

Sermon to the Saints of God assembled at Topeka, KS: Sunday, March 14, 2021

Entreat

The last time I preached, we examined the scriptural instruction to “greet one another with an holy kiss”, wherein we must either seek unity in the Spirit of God, which will produce the fruit of the Spirit, or else we are seeking unity in our flesh, which will produce the deeds of the flesh. We must maintain a holy perspective about each of these lambs of the flock of God that we are privileged to dwell with; we must **daily** be about the work of tearing down our sinful tendencies, so that we see the righteousness of Christ when we look at our brothers and sisters, rather than the offenses and complaints of our angry, envious, hypocritical hearts. Everyone in this world views one another through the lens of proud flesh; we must be holy (separate), and see each other through the lens of the Spirit of God. That is the work before us, my friends. This work will produce outward fruits of kindness and affection toward one another, and yet the bulk of the work is done in the heart, long before any interaction with another person.

We have had many sermons on how we are to view one another, and how we are to treat one another. Today, I would like to focus on one practical element of this work: **Entreat**. When we are having distress toward someone (whether personal offense, or worry about their behavior), we are to entreat them, and they are to receive that entreaty. The scriptural position is plain and clear:

1Timothy 5:1,2 *“1 Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; 2 The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.”*

- Notice that we are to entreat ALL categories of people. Every age and gender is covered in this plain command.
- As context, remember that these instructions are from Paul to Timothy, who was an elder in a particular church; he certainly has authority, but he is to use it with gentle care.
- This is up close, personal, and often emotional work. Thus the instruction to take extra care to maintain purity when engaging the work with a younger woman.
- *Matthew Henry: “Now the rule is:*
 1. *To be very tender in rebuking elders — elders in age, elders by office. Respect must be had to the dignity of their years and place, and therefore they must not be rebuked sharply nor magisterially; but Timothy himself, though an evangelist, must entreat them as fathers, for this would be the likeliest way to work upon them, and to win upon them.*
 2. *The younger must be rebuked as brethren, with love and tenderness; not as desirous, to spy faults or pick quarrels, but as being willing to make the best of*

them. There is need of a great deal of meekness in reproofing those who deserve reproof.

3. *The elder women must be reproofed, when there is occasion, as mothers. Plead with your mother, plead.*
 4. *The younger women must be reproofed, but reproofed as sisters, with all purity. If Timothy, so mortified a man to this world and to the flesh and lusts of it, had need of such a caution as this, much more have we."*
- The verse says: "Rebuke not" – but doesn't the Bible tell us to rebuke? Absolutely. There are several places where we find a direct instruction to rebuke (ex: **1Timothy 5:20; 2Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13; Titus 2:15**). Each of those instances is using one of two similar Greek words (epitimaō, elegcho), which generally mean: to correct, admonish, call to account, chasten, reprehend severely, chide, etc. There are times when we must employ these tools, as a part of maintaining the discipline of Christ.
 - Unless we have encountered an extreme circumstance of clear presumptuous sin, then we should not start at outright rebuke. Even when we must employ rebuke, it must come from a spirit of meekness, and a desire for the person's best good. Consider these words from Christ:
 - **Luke 17:1-4** *"1 Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! 2 It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. 3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. 4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him."*
 - The word translated as rebuke in Luke 17 is "epitimaō", which is made up of two words: "timaō" (to place honor), and "epi" (upon). When we go to rebuke, it must be with a desire for the honor of Christ, the honor of the church, and to restore honor to the person in question. It is **not** an angry, vengeful tirade.
 - In 1Timothy 5:1 the Greek word translated as "rebuke" is unique in the entire Bible. What is this "rebuke" that we are to avoid? The Greek word is "epiplesso", which is made up of two words: "plesso" (to strike or beat), and "epi" (upon). We have no business striking, beating, and brawling with our tongues. Our personal anger and malice have no place in appropriate Christian rebuke. We cannot engage in appropriate rebuke – much less appropriate entreaty – if our hearts are full of wrath. So then what are we supposed to do? ...

