

Mercy and Forgiveness

The Cure to Condemnation

“for if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.” **1 John 3:20–22**

One of the greatest enemies to our hearts being confident in love is condemnation. When our hearts lie under the sway/influence of condemnation we will never see the power of the gospel, the freedom that Christ offers, the intimacy bought for us on the cross or the confidence that God love and enjoys us.

What is condemnation?

- A. Condemnation carries the meaning of finding fault, holding a note [record] against, blame, condemn. Its root words means essentially that things that we have done and personally experienced in our past, we now hold against ourselves and it keeps us from walking in freedom and forgiveness.
- B. Condemnation is a result of accusations that are unchallenged by truth. The enemy accuses us of our weaknesses and sin, and without a revelation of the mercy of God and His forgiveness, we will allow these accusations to define us and live condemned.
- C. When we live in agreement with the accusations of the enemy, we live condemned. When we live in agreement with the truth of His mercy and forgiveness, we walk in confidence and freedom.
- D. When we lack faith in the mercy and forgiveness of God we believe our sin is not really forgiven, that we are not truly clean before the Lord and the result is fear, shame, condemnation, guilt, hopelessness etc.
- E. Living under condemnation is living connected to the old life that Jesus paid with His blood to save and redeem you from.
- F. **The forgiveness of God is one of the most foundational aspects of our faith but one of the most overlooked aspects. Many believers come into their faith knowing that Jesus forgives, but never being touched by the reality, the finality, the totality of His forgiveness. Everyone has heard about forgiveness, but few have been radically transformed by its power.**
- G. Therefore to truly lay a foundation of living confident in love before God, we must deal with condemnation and its cure: mercy

The main issue with condemnation in our hearts is many have not embraced the gospel fully. We have introduced many aspects based upon the world's system into the gospel that neutralize the power of undeserved mercy and total forgiveness. Many come into the faith and never depart from a works mindset or a performance based system of worth and acceptance. Therefore they hear the words like "forgiveness", "grace" and "mercy" yet they never abandon their own strength and receive like a child.

The Father of mercy and compassion

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **the Father of mercies** [and compassion] and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. **2 Corinthians 1:3-4**

- A. We must first establish and understand that God is a God of mercy. This was the first attribute He displayed to Moses [Ex 34] and the one we need most in relating to God. Mercy is not just something God has or gives, but it is who He is. God is mercy and out of a heart of mercy and compassion for us gives us what we do not deserve.
 - a. **Mercy:** to stoop down in kindness to an inferior, to have pity or compassion upon. It is the verb form of compassion [meaning compassion in action, not just sentimental thought]
- B. Secondly, we must understand that God is not only merciful, but delights in giving us mercy and desires to show us mercy. Many have accused God of grudgingly giving mercy, or being disappointed in our lives but tight fistedly extending mercy, "just one more time" hoping we get our act together. We must see an extravagant Father who delights in extending kindness to His own, who loves to take a hard heart and win it over in love by giving what is undeserved. This is what the scripture declares to our hearts. **Micah 7:18-19, Hosea 6:6, Psalm 103 and 130**
 - a. **Jesus desires mercy and delights in giving it:** we must understand that the strategy of heaven to win over hearts is not in our strength but in our recognition of weakness. When we recognize our own weakness, frailty of our hearts, the depths of the wickedness of our hearts, and in the midst of this Jesus the perfect One has real desires for us and desires to cleanse us and extend His love to us, it leaves our hearts undone. This is the method the Lord has chosen to awaken love in our hearts, to break us of our independence, pride and performance.

C. Thirdly, mercy is something we must learn from God. It is not natural or native to the human heart, but something we must encounter in the heart of God and learn.

a. Matthew 9:9–13: Jesus calls Matthew to follow Him and the religious leaders object. Jesus instructs them to learn mercy.

D. We can only truly appreciate and be impacted by His mercy when we understand our condition and inability to do anything about it. It is by His mercy alone that we exist, that we are saved, that we know Him etc.

