

1 John 5:16-17
Am I wronged or Am I Wrong?
Pastor JD Farag

KAPONO: Amen. Would you join me in a word of prayer? Lord, thank You so much. Thank You for Your teaching, Lord. Thank You for the Prophecy Update, Lord, First Service. As we get into Your word, hearing the Book of 1 John, Lord, continue as You have already done to speak to us Lord. Holy Spirit, guide, lead, and direct. Thank you for this time together in Your Word. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen. Good morning and welcome. You can be seated. Thank you. I want to welcome those of you that are joining us online. We're so glad that you are and trust that everyone will be blessed that they did. So before we get started, I want to provide you with an update on our ongoing Maui mission support. I want to start with a text from brother Mike Lau on the remaining containers. For the benefit of those who may not know about these amazing stevedores there on the waterfront, and I want to give them another shout out. By the way, these guys are, yeah, amazing.

[Applause]

And these are brothers, man. These are brothers in the Lord, and God is using them and has used them in a mighty way to make a way to get supplies to those with the greatest needs there on Maui. So I want to just share with you this latest update from brother Mike.

He says, "Aloha JD. The last batch of seven 40-foot containers were shipped to and have already arrived on Maui. We are grateful for the outpouring of love by the amount of supplies dispersed in the last month. God has been so faithful as He always is. This is the last of the 50-plus containers we shipped over the last two months, almost to the day when this happened, which was back on Tuesday, August 8th. And today is October 8th. So two months to the day.

Please thank everyone for all their prayers for the Lord's guidance and discernment. And please continue to pray for the people of Maui!

Also, last week I updated everyone on Perry and Laurie Allen. And as many of you know, Laurie went home to be with the Lord a week ago on Friday after succumbing to burns over 70% of her body. We've come alongside Calvary Chapel Westside and Pastor Steve Santos there in Lahaina, and we are providing financial support to Perry, who is still here actually on Oahu.

And because of that, we're going to continue with the meal train for him while he's here on the island. If you're interested, we do have the fliers with the information out front. And also I mentioned this First Service for those of you online, you can use other means such as DoorDash, etc. if you would like to help out just for a season for Perry who is here now. Not sure where he is going to go. He has nothing to go back to in Lahaina.

Lastly, please pray for our efforts in replacing cars for those who lost their vehicles. While our plans to do this on a larger scale have proven to be infinitely more complicated than what we had originally thought, and by infinitely more complicated than what we'd originally thought, I mean, it's infinitely more complicated because the government got involved, and need I say more? So Plan B is probably more like Plan E now.

We're just replacing vehicles on an individual basis instead of on a grander scale. And actually, we were able to replace a vehicle for a family who lost their car. And this was on Friday. Lord willing, they'll be able to take delivery of it tomorrow, and this by way of an arrangement with a brother in Christ, Danny Asao of the Jim Falk Automotive Group there on Maui. So we are going to continue to

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move forward to get vehicles to those who need them most. And we would certainly covet your prayers to that end.

All right. Let's get into the word. Looking forward to what the Lord has for us today in 1 John as we make our way, verse-by-verse through this epistle, which we're almost done with. No hurry, though. Maybe next week. We'll see, "if we're still here." We had to get that in. S

o our text today, two verses, again, *verses 16 and 17* in *1 John 5*. I'll ask you to stand if you're able. You can follow along as I read. If not, where you're seated is perfectly fine. The Apostle John is writing by the Holy Spirit, and in *verse 16* writes, **"If anyone sees his brother commit a sin..."** [*They need to start calling their neighbors and telling them about it*] [No]

[Laughter]

That was no extra charge for that, by the way. Maybe let's start over.

"If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray, and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that. All wrongdoing [Verse 17] is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death."

I think that's pretty self-explanatory. If you — we can just close in prayer. How about we just open in prayer? If you would join with me?

Wow, Lord, this is one of those places in Your word where we desperately need for the Holy Spirit to be our teacher, to teach us what it is that You want us to learn. This is why we have this in our Bibles. It's here for a reason. And so, Lord, we want to know what that reason is. We need to know what it is that You want to show to us and what You have here for us. Because we want to have ears to hear what it is that You want to say to us in and through Your word, and not only ears to hear, but eyes to see and hearts to receive.