Entreat

What does it mean to entreat, and how should we do it? Let's begin with definitions:

Dictionary: ask someone earnestly or anxiously to do something.

synonyms: implore · beseech · beg · plead with · supplicate · pray · ask · request · bid · enjoin · appeal to · call on · petition · solicit · exhort · urge

Strongs: parakaleo – Beseech, comfort, exhort, desire, pray,

1) to call to one's side, call for, summon

2) to address, speak to, (call to, call upon), which may be done in the way of exhortation, entreaty, comfort, instruction, etc.

2a) to admonish, exhort

2b) to beg, entreat, beseech

2b1) to strive to appease by entreaty

2c) to console, to encourage and strengthen by consolation, to comfort

2c1) to receive consolation, be comforted

2d) to encourage, strengthen

2e) exhorting and comforting and encouraging

2f) to instruct, teach

Further, let us consider how this Greek word (parakaleo) is used throughout the scriptures. I've underlined it's usage in each verse.

Comfort

- **Matthew 5:4** *"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted"*
- **Luke 16:25** *"But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."*
- **2Corinthians 1:4** *"Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."*
- **1Thessalonians 5:11** *"Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do."*

Pleading for help with strong desire; pleading from a position of relative weakness – no upper hand, no whip hand.

- **Matthew 18:29; 32** *"And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. ... Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:"*

- **Mark 1:40** “And there came a leper to him, beseeking him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.”
- **Mark 5:23** “And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.”
- **Mark 6:56** “And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.”

Exhortation and edification: encouraging and building up.

- **Acts 2:40** “And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”
- **1Thessalonians 2:11** “As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,”
- **Hebrews 10:25** “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

Even when we are in a position of authority, and someone clearly has a wrong perspective, we should try to entreat them.

- **Luke 15:28** “And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.”

Even when we are mistreated, we should respond with entreaty. Whether we are dealing with our brothers and sisters of faith, or with the people of the world.

- **1Corinthians 4:13** “Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.”

The fact that God has given someone a weaker constitution, or lesser skill set than you is no excuse to harbor anger toward them, or rail on them; rather, we ought to take opportunity to consider the frame of our fellow laborers, and encourage and support them in their walk of faith. What do any of us have to glory in? We have only what we have been given, and should work to employ those gifts and improve upon them in patiently ministering to the flock of God.

- **1Thessalonians 5:14** “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.”

This earnest entreaty is not at all mutually exclusive from appropriate rebuke and reproof. We must patiently stay upon our God and hold up His word as the plumb line.

- **2Timothy 4:2** *“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”*
- **Titus 1:9** *“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”*
- **Titus 2:15** *“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.”*
- **Jude 1:3** *“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”*

Practical thoughts:

- If we are distressed toward someone – either because of personal offense, or concern that they are sliding into sin – then we are to entreat them. We are to go to them alone, and entreat them. (**Matthew 18:15**)
- Entreaty **does not** mean that we avoid saying difficult words; direct words; words of correction; words of rebuke. These things are necessary, and they are the spiritual help that we owe one another. Entreaty is not weak; it is powerful, in that it is relying upon the strength of the words of God, instead of the strategies and emotions of fleshly reasoning. The word of God is a hammer – we don’t need to manufacture impact because of our pride and fear.
 - **Job 6:25** *“How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove?”*
- Entreaty begins with a frame of mind, and shows forth an appropriate meekness before God. I know what manner of man that I am, and what struggles that I have against sin within my own heart and behavior. I must consider that when I go to address someone else; I must go with behavior purposefully aimed to help, encourage, comfort, instruct, and build them up in the faith. I want them to do those same things for me, as the adopted siblings of God. The framing of my own heart is the driving force of entreaty. The fact is, I can address someone with a syrupy sweet tone, and calculated strategic words while still harboring malice and envy toward that person. If my heart is not right with God, then I cannot effectively entreat.
 - **Ephesians 4:29-32** *“29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”*
- If we are going to properly consider and entreat one another ...