⁴ But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. **Titus 3:4–5**

Our condition apart from Christ

⁶ You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹ Since we have now been justified [completely cleared of any charges or guilt] by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰ For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! ¹¹ Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. **Romans 5:6–11**

¹ **Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins.** ² You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. ³ All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else. ⁴ But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, [He gives mercy because of His deep love for us] ⁵ that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) ⁶ For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. ⁷ So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus. ⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He

has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Ephesians 2:1–10

⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. **Isaiah 53:6**

- A. Our condition prior to salvation was an enemy of God who walked in darkness, pursued our own pleasure and gain, disconnected from God living in spiritual death. This meant if our lives were undisturbed we were destined for an eternity without Christ in torment and condemned to hell.
- B. Yet in the midst of this blind pursuit in the dark, the Light came and gave us a way out of the dark and into the light of the Father's house.
- C. We were encountered by His kindness and won over by His love; therefore we surrendered our aimless pursuits and chose to follow Him.
- D. However, many who have been surrounded by the message of the gospel still have not had the revelation of the kindness and mercies of God pierce their hearts. They have grown accustomed to the words without the reality of what has been accomplished on their behalf. Therefore their hearts are left barren and cold. They know they should love God and do the right things, but their strength and motivation to follow through with these intentions are lacking.
- E. We must encounter the Father of mercy to have love awakened in our hearts.

Go and learn...[Matthew 9:13]

- A. In Matthew 9:9–13 we see Jesus interacting with 'sinners' and doing the unthinkable. He calls Levi, a tax collector into His leadership inner circle. When He does this, the religious leaders strongly oppose Him. However, Jesus sets the stage to unpack a truth from His heart.
- B. Mercy is something foreign to the human heart. We must learn mercy from God's heart. We must be changed by the process of learning the truth of His heart.
- C. Jesus is about to show how He brings lasting transformation. It is not through religious effort, but undeserved mercy.
- D. **He connects the concept of mercy as the antidote to the spiritually sick.** It is not just what He gives the human heart in love, but the cure to the disease of sin. He says to the Pharisees "I have come for those who recognize their need for mercy and receive what I give freely".
- E. **Also in this passage we see into the heart of God clearly.** He does not just tolerate mercy or give it with strings attached, but desires to lavish it on the weak, broken, undeserving sinners who recognize their need for Him.

- a. Many feel in their hearts that God is unhappy when we need mercy, reluctant to give it or disappointed at our failures. We may never vocalize this but our emotional chemistry coming before God in weakness reveals what we truly believe in our hearts about Him.
 - b. Micah 7:18
- F. Mercy is also the way that the Lord brings lasting transformation and repentance.**
- a. Romans 2:4
 - b. Jesus desires mercy: we must understand that the strategy of heaven to win over hearts is not in our strength but in our recognition of weakness. When we recognize our own weakness, frailty of our hearts, the depths of the wickedness of our hearts, and in the midst of this Jesus the perfect One has real desires for us and desires to cleanse us and extend His love to us, it leaves our hearts undone. This is the method the Lord has chosen to awaken love in our hearts, to break us of our independence and pride
- G. Mercy also brings out the worse in the self-righteous and religious. When God gives what is undeserved to another, it undermines their confidence in their own accomplishments and strength. “They are getting what they didn’t deserve, earn or work for”**

Luke 7:36–50

- A. In this account of Jesus’ interaction with a religious leader and a sinner, we see clearly the heart of the Lord toward us.
- B. The woman in this passage is thought to be Mary Magdalene. [Luke 8:2]
- C. After this woman breaks in and lavishes her love upon Jesus, He tells a parable to solidify the truth in His heart toward the broken and weak.

Verses 41–42

- Key facet of this is both debtors had nothing to repay, and he freely forgave both of them. The main issue was love
- The purpose of the parable is to show the power of forgiveness to produce love. This is the key ingredient in our heart growing. Our ability to perceive and receive His forgiveness is crucial in growing in love.
- Jesus connects our ability to love Him to the ability to receive mercy. Our capacity to love is hindered by our inability to receive mercy. Most receive mercy as if God is grudgingly giving it so it does not produce love and gratitude in our heart.

