

**CONNECTION CARD!!**

**[TITLE]** Good morning Cornerstone! It is good to be with you this morning. We are going to be continuing our sermon series called wounds. Where we are here to call out the hurts, wounds and scars that we carry in order to find healing in our Father, his word and his Church.

Today our scripture is going to be found in 2 Corinthians 2:5-8. So if you would like to follow along with us there. If you do not have a paper bible and would like one, we have some available for you in the back. You can also follow along with us today on the app with the scripture and our sermon notes available to you there.

Here is the part that we would stand and read a part of our passage but before I ask you to do that, I want to explain why we do this. I remember growing up we did this in my home church. My mom and dad always emphasized how important this part of the service was. Of course, when you're a kid you don't fully understand all I knew was that what we were saying was important.

Growing up with that understanding I see the gravity of the words in scripture and the power that can be felt when we read it together as a church. We stand as a position of respect for who wrote these words. And we read them together as the body of Christ connected to him and boldly proclaiming the word of God. So when we stand we do it our of reverence and awe of the wisdom that we find in the words that were written by God to us in this book.

So, before we dive in the teaching today, let us stand out of reverence for God word and read a part of our passage this morning together which comes from the book of 2 Corinthians 2:5-8.

**[1] SCRIPTURE 2 Corinthians 2:5-8**

*"Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him."*

This is the Word of the Lord  
Thanks be to God

**INTRO**

**[2]** Lets talk about a little background on this passage. In the New Testament there are 27 books and at least 10 of those books are letters that are written to specific churches. This is one of those letters written by Paul to the church in Greece in the city of Corinth. In our bibles this book is called 2 Corinthians. This is actually the 4<sup>th</sup> letter that Paul had written to this church 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians is the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians is the 4<sup>th</sup>. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> letters have been lost with time.

What is extremely fortunate for us is that Paul references his letters we don't have in the letters that we do have. As we study the text we can infer or gather what was said in the letters that are lost and fill in the gaps in between.

I say all of that because in our passage today as we read there is something that happened that needs to be forgiven by the church and doesn't explicitly say what that offense was. I think Paul did this to try and avoid further shame on the person that was guilty to prevent further sorrow like he mentions in verse 7. So he avoids the details because it would have been known by the people in the church already.

For us to understand what was forgiven we have to look back at the other letters filling in the gaps of the ones we don't have to know what was being forgiven and why Paul directs them to this conclusion.

I'm going to do a 10,000 ft view of what has happened to bring us up to speed on what the church that was reading this already knew.

**[3]** Paul planted this church on his second missionary journey around 50 AD. We know from Acts 18 he stayed there about 18 months and left to head to Antioch in Syria<sup>1</sup>. On his travels is the best guess that he wrote his first letter to the church. This more than likely would have communicated his sorrow in leaving them, probably encouragement to continue on while he was away, with specific details<sup>2</sup> and that he hoped to return soon.

While in Ephesus on his third Missionary journey he would have received reports of some things that were happening in the church<sup>3</sup>. Various divisions and argument that were happening among them. This is where he writes his second letter which is 1 Corinthians. Corinth was a city that was known for its sexual immorality, religious diversity, and its corruption.

The church was beginning to fall apart under these influences from the culture<sup>4</sup>. Paul, as a major theme of 1 Corinthians, was to encourage them to remain set apart from the world around them and in some cases addresses specific things and how the church should address them.

One of these specific things that Paul addresses in chapter 5 is a man that has married his step mom.

**[4] 1 Corinthians 5:1-5**

*"It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. <sup>2</sup> And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. <sup>4</sup> When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, <sup>5</sup> you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord."*

To establish the gravity of this sin he points out that this thing would not be acceptable with the culture that is polluting them. They have gone above and beyond the pagans in allowing immorality that is unacceptable to even them. Not only that but they were arrogant about it having some twisted sense of pride about this sin. "Look at how he is taking care of his overly affectionate step-mother after his dad passed. He is such a good man". Gross. Paul gave them instructions to remain set apart from the world around them and they were worse than them and they allowed this man to remain in the church.