- We must be considered about what we are doing and why. We must keep before our eyes that our words and deeds in these moments will provoke someone. We must frame our hearts and behavior with purpose and intent to provoke to love and good works, rather than anger and strife. We cannot control how a person reacts, but we can – and must - control our intention, and our approach.
- We must assume that our perspective, perception, and facts are limited and myopic. We cannot rely upon rumors, assumptions, hearsay, history, etc. We have to ask, and then ***listen*** to what a person has to say.
 - ***Proverbs 18:13*** “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.”
- Where we don’t have full information, we must assume the best motivation for a person’s behavior, unless and until we have clear information that says otherwise. This should be our default reaction when we start to have distress toward someone. Step back, consider the person, and force yourself to find a perspective that puts a positive view on their motivation. Charity thinks no evil. (1Corinthians 13:5)
- If we bite upon each other, then we will consume each other. (Galatians 5:15) Our flesh is insatiable.
 - ***Galatians 5:13-16*** “13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. 16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”
- Inspect your own behavior, your own motives, your own biases, and your own assumptions ***first*** – we are hypocrites by nature! Watch for, and own your malice, anger, hatred, envy, etc. Don’t gussy it up as righteous indignation. Get to the Lord and ask Him to give you a godly spirit toward your co-elect. When we get our hackles up, pride, envy, and fear are leading the charge. Take a deep breath – pray - get out of fight or flight mode. There is no need for a fight. Peaceably entreat, and trust that God will give you peace in obedience.
- There is no need to build up to a rolling boil and then burst on someone. There is no need to run a personal matter past a bunch of other people. There is no need to rally troops to your cause. While there are certainly times where it is appropriate to speak to someone for help with your perspective (spouse, parent, elder, trusted, experienced and discreet friend, etc.), we need to treat that like it is the exception, not the rule. If you are talking to someone about someone else – what is your purpose? If in fact

there is a good reason for it, then it must be done only to the extent necessary, and there must be discretion!

- **1 Timothy 5:13** *“13 And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.”*
 - **Proverbs 6:12-19** *“12 A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth. 13 He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers; 14 Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord. 15 Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy. 16 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: 17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, 19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.”*
 - **Proverbs 11:12,13** *“12 He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace. 13 A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.”*
 - **Proverbs 16:27,28** *“27 An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire. 28 A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.”*
 - **Proverbs 26:20-22** *“20 Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. 21 As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife. 22 The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.”*
 - **Proverbs 11:9** *“An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.”*
 - **Proverbs 25:23** *“The north wind driveth away rain: so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.”*
- Easy to be entreated:
 - Each of us ***must*** be entreatable. This is huge. Fear is one of the main reasons that we strategize in our flesh and avoid the plain instruction to entreat. We are afraid that we will encounter defensive mechanisms and rage when we try to talk to a person about their behavior. That is no excuse to avoid doing the work with a proper spirit toward God, but it is a major mental hurdle. We must be easily entreated.
 - **James 3:13** *“Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of*

wisdom. 14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”

- Do not use anything I have said in this sermon as defensive weaponry when someone tries to talk to you. These scriptural truths are things that we must apply to our own thinking, behavior, and words, first and foremost. They are not a cudgel to keep people at bay. We are all flesh and blood, and will fail in some aspect of this work; that is no excuse to harden your heart and stop up your ears.
- Recognize that any correction feels grievous at the moment that you receive it. In fact, it can feel like a beating to our conscience, but that doesn't mean that someone is beating us up with malice. We ought to well appreciate any faithful friend that is willing to tell us hard truths.
 - **Proverbs 27:6** *“Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.”*

I love you all. Amen.