- We ask to receive mercy, then we do penitents and walk guilty and condemned, until we feel like we have the right to be before Him again. We must have faith in His forgiveness. This launches us into confidence in love.
- What hinders us from freely receiving His mercy is our **history of failure**, usually in one or two areas. [the ones when we say sin, they pop up] **Because of our history of failure or our inabilities, we come to the place of confession and repentance and we don't believe that He really gives it. This hinders our heart from being touched by mercy and therefore our capacity to love is very small. It is our love, awakened in mercy, that will be the strength to overcome the very sin we are confessing.** We must come to Him with understanding of His mercy, trust in His mercy, freely receive it, allow it to pierce our hearts and awaken love, thereby producing the very victory we are longing for.
- We must have faith that God forgives, and lay hold of it with tenacity. Confidence in His forgiveness and mercy accomplished at Calvary is what causes our hearts to rejoice after confession. [how your heart responds after confession reveals what you believe about His mercy] The joy and love produced in that moment is what will cause our hearts to overcome those besetting sins. In humanity's worst moment, we killed the Lord of glory and while we were doing it He said "Father, forgive them."

Luke 7:47

- When God's mercy touches the deepest part of our need, it will produce the greatest amount of love. The Pharisee was thinking of who was righteous and who wasn't, but Jesus was looking through the lens of no one is righteous, everyone is in need, and those who recognize their need and place their trust in my mercy are those who will become the greatest lovers of God. **None of you have anything to pay Me back. The Lord is in this for another reason– produce lovers through unqualified mercy.**
- She had been struck with the revelation of forgiveness, she is not trying to earn it, but lavishing love because of His mercy. Her response is because of what she touched in the depths of His heart/ what touched her in the depths of her heart.

Vs. 50

- We must have faith in His forgiveness. This releases us into wholeness, healing, freedom and salvation. [Sozo]
- This woman who had a reputation as a 'sinner' is radically transformed by an encounter with the mercy of God, the tenderness of God and His kindness even toward broken people.
- When we put our confidence in His victory over sin, His strength in our weakness, His mercy that is greater than judgment, we will encounter a heart that is alive, a wholeness we never knew and a freedom from condemnation, guilt, fear and shame.

What is our confidence in God's mercy and forgiveness?

- A. Jesus has freely, finally and totally forgiven us and will extend mercy toward us as we walk with Him.
- B. Jesus took upon Himself our debt, paid it in full and satisfied the requirements of the law. Now we stand before God righteous, holy and clean [pure] before Him.
- C. He desires to show us mercy, He delights in showing us mercy, and He has purposed to win our hearts over in love through undeserved mercy.
- D. The Lord is not looking for anyone to work to pay back the debt He forgave, but to respond in love.
- E. The Lord is faithful to forgive us and cleanse us from sin. [1 John 1:9]
- F. Romans 8: there is no condemnation for those in Christ, He is for us not against us, He has justified us and now intercedes on our behalf. Nothing can separate us from His love.

Colossians 2:13–15: he took all that stood against us and dealt with it at the cross

John 19:30: it is finished

Rom 3:23: we are righteous by faith in Christ not works of the law

What did Jesus accomplish?

- A. Jesus came to save sinners [1 Tim 1:15] and redeem humanity from under the oppression of sin and satan.
- B. How He would accomplish this was not the way His people expected. It was through humility, obedience and death.
 - a. He came and humbly lived a perfect life of obedience. He did what we could not do and walked in victory over sin and fulfilled the standard of God on our behalf. When He fulfilled the law and overcame sin, He included us in that victory. We are now declared righteous or justified before God because of His life.
 - b. Instead of overthrowing physical oppressors with displays of power, He took on Himself the debt of sin we owed and bore it to the cross. He was crushed by the Father and the just penalty for our sin was upon Him. He was condemned so we could be declared free.
- C. Therefore on the cross, a divine transaction was taking place. Here was the Son of God, the only One able and qualified to stand before God and represent humanity, hanging on a cross

bearing our sin. When He declared “It is finished” what He came to accomplish in the liberation and reconciliation of humanity was solidified.

D. When we receive Christ, our position before God and our relationship with Him change forever.

- a. Romans 8 tells us there is no condemnation to those in Christ [who have placed their faith in what Jesus did and who He is]. Why? Because He perfectly fulfilled the law, overcame sin and defeated the devil. [Col 2:13–15]
- b. Jesus now is exalted to the right hand of God and intercedes for us to enter into the fullness of what He paid for. Nothing can separate us from His love and the finality of what He accomplished on our behalf.