Paul issues this decree for the church to discipline him by removing him from their fellowship and delivering this man to Satan. This sounds harsh but what Paul means is by sending him out of the church

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 18:18

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor 5:9

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor 1:11

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor 3:16-23

and out of the community, he is forced into the world that Satan reigns over<sup>5</sup>. This is done with a purpose of the destruction of the flesh.

This was not meant as a physical death, but a spiritual one. The church community is not like it is today. You couldn't leave one church and attend the other one down the street. In the 1<sup>st</sup> century if you were removed from your community, it was a big deal you were out on your own and would have been detrimental. This destruction of the flesh was meant to be a shock that would force him to come to his senses. The hope was for the orientation that he had to satisfy the flesh would die so that his soul could be saved. This is why Paul stresses in ch 15 that because of Adam we face death but because of Christ the flesh is put to death and we live with him.

This punishment is a mirror of God's wrath<sup>6</sup>. The intention of God's wrath is to cause people to snap out of their sinfulness come to their sense and seek repentance. Likewise Paul's purpose in this punishment is to bring the offender to repentance and protect the community from corruption.

[5] The Church however does not follow Paul's instruction and this man now hearing this from Paul is furious. There's a couple reason why the church probably didn't follow this instruction. This man even though he was in sin, he could have been financially wealthy, he know in hindsight that he was probably influential among the people, if both of these things were true he could have been one of the hosts for the church in Corinth. One of them being Philemon that we talked about a couple weeks ago.

As a result of the churches inaction and Paul's issued punishment, this man does not want to relinquish his position in the community without a fight. He begins to convince others to question Paul's authority leading this revolt in the church<sup>7</sup>. He launches this campaign to undermine his authority as an apostle.

On his third missionary journey Paul returns to visit the church in Corinth<sup>8</sup> and this man mocks Paul and openly questions him in a threatening way. He would have followed a Roman custom of public ridicule those who opposed him, i.e. Paul, for the purpose of humiliation and cause broken relationships among his peers.

Because of this Paul cuts his visit short with the church and leaves<sup>9</sup>. Paul saw that this would go one of two ways if he engaged with this man. It could either shame this other man and cause the people following him to be lost, and he losses people in the church or he argues and proves this man right winning over the others and he losses the church entirely. He did not want either of those outcomes so he leaves.

Paul probably was not feeling supported by the majority of the church. Chances are they would have believed this to be a personal matter between Paul and this man and they chose not to get involved, buried their heads in the sand and hoped the problem would go away.

Paul had instructed the dismissal of this man because of a bigger issue. This man's obligation to his flesh created a weakness in the church. The church in Corinth believed the power of Christ was moving in the

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<sup>5</sup> 2 Cor. 4:4, 2 Thes 3:14, Titus 3:10-11

<sup>6</sup> Rom. 1:18-31

<sup>7</sup> 2 Cor 10-13

<sup>8</sup> 1 Cor 4:19; 2 Cor 2:1-2

<sup>9</sup> Acts 20:2-3

community<sup>10</sup>. In his discipline action for this man Paul says that if they are to successfully fight off the schemes of Satan, that the church will be the one place that Satan does not reign<sup>11</sup>. This man's influence and inability to fight off his flesh was a compromise to that and therefore he should be removed.

His reaction to Paul's words proved that. The course of the conflict that erupted in Paul's visit was this man's self-interested behavior clashed with Christian morality and spiritual welfare of the church. He did not want to repent. He was called out, hurt and embarrassed. He took that hurt and used it as an opportunity to breed division in the church.

In a way it was fulfilling of the warning that Paul said. His desire for his flesh over the church caused damage to the church body because they did not remove him like they should have.

This is where Paul writes his 3<sup>rd</sup> letter. This letter was more severe and full of harsh criticism of the church, Paul referred to it as his letter of many tears<sup>12</sup>. In this letter he more than likely laid out all of the issues that are present in this conflict that came to light during his visit. Paul was not willing to compromise on Christian truths and not willing to give up on the church. He needed to equip the church with the theological understanding to take responsibility and do what needed to be done.

