savior but not as Lord. And I'm staggered by how often I still hear that phrase. And it's rife in American circles.

I received Jesus as Savior when I was 15. But it wasn't until I was 39 that I received him as Lord. Now, I don't know about yourself, but that turns my whole theology upside down.

I can't understand the Bible anymore if that can be so. You can never, ever receive Jesus as Savior without receiving him as Lord. It's just two parts of the one package.

To actually receive pardon means that you are subjecting yourself to his rule and guidance for the rest of your life. You can't divorce the two. But that's what this man has done. That's what this man has done.

[35 : 53] He's taken the charter of forgiveness and he's used it to give his own conscience peace and quiet. But on he goes living his life the way he was living it before. Living his life the way he was living it before.

It's only the final reckoning that will determine that kind of man. It will determine him finally because the judgment that they have at the end is the last judgment.

When the Lord was wroth and delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due to him. Christ tells us that there are people who will appear before him in heaven and they will say, Lord, Lord, did we not do such and such things?

And they expect to be in heaven. But Christ says, depart from me, you workers of iniquity. He doesn't say, depart from me, you who didn't believe on me in any way at all.

Because they did have some kind of claim to be Christians. But he calls them workers of iniquity because their Christianity never permeated their lives.

[37 : 00] It never permeated their dealings with others. In fact, if anything, it left them harder. You know, this man was actually harder when he came out from the king's presence than he was before.

Many of the time he possibly walked past this person who owed him 300 pence and thought nothing of it. But now that he's got this charter, he sees free to grab this man by the throat. It's interesting that there's no one as demanding of others as a Pharisee.

You'll find that a Pharisee is far more demanding of other people than an ordinary worldly person. The Pharisee, the man who thinks that he's all forgiven himself, but doesn't actually see himself under an obligation to others.

He's the man who's most exacting. He becomes a tormentor himself. He binds burdens on people's backs, but he's never really concerned to put them on his own.

And God reckons with every single one of us. And we have to make sure how we're going to make that up. The second thing is this, that our attitude to others, and this is basically what I'm saying, reveals where we stand ourselves.

[38 : 11] And that again, it's so prone for you and for me just to look at someone else and say, well, what's his attitude? Well, that's where the other part of it comes in.

Think no evil. Don't be ready always to assume why this other person is doing that. Forget others, basically. Just forget the motive of other people in that way.

Think of your own. Paul is addressing these Corinthians individually. Think of your own. Sit down and say, how am I dealing with other people? If we show a legal spirit to others, it will be shown to us too by God.

In what measure we meet, it will be meted out to us. If we show a forgiving spirit to others, God will show that forgiving spirit to us as well.

And so your very attitude to others should tell you something about where you stand spiritually today. And the other thing is this, how small the debts other people owe to us are compared with what we owe to God.

[39 : 26] If I was going to take the ratio for you here between 300 pence and 10,000 talents, the ratio is approximately 1.5 million to 1.

That's the ratio. This man's rejoicing like 1.5 million has just been written off and yet he's exacting the 1 and putting the man to the tormentor to get that 1 out of him.

Have you ever thought that that's what the ratio is? I don't mean exactly, of course, but that gives the picture of the ratio in terms of what people do to you and what you have done to God.

All right, someone maybe didn't pay you something in time. So your employer didn't do as good a job on something as he ought to have done.

So your neighbor spoke a little out of turn to you, said something about you that wasn't altogether true. Maybe your wife or your husband said or did something that you think should give you a paroxysm, unjustifiably so.

[40 : 37] What are all these things? What even is a rumor about you? What is that compared to what you do to God?

What is it? What is it compared to the part that you play in the crucifixion of his son, Jesus Christ? Every sin you do actually reflects on God.

The sins that other people do on you, well, maybe there's one or two or whatever, but not everything they do reflects on you. But absolutely every sin of yours in thought, word and deed is against the glory and the goodness and the mercy of God.

And God's goodness and mercy far transcends your goodness and mercy to your neighbor. You or I may think that we're extraordinarily kind to others, but there's a limit on it. But what does God do even for his greatest enemies?

Does he not pour down rain upon them? Does he not give them sunshine? Does he not give them crops? Does he not clothe them? Even though they blaspheme a hundred times in the day and so on.

[41 : 42] What has God done to you? How much forgiveness has God shown you today? How much yesterday? How often have you done the same thing against God, although you said you wouldn't do it again?

Is there a sin that you've done a hundred times? Is there a sin you've done against God since you were converted a thousand times? Two thousand times? Has he forgiven you?

Yes. And yet you'll put someone else to the tormentor for something that you think is so vast and so enormous. You'll take him by the throat.

You'll notice how a parable very often conveys something that a naked word can't. There's something so vivid in this man. He's just come out of the king's presence. He's just out of it. And I think that's an important part of the parable.

It's as though a person like this can actually pray one minute and the next minute he's extorting something like this. Grabbing him by the throat as though he was forgiven nothing himself.

[42 : 43] How can it be? How can it be? How can it be that a person could do that? And yet we hold people sometimes to account so strictly.

When the disciples heard this they said increase your faith. It's in the gospel according to Luke that we have that.

If a man trespass against you you shall forgive him. And the apostle said Lord increase our faith. Now I suppose we need that too.

Every one of us needs it. An increase of faith to be willing to forgive. If you don't it's resentment that takes its place and bitterness.

Resentment and bitterness. And that does so much harm to yourself and to others as well. Her attitude should be what Paul said.

[43 : 42] Forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. So likewise shall my heavenly father do to you if you from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses.

Someone may have done you a personal wrong. And that person hasn't changed. He hasn't changed his attitude at all. You keep your forgiving spirit.

I suppose your forgiveness in a way would be water off a duck's back. But you forgive you keep your forgiving spirit. Guard it carefully in your heart.

So that when that person does indeed come to a place maybe it's years afterwards that he says I'm sorry for that. That you can immediately extend your hand and say it's blotted out.

And like God's forgiveness it's a blot. It's finished. It's forgotten. It's not of course I forgive but I won't forget. It's as though it hadn't been done.

[44 : 51] Let's try and keep and maintain that spirit. And even as groups let's keep that spirit. Always to be ready to forgive.

I know that until something is not repented of you can't just pretend that it's all right. Even the Lord said that. Let him be unto you as someone who's outside. But still be ready to stretch the hand when repentance is there.

May the Lord bless our thoughts on his word. Let us pray. O gracious God. We acknowledge that in many of these things we fail.

And that we find many of these things often difficult. grant us grace to pray and to learn from the example of the Lord. For without spiritual strength these things are impossible.

And only those who truly depend upon thyself can maintain and keep that spirit. And ever keep us mindful of the debt that was wiped out by thyself.

[45 : 56] And ever let us lay hold of it. That we may be better able to deal with others who are in debt to ourselves. For Christ's sake. Amen.