So Lord, speak into our lives, especially with regards to that which John writes here because this is for us for today. So speak, Lord, Your servants are listening. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

You could be seated. Thank you very much.

Okay. (Chuckling) We're off to a great start, yeah? I want to talk with you about a problem. It's a problem we all deal with concerning the matter of whether I'm the one that's been wronged, or I'm the one that's wrong. Am I wronged here, or am I wrong?

Why are you looking at me like that?

[Laughter]

Well, actually we're both, oftentimes. But the problem I want to talk about today is that the wrong still needs to be made right.

Enter the text before us today where John, by the Holy Spirit, is going to provide us with this biblical template, as it were, in order that we might discern how it is that we can right the wrong whether or not we're the ones who have been wronged or not. Truth be made known if we're honest with ourselves, more often than not, it's not that we've been wronged. It's actually that we are the ones in the wrong.

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So if you'll kindly allow me to, I'm going to approach the teaching of today's text by posing three questions that all of us, myself included, would do well to ask ourselves in this regard. And I think I would be grossly remiss were I not to forewarn you that what we're about to see here is going to be very convicting. And by convicting, I mean this goes against everything in our sin nature, and as such, it requires the power of the Holy Spirit in our new nature. Because absent the Holy Spirit, there's no way because our sin nature will chafe at this.

And even now — I don't want to look at anybody when I say this — but even now it's chafing. It's resisting. Our necks stiffen, our hearts harden. I didn't — I'm not wrong. I've been wronged. I did that too good, didn't I?

[Laughter]

It might reveal too much, especially when it comes to the marriage relationship. This is not a sermon on marriage, though it could be. Because isn't it true, again, if we're honest with ourselves — I'm not talking about my marriage. Because I'm the pastor. I have a perfect marriage. I'm talking about your marriage.

[Laughter]

When you guys have conflict and a disagreement, "I'm not going to apologize. She needs to apologize to me. I didn't do anything wrong. She's in the wrong."

Again, I did that way too good. That's because I'm a pro. I have a Ph.D. in this, I want you to know. Three very convicting questions, and I emphasize and highlight "convicting" for a reason. And that reason is, is because if I'm convicted, I want you to be convicted, too. Okay? Just so we're clear. Full disclosure here.

But three very convicting questions that we need to ask ourselves. And I'll take it a step further and suggest that we need to allow the Holy Spirit unfettered access to search our hearts concerning in this regard.

So first one is in the first part of *verse 16*, and it's the question of "Do I pray for them?"

Second, in the second part of *verse 16*, "Do I love on them?"

And third in *verse 16*, perhaps more importantly, "Am I the one who's actually doing wrong to them?"

So we're going to take and tackle these three questions. And with the help of the Holy Spirit, it is my prayer and my hope that we will leave here today different than the way we came here today. And I'm not talking about the way we look. But you all look marvelous, just so you know. But let's start with this first one in the first part of *verse 16*. And this is a biggie. And really it all starts here.

Do I pray for them? Dare I say and ask the opposite question: Do I gossip about them? Because what is John specifically referring to? He's referring to a brother who is wrong and sinning. So he says pray for them. Pray for them. Here's a brother. He's sinning. I

t's not a sin that leads to death. We'll come to that in a moment. But he is wrong by sinning a sin not leading to death. Pray for him. Don't gossip about him. Pray for him. The sin, the wrong, and all wrongdoing is sin that he's sinning does not lead to death.

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And this has been the subject of some debate, I even say much debate. He's going to address this matter of sin that does lead to death. But this particular brother to whom he is referring is sinning a sin that does not lead to death.

Now, why is this a difficult subject of much debate? Because some have interpreted it to mean that he could lose his salvation. That is absolutely not the case here. And if you try to superimpose that interpretation upon the text, you've got a lot of problems you're going to have to work through. So you've got a brother that is sinning, and this sin, this wrong, all wrongdoing is sin, you need to pray for this brother.

But we don't do that, do we? This is a brother in Christ. He's saved. He's already got eternal life. Well, then why does John say then pray for him that God will give him life? Oh, that's talking about in this life. Pray for him. He already has eternal life.

But he's committing a sin in this life. And thankfully, the sin committed is not one that leads to a physical death, which is why we should pray so that God will give him life.

Here's the takeaway and stay with me. I wish I could say it's going to get easier. It's not. It's actually going to get difficult. So if I lose you here, just have a nice afternoon.