His purpose in all of these letter was not to make the church dependent on him for his instructions but to develop a church capable of making mature Christian decisions on their own. In this severe letter he would have communicated that this was not a private matter. This was something that involved the entire church<sup>13</sup>. Church disputes effect everyone, whither or not they are personally involved. They all damage the entire congregation. So the church needed to do something about this.

The ultimate goal is peaceful resolution not unholy compromise. The final outcome had to be fitting for those who were baptized into Christ and bore his name. Paul loved the church and did not want them to be destroyed because of their previous failure to remain completely separated from sin.

Paul sends this severe letter and receives reports that the church received his letter well. They issued the long overdue punishment and this man repented. Paul writes his 4<sup>th</sup> letter, 2 Corinthians, as a response to this positive report<sup>14</sup>.

## BODY

[6] With all of that context the structure of this letter makes far more sense. The body of this letter which is where our passage lies this morning. Paul is defending his actions after that painful visit and severe letter (1:12-2:11). He explains the nature of his ministry and his heart for it (2:12-7:16). In 8:1-9:15 he points out a need of the church in Jerusalem and that he wants them to take up a collection for them to unite them with other believers. Sacrificing when others are in need. Paul also gives a defense for his authority as an apostle to those who still question him (10:1 - 13:10).

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<sup>10</sup> 1 Cor. 11:29-30

<sup>11</sup> 1 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor. 2:11

<sup>12</sup> 2 Cor. 2:3-9; 7:6-15

<sup>13</sup> 2 Cor. 2:5

<sup>14</sup> 2 Cor 7:6-7

Paul shows his heart to them and his concern for them in his words as their shepherd, Pastor and friend not as an outsider or a voice of condemnation because they made a mistake. Which is another reason he probably does hash out all of the details.

**[7] 2 Corinthians 2:5**

*“Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you.”*

This is Paul addressing this man that caused all of this conflict and division among them. Even though there is a perspective that the conflict or the main hurt would be possessed by Paul. Paul is flipping it and saying that this man has caused more pain to the church than this man ever caused to himself. Because it wasn't about just the disagreement between this man and Paul. This man had people that followed him and there were others in the church that remained loyal to Paul. It probably would have caused more hurt in Paul's absence as they argued with each other.

He is pointing out that this man caused so much hurt, yes publicly to me, but more severely he cause a lot more hurt to the church.

**[8] 2 Corinthians 2:6**

*“For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough,”*

This person that has caused this hurt, he has suffered his punishment. This would have been the original punishment that Paul would have outlined in 1 Cor 5 but would have finally been instituted after his severe letter. The punishment by the majority is pointing out that the church is the one that issued this discipline. The majority of the church was unified against this campaign. The Church took responsibility and made this situation right<sup>15</sup>.

This is where things get crazy though...

**[9] 2 Corinthians 2:7-8**

*“so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him.”*

Paul is saying alright his punishment is done, he has served his consequence it is now time that he be restored to you. We will talk about this a little more but this is not a restatement of a position of authority, but a restatement of fellowship. Forgiveness is about relationship not restoration of authority. This is Paul turning the situation of 'I win you, loose' into a situation where the church wins and Satan loses. This brother is won back to Christ and is not lost to Satan.

Remember Paul's original discipline was for him to be turned over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh. So this means, if the punishment is sufficient that the flesh of this man has been put to death. He has turned to full repentance of the Holy Spirit and has repented of sin.

The grief that he experienced in his punishment is to be overturned with forgiveness and comfort. Notice this is not a command by Paul to forgive him. This is him saying what they should do, he is asking them to forgive him.

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<sup>15</sup> 2 Cor 7:8-12

Paul is asking them to comfort him. He saying that they should deal with him in love, support him and encourage him<sup>16</sup>. This would be the church dealing with this offender as a father deals with his own children, 'encouraging, comforting and urging to live lives worthy of God who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

This 'comfort' is not making them feel comfortable about their past sins. This is leading them to godly sorrow where they find God's forgiveness. This comfort is with the goal of removing this excessive sorrow. Paul is all too familiar with sorrow and does not wish for even this man to be lost in it. As Christians we are to live triumphantly, knowing that our sins have been forgiven but God. Living under an all-consuming, excessive guilt can only destroy life, not bring it.

