

Fil-Am Community Church
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6 Nov 2016
Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 13:5

RECOVERING FROM RESENTMENT

Building Great Relationships, Part 8 of 10

Good morning Fil-Am It is so good to see you here this morning, let us get into the Word of God, more importantly, let us get the Word of God into you!

I want to start off this morning by saying I am sorry for hurting your feelings, and if I have not just give me a few weeks and I am sure I will.

Today we are continuing with our series called building Great Relationships and we are on the 8th sermon called Recovering from Resentment.

The key verse for today is 1 Corinthians 13:5 "*Love keeps no record of wrongs.*"

It's a fact of life that people hurt each other. Either intentionally or unintentionally we hurt each other. You're going to hurt people, they're going to hurt you.

It is how you handle that hurt will, to a large degree, determine your happiness in life. As we said last week it is not what life throws at you that determines your happiness, it is how you deal with it that does, or how you respond to what life throws at you!

If you don't respond correctly to hurt it can turn into resentment.

- If you hold onto a hurt, it becomes resentment.
- If you hold on to a hurt, it can become hate.

We often experience resentment toward other people when we find it hard to forgive them and hold on to unspoken pain.

We do this when we feel we have been treated unfairly, judged, or wronged, we have a powerful internal reaction. The emotions we experience are strong, we feel them intensely, because they challenge us to reassess the self-image we hold of ourselves.

The unexpressed painful emotions we are experience as a result of other people's actions have the potential to transform into resentment if they are not released in a healthy, effective and timely way.

We need to understand that resentment lives inside all of us, feeding on our negative feelings and emotions. It becomes stronger the longer it is ignored. It can mutate and develop into a warped veil, which prevents us from seeing the world from a healthy, balanced perspective.

Resentment if left unchecked and or unresolved, has the power to be all consuming, and is very effective at fueling anger.

Resentment is the great destroyer of relationships. It destroys all kinds of relationships.

Marriage counselors frequently have people tell me, "I don't love my husband any more. ... I don't have any feelings for my wife; I'm dead inside. What's wrong with me?"

What's is wrong is resentment.

Resentment eats up your energy in such large quantities that eventually you're emotionally empty and you have nothing to give.

The Good News is that you can recover from resentment and hurts in life.

1 Corinthians 13:5 "*Love keeps no record of wrongs.*"

It's an accounting term.

It doesn't keep a ledger of wrongs. Love does not hold a grudge, or remain silent for six weeks then hit you with what you did way back when....

Today I want us to into the Bible and see where a man named Job who had every reason in the world to be filled with resentment, and see if we cannot learn from how he processed what was thrown at him.

You have to understand that during his time he was probably the wealthiest man who ever lived, there was not a need or a want that he didn't have at his fingertips.

On one day he lost it all.

- He went bankrupt.
- He lost his entire estate.
- All of his children were murdered.
- His wife turned against him.
- He got an incurable disease which was extremely painful and if that were not enough
- All of his friends came to him and, instead of sympathizing, said, "It's your fault."

No sympathy at all. He had every reason in the world to be resentful.

However, instead of getting resentful, he recovered from the resentment and the Bible says that God made the last of Job's life greater than the first.

Regardless of the pain you've had in your past, God can make the rest of your life the best of your life if you'll do what Job did.

Today we are going to dig a little deeper at the cures for resentment but before we do we are going to look at three reasons for resentment

I. CAUSES OF RESENTMENT

The first cause for resentment is....

1. What people say about us.

We touched on this last week when we said, "Sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me." That's not true. Given 90 seconds you could recall things that kids said to you on the playground that still hurt.

It's amazing how labels stick with us. They can still hurt today. If we allow those words to stick with us they can cripple us or hinder us from becoming all that we could be, they will limit how we look at ourselves, or potential or self-worth. That is why it is very important to know who we are in Christ, because with that understanding we are not limited to what the world thinks about us, because we have a solid understanding of who we really are.

Another cause for resentment is...

2. What people think about us.

"You think you are better than I am."

Can you be hurt without having anybody say anything to you? Sure.

Have you ever felt rejected when nothing was said? Sure.

Just by the way people look at you, by their body language, non-verbal messages.

You can hurt people just by ignoring them, when you don't acknowledge they exist.

Some of you had unpleasable parents growing up. No matter how hard you tried, you just couldn't please them. And that hurts.

3. What people do to us.

"Those I love most have turned against me." The tragedy today is that abuse is on the rise.

- Physical abuse,
- Emotional abuse,

- Spiritual abuse.

We're in a very abusive society. Notice that Job says, "Those I love most". The number one place resentment shows up is not at work,

- It is in the home,
- In marriages/relationships,
- In families.

The closer people are to you the greater the chance they have to hurt you.

They can betray you, be disloyal, say hurtful things and do hurtful things. It is in our homes that we have to deal with resentment the most...

It is....

- what people say about us,
- think about us,
- And what they do to us.

II. THE PROBLEM WITH RESENTMENT

When people hurt us, the normal way to react is to get resentful. That's the natural, normal reaction.

It's not the right reaction. It does more damage than good.

By getting back into the word and into the book of Job it says that it does three things to us.

1. Resentment is unreasonable. It doesn't make sense; it's illogical, irrational. It's not worth the effort.

Job 5:2 *"To worry yourself to death with resentment would be a foolish, senseless thing to do."*

Circle "senseless". He says it's worthless.

Eccl. 7:9 says *"It's foolish to harbor a grudge."*

It doesn't make sense. Why?

You can't change the past. No matter how much you resent what happened it's not going to change the past. It won't correct the problem in the present no matter how much you resent it.

It doesn't make you feel any better. So why get resentful, it doesn't work. It's foolish and senseless.