[Laughter]

Sorry. But seriously, in all seriousness, if we miss this, then the rest of today's text and teaching is not going to make any sense, okay?

So our first response should always be to pray for someone who is in the wrong, especially when we're the ones being wronged. That's what I mean by it goes against everything in our sin nature, our Adamic nature.

Just at the very mention of it. They have wronged me. They have sinned against me. And you want me to pray for them? I'll pray for them, all right.

[Laughter]

Now be careful because you know, this is what Jesus said. You know what I'm talking about? Let me refresh your memory. *Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 5, beginning in verse 43.* Jesus speaking, **"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you..."**

Okay, I can't get to *verse 45*. Stop right there. Like I'm going to do that. Pray for those who spitefully use me and persecute me and hate me, are the enemy of me? And I'm going to pray for them? Yeah. Jesus goes on, **"...that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."**

And that's a good thing, by the way. **"Every good and perfect gift [James says] comes from the Father above."** And then He takes it further and He says, **"For if you..."** I want you to think this through.

Jesus says, **"For if you love those who love you, what reward have you?"** Do not even the IRS agents do the same? I mean the... No, that's what they were considered. If you're an IRS agent, we love you in Jesus' name. But really? (Bumblng his words)

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Again, this is — I'm just going to use myself as an example because, you know, being the godly, humble pastor that I am, I'll take one for the team. But this is what I do.

I find out you like me, hey, I like you too. But if I find out you don't like me, well, you know what? I don't like you either. Am I right? Come on. So that's what Jesus is saying. I mean, everybody does that. If you love people that love you, that's just normal. That's just natural that even the tax collectors do that. **“And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others?”**

Hey, bro, brah. How's it? Everybody does that. And it even says, **“Do not even the tax collectors do so?”**

What's so ironic is that Matthew was a tax collector before Jesus called him. Again, one of those places where you know God's got a sense of humor. So that's my story and I'm sticking with it.

Matthew is inspired by the Holy Spirit to write and record the sermon that Jesus preached about likening someone to tax collectors, of which he used to be one? That just, oh, that's the Lord. God's good that way, just to remind you where you came from. I'm going to leave it right there because again, that's very convicting.

“Therefore [Verse 48] you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

You know what Jesus is saying here? He's saying, I want you to be like Me. I want you to be a chip off the old block, like father, like son. The love of the Father — remember how we just got done hearing John talk about how are people going to see the unseen love of God if God is unseen?

Answer: Through us. They're going to see the unseen love of God through us, which can be seen. It's the like father, like son. He has his father's eyes. She has her father's eyes. The apple doesn't fall too far from the tree. I mean, do I need more idioms here? This is what Jesus is saying. I want you to be like your Heavenly Father is who loves, sends rain for the crops to the just as He does the unjust. He allows the sun to shine on those crops — that's their livelihood — on the just as He does the unjust.

Isn't the whole purpose to which we are called, *Romans 8:29*, which is after *Romans 8:28*. I know that's deeply profound. But that we're called to the purpose **“Because we know that God works all things together for the good to those that love God and are the called according to His purpose.”**

What's His purpose?

To make us more like Him.

By the way, in my time with the Lord this last week, God opened up my eyes to something that I want to share with you. Because again, I want you to be as convicted as I am on this. You know, when we talk about being Christ-like, we tend to favor — nothing wrong with this — but we tend to favor the Christlikeness being love, joy, peace, humility, you know, meekness, kindness, gentleness.

But it also means, in fact, it actually more so means to be Christ-like, that we are crucified with Christ if we're a disciple of Christ. He wants to make us more like Him. Well, what was Jesus like? Oh, He laid down His life. Oh, I didn't read that fine print. That's what it means to be Christ-like. Willing to lay down your life, pick up your cross, die to yourself. That's being Christ-like. Well, that kind of changes the whole complexion of it, doesn't it?

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I was good with love, joy, peace, and all that. I could even work in some humility and patience, all the, you know, *Galatians 5*. I was good with that. But to make me more like Jesus, to conform me into the image of Jesus Christ, to make me more like Jesus, it means that too, if not more so. So you have a nice afternoon now. (Chuckling)

This is going to tie in now with the second part of *verse 16*. and our second question which is in addition to “Do I pray for them,” “Do I love on them?”