This past disgrace will continue to burden the offender no doubt, but with forgiveness he will now have his fellow believer to help him under the weight. Because as I said before church conflict effects everyone. There are no private sins in the church body. Paul knew this which is why he addressed it the way he did in the first place. Since it was not done the severe letter was written. Paul says in verse 9...

**[10] 2 Corinthians 2:9**

*"For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything."*

Paul says that he wrote the instructions in 1 Corinthians to see if they would follow his instruction and do the right things without having him come and take care of it himself. This shows that his purpose all along was for the eventual restoration of the individual. This test was a way of identifying the true nature of a Christian.

According to the world, when someone offends, they cut ties issue discipline, or like we talked about in wk1 of this series when we issue vengeance that far exceeds justice. After our flesh is satisfied and we think they suffered enough we cut ties and removed them from our lives entirely. There is no hope or intention for restoration in the slightest.

Because of what Christ has done for us we model the same character<sup>17</sup>. When there is an offense, we separate ourselves, discipline wrongdoers, but we also forgive when they come to repentance.

Because this is exactly what this church in Corinth did, they passed the test.

This is why forgiveness plays such an important role in the life of a Christian. Paul is pointing to the teaching of Jesus in the Lord's prayer

**[11] Matthew 6:9-15**

*"Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.*

<sup>10</sup> *Your kingdom come,  
your will be done,*

*on earth as it is in heaven.*

<sup>11</sup> *Give us this day our daily bread,*

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<sup>16</sup> Gal. 6:1-5

<sup>17</sup> Eph 4:32

<sup>12</sup> *and forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

<sup>13</sup> *And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.*

<sup>14</sup> *For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, <sup>15</sup> but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"*

Or in Luke's Gospel...

**[12] Luke 17:3-4**

*"Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, <sup>4</sup> and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."*

Even with this emphasis on forgiveness something that has been a part of the Christian culture well since Adam and Eve really. But even in the secular world the mental health field is recording measurable and collecting significant psychological data on the positive effects of forgiveness in a persons mental health. These are studies that are done on victims of Trauma forgiving their abusers and showing significant signs of relief in their personal mental health<sup>18</sup>.

**[13] 2 Corinthians 2:10**

*"Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ,"*

Paul has gone ahead of them in this, saying that if they are going to forgive him, he will as well. In fact he has already forgiven this person, and it was for the benefit of the entire church community because these are the things that are done in the presence of God. Another way to say it is that we do these things because Christ is a witness to them. The punishment that was dealt out to this individual was for them to find repentance and put the death to flesh but the separation of him while he figured that out was for the benefit of the church. So too the forgiveness of the individual is for the benefit of the church.

As a Body we share in the damage that comes from sin, but we also share in the victory of the forgiveness and redemption when someone is restored to us. This is to say that this being done in the presence of God is that God is not far away<sup>19</sup> when these situations come up<sup>20</sup>. Everything that this church did was in the presence of God. Paul by pointing it out is identifying the approval of the forgiveness from Christ. Because this would have been evidence of their character as Christians.

Not only is God close to us in these situations of discipline but so is our enemy<sup>21</sup>. He says in verse 11...

**[14] 2 Corinthians 2:11**

*"so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs."*

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<sup>18</sup> Toussaint, Loren, and Jon R. Webb. "Theoretical and empirical connections between forgiveness, mental health, and well-being." *Handbook of forgiveness* (2005): 349-362.

<sup>19</sup> Heb 13:5-6

<sup>20</sup> Eph 5:25-27

<sup>21</sup> 1 Ptr 5:8

This word 'outwitted' is also translated as to cheat or to rob. Satan is clearly defined throughout scripture as an enemy of God and an enemy of the church. Satan in this letter is identified as the god of this age (4:4). When Paul issues the punishment, it was to release this man to the world where Satan is ruling.

Paul then pointing out that through forgiveness the church will not be outwitted by Satan. This is Paul saying that this man was turned over to Satan, but Satan cannot keep him if he comes to repentance. Catch this, if the man truly repents and the church does not forgive and accept them back, then Satan will outwit, cheat or rob another soul away from the kingdom.

### GOSPEL

**[15] 2 Corinthians is rich with this theme of reconciliation, but it comes through difficult choices about toxic relationships and separation from sinful behavior.**

Those that followed this man originally and questioned Paul's authority were being divisive. Paul still hoped for reconciliation even after the harsh visit. Reconciliation is only possible because Jesus reconciled us to God through the death on the cross<sup>22</sup>.

He paid the debt for our sin and removed our list of wrong doings so that nothing could hinder our relationship with our Heavenly Father<sup>23</sup>. The perfect example of forgiveness, where it says that he throws our sins as far as the east is from the west<sup>24</sup>.

### APPLICATION

Sin always has an effect. We see it in our lives and look around at our world and see the effects of sin all the time. When it comes to sin in the church we have some obvious examples like a Pastor has an affair or commits some great moral sin and we see it tear the church apart. But sin having an effect on the church does not have to be the sin of a Pastor, of its leaders or even have to be a sin that is obvious to others.

The hurt and the effect can be felt and the hurt can be all too real but it can feel like getting punched over and over again in a dark room. You don't know where they're coming from and you don't know when the next hit will come. As a church everyone feels the effects of sin. When someone is unhappy in the church, misery loves company. Now it is no longer one person who is unhappy, it's a group that continues to remain unhappy and makes other discontent.

This is why church discipline is modeled in scripture. We address and call it for what it is with the hope and motivation for repentance and redemption. Sin left unaddressed is a cancer that the enemy uses to destroy the lives of everyone around them.

**[16]** N.T. Wright says,

"Too often the church, at least in the mainstream of modern Western Christianity, has been so anxious about ever causing sorrow to anyone that it has backed off from confrontation and discipline. Sometimes the opposite mistake is made, of course. But Paul's point is that the right sequence, and balance, needs to be maintained. And he himself is an example of how it's done. Forgive—and forget. Of course, if the

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<sup>22</sup> 2 Cor 5:18-19

<sup>23</sup> Rom 8:38-39

<sup>24</sup> Ps. 103:12



discipline has only gone skin deep, and the offender returns quickly to the same practices, something more may need to be done. The balance of wisdom and love will always need to be fine-tuned as the story develops. But none of this, in any case, is simply a matter of 'getting things right' in church life for the sake of order and tidiness. It has to do with a larger and darker issue. It is about the church's stand against the accuser, the satan. We know, Paul says, the cunning plans he is working out. We mustn't let ourselves be outwitted by him"<sup>25</sup>

Church discipline is always a difficult subject. Often times, its not handled appropriately, churches will always go to one side of the extreme to the other. Either to harsh or not enough. Too harsh is pretty self explanatory. Its usually a punishment riddled with shame and does not have the purpose of repentance. That's the one extreme the opposite is when we do nothing, or not enough, and the damage can be catastrophic.

Churches, when they do nothing or not enough, they will either, bury their heads in the sand and just hope all of this will blow over, and it only gets worse. Or they will give out cheap grace at the surface level and pretend everything is hunky dory without any signs or demonstration of true repentance. This of course only perpetuates the problem. The pain of the victims of the offense is never healed and the offender does not change because there is no need and no real consequences.

Which is why in this passage, knowing the context of this situation, the purpose of this process always has to be restoration and forgiveness. It is absolutely necessary when it comes to us dealing with our wounds especially when dealing with wounds in, around and from the church.

C.S. Lewis said, "We all agree that forgiveness is a beautiful idea until we have to practice it."<sup>26</sup>

**[17] Forgiveness is putting into practice what Jesus instructed with his life, modeled with his death and completed with his resurrection.**

It should be an effort that comes as a result of our dependence on the holy spirit actively working in and through us.