And this is where it's going to get a little bit difficult. And this for no less than two reasons, the first of which is that there is a sin that leads to a physical death. In other words, it is possible — stay with me — for a born-again Christian to sin to such a degree that it leads to their untimely death here in this life.

And if you'll allow me to, I'll explain. If someone poses a threat to the body of Christ, in not discerning the body of Christ, resulting in their unloving of others. In the early church they had what were known as these love feasts, agape feasts. They would celebrate the Lord's Supper, and they would all bring food.

But in the Roman Empire at the time, the majority of the new Christians, the new believers, were slaves. And for many of them that was the only real meal they got all week. But then there were others in the early church that had means. And so they would come together for these feasts. We might affectionately refer to them as a potluck or whatever. They would bring the food, but then they wouldn't let them have any.

And this is what the Apostle Paul in what is arguably one of the most breathtaking passages in all of the Bible, confronts with the Corinthian church. Let me read, beginning in *verse 16* of *1 Corinthians 11* and just kind of hang on. This is the Apostle Paul writing. **“Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry, and another is drunk. What!**

[Verse 22] [I like it better in the JDV, Whaaat!] [Sorry]

Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or *[Listen to this]* do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.”

Now, when you get down to *verse 27*, he writes, **“Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing *[discerning]* the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.**

[And then he says this, verse 30] **That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you *[Have died]* fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.”**

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Man, I remember when we went through *1 Corinthians* verse-by-verse, it was brutal, it was brutal. And I was teaching it. It was probably more brutal for you, those of you who were here. We got to this chapter, I mean, I was on my face. Oh, God!

I mean, this is one of those times when you wish you didn't teach the Bible book-by-book, chapter-by-chapter, verse-by-verse because I would skip over this chapter.

I mean, really? This really happened?

Yes, it did.

You mean to tell me that God would put Christians, born-again, Christians who were sinning to such a degree against the body of Christ in these love feasts at the Lord's Supper by the way they were mistreating their brothers and sisters in Christ, the unloving way that they were mistreating them, that it would rise to the level of God putting them on a sick bed to get their attention?

Yeah. And are you also telling me —

No, I'm actually not telling you. The Apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit is telling you that God, if He couldn't get their attention by putting them on a sick bed, He would just have them come home in their death.

Should I just have us all bow our heads and close our eyes, and you can slip out at this point? What in the world?

Well, what they were doing was not recognizing that every Christian, whether rich or poor, Jew or Gentile, they're still part of the body of Christ. And Jesus loves every one of them in the same way, which is why they had been judged for mistreating. This is His body. Jesus is the head. This is the body of Christ, a body of believers.

I know it's hard to imagine that this was happening, but it was. And it's important to realize that they came under such judgment because of the harm they could have caused to other believers. They posed a formidable threat to the body, and it was a protection.

Let me see if I can use this example. This is maybe going to be a little bit rough. So buckle up. So you have a dog that has rabies. It's already — its fate has already been sealed. Now you're going to have to remove that dog because that dog poses a threat to your children, your family. So you've got to eliminate the threat.

And that's what was happening. There's still saved. We'll still see them in heaven. They just got an earlier flight. But it's like God's saying I can't take the risk of having you pose a threat to My body, the body of believers. So I'm going to try to get your attention. The first way I'm going to get your attention is I'm going to put you on a bed of sickness and suffering. And if that doesn't work, then you're coming home. I got to remove you.

I — this is hard, but I — I've shared it before, not very often, maybe once or twice over the years. But it's so sobering. I know of one instance — this was on the mainland where this happened with a sister in Christ. She'll be in heaven. But she was causing a lot of harm. It was, I'm sorry to say, she's survived cancer, but died in a freak accident on a four-wheel recreational vehicle. What do they call them? ATVs or whatever? How's that one?

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And I remember when it happened, I thought to myself, wow! And I immediately thought of *1 Corinthians 11* and with it *1 John 5*.

Because that's what John is talking about and writing about. That's what Paul is pleading with the Corinthians about. You're bring judgment on yourself. The way you treat someone in the body of Christ, God takes it very seriously, and He notices it.

And God is very protective, by the way, of His church, very protective of His church. Now, I better very quickly, lest there be any misunderstanding, hastened to say that sickness is not usually a result of the judgment of God. Oftentimes, sickness and especially death are just simply the result of living in a fallen world and not because God is judging us for our sin. However, there does come a time when God will deem it necessary for someone to go home if they do pose this threat to His church. So we've got two questions now we're going to ask ourselves.

And the first one is: Do I — because this is all to answer the question of am I wronged or am I wrong?

Question number 1: Do I pray for them?

Question number 2: Do I love on them?

And by the way, if I pray for them and love on them, they're not going to be an enemy very much longer in two ways.

What do you mean?

First, God's going to answer that prayer, sometimes much to our consternation, right? When you pray for your enemies, "God bless them." No hurry. Just, you know." And then He does. You're like, oh, I should have waited. But then something changes in your heart towards them. You cannot stay angry at someone who has wronged you when you're praying for them, loving on them. Your heart is changing toward them. And there's a reason for it.

There's many reasons, but chiefly because now your eyes are not on how they've wronged you, what they've done wrong to you. Now your eyes are on what Jesus has done for you instead. I know we've talked about this the last couple of weeks. See, if I'm focused on "they wronged me," truth be known, you're in the wrong too. That saying, "two wrongs don't make a right," right?

But we still think like that. That's our mindset in our fallen minds. So we want to get even. We talked about that Thursday night a couple of weeks ago. You know the eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth.

You know what that was about? That was a restriction, a prohibition. If someone takes out your eye, what do you want? You want both their eyes. The tooth. They take out one of your teeth. I want all of their teeth. That's our human sin nature.

See, we want to — you've wronged me. I'm going to not only get even with you, I'm going to inflict harm on you for wronging me because you've wronged me. They probably have. But here's the thing. You've probably wronged them too.

Yeah, but they're wronged me first.

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Okay, whatever. But see, we hold on to that grudge. And if I'm answering these questions with a yes, I do pray for them, yes, I do love on them, well, then the wrong has been made right. I've righted the wrong. **"Love covers a multitude of sins."**

Now here we go with *verse 16* because this is where it's going to get real. Because again, I want you to be as convicted as I am. Do I do wrong to them? It was Oswald Chambers who said, It's not so much a question of whether I've been wronged. It's a question of have I wronged."

Have I wronged? See, maybe they have wronged you, but it's between you and the Lord. The Lord will take — pray for them. Love on them. The Lord is going to take care of that. I mean, yeah, but they're a brother of Christ. Yeah, but what, you want God to kill them? Well, that was the Corinthian church. What do you want God — **"Vengeance is Mine, saith the Lord."**

Well, I just want to help Him out.

[Laughter]

Okay, that was too much, I could tell. But when I allow the Holy Spirit to search my heart and see if there be anything. Because see, the onus is on me, not them. The onus is on me. How have I wronged?

Can I bring the marriage illustration, your marriage, again, not mine, into the equation? So here you got a husband and wife. You know how it works, right? You can write the next chapter in this book. So there's a conflict. And then there's the silent treatment. I mean, two or three days.

Oh, man, it got really quiet in here.

No, really, you let the sun go down on your anger.

It reminds me of the story I heard. Actually it was Dave Hunt who told me this many years ago. This husband was sort of boasting in a sanctified way about how, you know, my wife and I, man, we never go to bed angry. I mean, sometimes we're up till 2:00, 3:00 in the morning.

But, you know, sooner or later she'll come crawling on her hands and knees and she'll say to me, "Come out from underneath the bed and fight like a man, you coward!"

[Laughter]

That was no extra charge too. But no, the silent treatment because they wronged me. Wow. Well, what's that other saying? It takes two to tango.

Hey, if you think about it, how is it possible for them to wrong you if there's no you to wrong? That didn't work. You see what I'm saying? Because again, in your marriage, not mine, you know, there's the, you know, you're wronged because you're not wrong. Of course you're not wrong. You're wronged, and you want them to know. And you do pray, Oh, God...

No. I did this actually. I got to be honest. Early in our marriage — we've been married for 35 years — I was such a jerk early on. I just confessed it to you, okay? Notice I said,

"early on." Not now because I have a perfect marriage now. But I used to pray, "God, show her she's wrong." Hey, guys, can I just let you in on something? Trust me on this. Don't waste your time praying that. He will not answer that prayer.

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Because we're pretty — man, you talk about praying effectually and fervent. We're very detailed in our prayer. God, show them — show her that when she did or didn't do that or this, that she was wrong, and she has sinned against me. And after all, I'm the man of the house, woman!