Some of you have big hurts. There are things that have shaken your worldview, caused you to question your sanity, your value, or even caused you to abandon your faith all together. You may be thinking that your hurt, your wound, your scar are too big to forgive. You think that you do not have the strength. But you have to understand what forgiveness is before you can reject the idea.

Before we say what forgiveness is let's address what it is not. True forgiveness does not excuse the sin or ignore what happened. This man at the church in Corinth was someone of prominence of status and influence in the community. Forgiveness was not letting him sit he is sorry and placing him back on the pedestal he was on before.

**[18] Forgiveness means that you still relate to the person in spite of what happened as well as in light of what happened.**

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<sup>25</sup> N. T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: 2 Corinthians* [London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004], 21

<sup>26</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (London: Geoffrey Bles. 1958) 27.

This man was restored to fellowship with other believers. In spite of the division that he caused. Even though he wounded the church. He caused people to rise against it, rebel, fight, destroy, and leave the church. That person is welcomed back into fellowship and communion in spite of all that they had done. Because love covers a multitude of sins<sup>27</sup>.

Also they are welcomed back in light of what happened. They understood their sin. They were removed to put the flesh to death and they entered into enduring sorrow because of the pain that they caused. They are then welcomed back out of that depth of despair in fellowship with the body of Christ as we build each other up sharing each other's burdens<sup>28</sup>. He entered into fellowship, in light of what has happened.

If we are to pass the test that Paul laid out for the church in Corinth of the nature of true Christianity, we have to learn from their example. We have to remain free from the influence of the culture around us. The world out there, is under the rule and reign of the enemy. He is not in here. Not in the body of Christ. Jesus is the only one the rules and reigns in this community.

**[19]** Not only are we to keep out the influence of the culture but we are to minimize the effects of sin on our community. When there are offenses, we are to follow the Matthew 18 Model and address our hurts with our brothers and sisters. Sin and hurts are not just with the individual. They affect the entire congregation.

If someone leaves a church because they are hurt by someone specifically. When they leave, they have done nothing to help the rest of the church heal from that same hurt. They walk away from the source of their wound, and in turn, struggle to find true healing. Which is why being apart of a church is like marriage you're in it for better or worse, richer or poorer, part of the solution or part of the problem.

We remain free from the culture, we address sin among believers, but we also silence division before it destroys. A house divided cannot stand<sup>29</sup>. Unity within the church should happen naturally as we lean into the work of the Holy Spirit<sup>30</sup>. Division is the challenge to it and actively needs to be squelched<sup>31</sup>. Those that are unhappy, address the wounds that hurt you. Do not build your company of misery and divide the body of Christ.

**[20]** Finally, and most importantly no matter the situation, circumstance, or magnitude of the offense we always have to **work with the purpose and intention of Forgiveness**. When it comes to operating as the body of Christ we have to model the one who is the head of us. That is Christ and to be his followers, his hands, his feet, and to have his heart...

**[21] Repentance and Forgiveness are absolutely Necessary.**

## PRAYER AND REFLECTION

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<sup>27</sup> 1 Peter 4:8

<sup>28</sup> Romans 12:5

<sup>29</sup> Matthew 12:22-28

<sup>30</sup> Eph 4:3

<sup>31</sup> Titus 3:10-11

I'm going to ask one or two of our elders and some of our women's ministry to come up and stand around the sanctuary. They are available to pray with you and for you as we enter this time of reflection. For the believers that have the scars and the one that have caused them.

If you have these wounds go to your father to have him prepare your heart to forgive. It starts with letting go. Right here in your seat between you and your heavenly father give forgiveness and let those things go. It is a process, you might have to acknowledge forgiveness everyday, especially when you are reminded of it, but let the Christ-like character shine through and let those things go.

If you are the one the was responsible for the wounds of others. Maybe you have hurt someone, or maybe you have caused that division you are in that enduring sorrow. There is redemption and forgiveness in Christ and in His body. We aim to model Christ sacrifice. Come in true repentance and seek forgiveness and we will bear each others burdens as the church.

So take this time to go to your heavenly father, giving forgiveness or seeking it through repentance, start with your father that loves you and is the great comforter. Seek him first in prayer.

## COMMUNION