[Laughter]

Yeah, how about Peter, when he says, Husbands, you know why your prayers are bouncing off the ceiling? You're not dwelling in an understanding way with your wife. How about that?

I have a list in my archived notes of the many reasons for unanswered prayer. And would you believe me if I told you that that was at the top of the list? If you're praying and it seems like God's not answering your prayers, husbands, that could be the reason.

Because is she not our bride like the church is the bride of Christ? So the way you're treating your bride, the way we're treating His bride, you don't think that's going to have an impact? Don't try praying that because God is not going to answer that prayer.

In fact, if you keep on praying that, I promise you, and I got the scars to prove this, that God will answer your prayer, but it will not be in the way that you would have ever wanted Him to answer that prayer. And it's not long before you realize, wait a minute...

I have another illustration. I got plenty illustrations. Every pastor should have plenty of illustrations. But here's one. When was the last time you got — your marriages again — you got into a conflict, an argument because you were wronged? When was the last time you actually fought over being humble?

Oh, have you ever done that? Hun, I was wrong. The three hardest words to ever come out of our mouth: I was w-r-r-r wrong. Right? Picture the scene. The husband goes to the wife and says, Honey, I was praying that God would show you that you were wrong. But He showed me that I was wrong. How long is that argument going to last? How long is that silent treatment going to go on?

This actually happened. I'm a very complicated person. We actually got into an argument about who was the first to admit that they were wrong. No, I was wrong first. No, I was wrong first! That's never happened to you guys?

No, you've completely defused and resolved the whole situation because you were wrong. You were wrong. Honey, I was wrong. And then she looks at you and says, What did you do with my husband? That's probably not a good sign.

Kind of like the guy. (Bumbling his words) I said, Why don't you get your wife flowers?

He says, It's not her birthday or our anniversary.

I'm like, really? You don't just buy her flowers because?

No. Man, if I came home with flowers, she'd think I did something wrong.

I said, Wow! Well, you did because that's just wrong that you're not doing that. You're wrong. Just to humble yourself and say those three words. "I was wrong" because you were. And then watch what God's going to do. Now you've just opened up the floodgates, the windows of heaven. I mean, I just picture the heavenly hosts just waiting on standby. He said it. Let's go! We humble ourselves. We admit that we're wrong.

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Now, why do I point this out and illustrate this this way? Because if all have sinned, and all have sinned, then wouldn't it stand to reason that all of us are wrong? And if it would stand to reason that all of us are wrong, then wouldn't it also stand to reason that we should all confess that we were wrong?

I just wonder how many marriages would change overnight just with this. I wonder how many churches would change just with this. I wonder how many relationships would change. Don't even get me started on the whole "love thy neighbor" thing. Who's my neighbor? The coworker. See, somebody's coming to mind right now.

You're thinking about them thinking (Shaking head "no") that person wakes up in the morning trying to figure out a way to get to me. I know it for sure. I know for sure.

This actually happened to me on the mainland. And he got saved. And he admitted to me that he used to wake up in the morning and try to figure out a way...

And then I just — but I had to love him because he's now my brother in Christ. But man, I would go to work. And this guy, I mean, he just, he — but he was testing me and watching me.

I just wonder how many relationships in the workplace would change overnight just with this. How about the family dynamics? You know what I'm talking about? The in-laws that are outlaws. I mean, you know, the whole — this is a thing in Hawaii, isn't it? The family dynamics.

Boy, I'm reminded of this whenever I do a memorial service. (Attack cat sound) It just comes out. I mean, this side, this sect is over here. They're over here. They didn't even come because they knew they were going to be here. And they weren't going to come if they found out that the other persons were going to come if they were going to be here. So they didn't come. I mean, it's just horrible. What would happen?

I'm almost done. There's hope.

[Laughter]

I just wonder what would happen. Let's just ask ourselves and let's be honest with ourselves. I just wonder what would happen if I would just humble myself and say those three words to that person in my life. I just wonder what would happen.

Do you wonder the same? I wonder what would happen if I just started praying for them. I mean, they may not know that I'm praying for them.

And here I'm harboring this grudge towards them for what they did to me. And I'm allowing a bitter root, a root of bitterness to germinate and sprout. It will destroy me. It's been said, of bitterness and grudges and resentment that it's like drinking poison, hoping that the other person will die. That's what bitterness is. We've talked about that, too.

But I just wonder what would change? I would change if I were to pray for them. And by the way, it's a command to love one another. The law is summed up —

But well, I don't feel like it. I'm not feeling the love right now.

Oh, really? You don't feel it? Well, I guess we — the righteous shall live by feelings. Now here's what happens when you leave your first love, Ephesus. You go back to what worked at first, the first

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works. Remember, guys, when you were courting? I mean, just listening to the way you were talking to her would make people sick around you. Oh, Sweetie! Open the door for her and just so nice. And then you get married, and gone.

What happened? Well, you're not opening the door for her anymore. In fact, you're slamming the door shut on her now. Well, go back and do what you did at first, that worked at first, the first works, repeat.

Repent. Do a 180. Go back, repeat the first works, what worked at first, and watch the love. Oh my.

True story. Last one. This will be the final closing. We're good. Don't look at your watches. I just did. True story.

Wife goes into the attorney's office. She wants to file for divorce against her — just, I mean, wretched, rotten, stinking, mean husband. So the attorney, a Christian — they're Christians, sadly — says to her, Here's what I want you to do. You want to get him, man? Okay.

90 days before you divorce him, I want you to cook his meal, his favorite meal for him every night. I want you to clean the house and make yourself up, you know, kind of like you used to do before you got married. I don't want to go too far with that one. Can you just not wear those around the house? Can you just put on — can you just do something?

And guys, that's for us too, right? I mean, it's like after you get married, you just — I'm speaking about myself on this one. I mean because we're married now. So I told you I loved you the day we got married. That should be good enough, you know?

So I want you to dress up nice for him. Be there when he comes home from work. Make his favorite dinner, and just, you know, as they say, kill him with kindness, and then divorce him. She was just like, yeah!

Well, the attorney knows what's going to happen. So she does that and all of a sudden now her whole heart changes towards him. And how about his heart towards her? I mean, he's waiting. Three months go by, there's no phone call, no e-mail, no nothing. What happened?

Oh, we're so in love. We're more in love now than we were when we first got married.

There it is. There it is. That's what John's saying.

Pastor, could you have said that in a shorter period of time? Absolutely, I could have.

[Laughter]

But I wanted to take you on the scenic route again. So before I have Kaponu up, can I just end this way? Will you, with me do this? Ask yourself these questions and really take it to heart and let the Holy Spirit search your heart. Give Him unfettered access to that deep recess in your heart and ask yourself these questions, especially if you've got someone in your life that you are just holding onto what they did to you and you're not letting it go.

And by the way, it's eating you from the inside out in every way, literally physically, mentally, emotionally, psychologically, and certainly perhaps more importantly spiritually. It's defiling you, destroying you. You need — it has to change. You cannot continue on this way. And God loves you enough and loves me enough to tell us the truth about ourselves.

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So would you, with me, ask yourself this question? I promise you they will change your life completely. You'll never go back. And your only regret will be that you didn't do it sooner. That's how I always know that it was a good decision when my only regret was that I didn't make it or do it sooner. I'm done.

Kapono, come on up. Stand up. We'll close in prayer and song. That was tough, man. I'm still really convicted. Are you? Because I want you to be. Just say yes, I'm very convicted. Good. We'll close in prayer then.

Father, Thank You. Oh, man, sometimes feeling bad can feel good. And knowing how bad we are can be good, how wrong we are can be so right. And this is right, Lord. You're right. This is righteous. This is righteousness.

So, Lord, would You take it from here with the Holy Spirit indwelling us, empowering us, enabling us to do that, which only You can do. There's no way in and of ourselves, in the energy of our own flesh or strength that we could ever pray for those who wrong us or love on those who wrong us or even go as far as to admit that we're the ones in the wrong.

And as You said, Jesus, **“settle matters quickly.” “Leave your gift at the altar.”** Don't offer it. Don't serve. Just leave it here. Go immediately and make it right. Or else the devil's going to — it'll cost you every last penny, metaphorically.

So Lord, thank You for this much-needed warning. The strength of it; it needs to be strong. This is corrective. It needs to be corrective. It's a rebuke. And sometimes we need to be rebuked with the truth in love. So thank You, Lord. In Jesus' name. Amen.