Have you ever done something dumb or silly because you were resentful. "I'll show him!" and you go out and do something real crazy and make a fool of yourself.

Psalm 109:33 *"He was so bitter he spoke without stopping to think."*

A lot of times we do that. We get so bitter and resentful. We say stuff without even thinking what it is.

2. Resentment is unhelpful.

It's self-inflicting.

Job says, "You are only hurting yourself with your anger!" When you get resentful it always hurts you more than it does the person you're resentful about.

They might be totally oblivious of what is going on.

It always hurts you more than it does anybody else, and does nothing but fuel negativity and pain in your life.

While you're stewing and spewing and upset, they're going on with their life. Some of you are allowing people from your past, a former mate, a parent, a teacher, who made you miserable back then, continue to make you miserable now.

That's dumb! They can't hurt you any more unless you choose to let them.

Resentfulness is not only unreasonable and unhelpful it is not worth the price.

It's emotional suicide.

The most miserable people I know are people full of resentment. They're unhappy, it just prolongs the hurt. It costs too much.

Given a conducive set of circumstances and enough time, resentment can be expressed on a powerful scale. It is a ticking time-bomb, which can lead to self-abusive or self-destructive behavior, or a combination of both.

Resentment finds a comfortable home inside us if not dealt with, and can do nothing but continue to fuel those negative emotions, those feelings of inadequacy that we all feel from time to time.

3. Resentment is unhealthy.

Job 21:23-25 *"Some men stay healthy till the day they die ... others have no happiness at all; they live and die with bitter hearts."*

You can't be resentful and happy at the same time.

If you're holding a grudge you're only holding on to hurt. And it's unhealthy.

People say, "Watch what you eat." It's not what you eat it's what's eating you that makes a bigger difference in your life.

There is a strong relationship between your physical health and your spiritual health, between your emotional makeup and your physical makeup. There is a relationship between sin and sickness. I'm not saying all sickness is caused by sin. It's not. But a lot of problems you're carrying around you brought on yourself by holding on to grudges.

You have no idea what you're doing to yourself when you hold on to a hurt, a grudge. It always hurts you more than it does anybody else. It ruins your relationships.

Proverbs 17:22 *"A cheerful heart is good medicine but a crushed spirit dries up your life."*

It will dry you up into a little shell of a person if you let it. For your own sake, for your health's sake, let go, forgive.

III. THE CURE FOR RESENTMENT

I want us to look at the three things that Job did that turned his life around that made the rest of his life the best of his life in spite of all the tremendous pain he'd gone through.

One of the first cures for your resentment is to....

1. Reveal you're hurt.

Admit it.

- Be honest.
- Tell the truth.
- Own up to it,

"It hurt!" Job 7:1 *"I can't be quiet. I'm angry and I'm bitter. I have to speak."*

I got to get it out!

Job 10:1 *"Listen to my bitter complaint. Don't condemn me God."*

Job emotionally vomits.

- God, I don't like it!
- It's not fair!
- I'm ticked off!
- I'm angry!
- The situation stinks!

He tells God how angry he is. What did God do? Do you think God was surprised? God knew Job was upset from the moment he got upset.

He just wanted Job to admit it, to get it off his chest. The start is to reveal you're hurt.

Revealing your feeling is the beginning of healing. That's how it starts. The healing process in your life.

If you want to get over your hurts emotional hurts revealing your feeling is the beginning of healing. You've got to share it with somebody.

Some of you are angry at God for things that have happened in your past. He knows it, you know it, but you won't admit it.

The starting point is to say, "God, I'm still upset. I'm angry that this happened!"

You just need to reveal your feeling. God's not going to fry you with some thunderbolt if you do that. He already knows how you feel. You just start the healing process by admitting it.

A week ago, in the last message in this series, we talked about there are four things you can do with a feeling, a negative emotion: repress it, suppress it, express it -- those are the all the negative ways to do it -- or confess it. You admit it to God.

You tell God.

- What is it in your life that you're pretending not to know, or don't want to talk about?
- What is it in your marriage that you're pretending is not there, but it is there and it bugs you? And it hurts.
- What is it in that relationship with that boyfriend or girlfriend or boss or parents or kids... that you know is there, everybody knows it, but you're pretending is not there? It's like the elephant in the living room that no one brings up?
- What elephant? And everyone is walking all around it, acting like it is not there?
- What is it in your family that you're pretending isn't true?

You need to face up to it. That's the first step.

Some people say, I'd like to close the door on the past. You ought to so you can move on to the present, but you can't do it by ignoring it.

It doesn't matter where you've been as much as the direction of your feet today.

You need to close the door on the past but there is no closure without first disclosure.

I can't close the door on my past until first I've faced it and admitted it, share it with somebody, CONFESSED IT!

Somebody says, "I keep trying to bury my past." But it keeps resurrecting itself because it's a live burial. You haven't dealt with it. It keeps popping back up. Any trigger that triggers that memory brings the hurt back. You've got to deal with it first.

Some of you need to go home and write a letter to God. God, this is the way I feel about those things that hurt me. Where were you when these things happened? Why did it happen to me? Tell God your feelings. He understands you. Remember, He's the one who made you. He knows what you've been through.

Where was God when your son died? He was the same place He was when His son died on the cross.

God understands hurt and pain.

Saints listen to this very critical path toward recovery. Everybody needs at least one person you can spill your guts to and they're going to love you unconditionally.

That's why we believe so strongly in small groups in this church. If you really want to get in the family of Fil-Am Community Church you really need to get into one of the Local Home groups.

When you're going through a crisis or dealing with a memory you can share and pray with them. That's the value of Home Groups, it is a sterile place where you can reveal your hurts, your hang-ups and your habits, and have someone come along side you to help you walk through them, to lift you up and HOLD you ACCOUNTABLE.

The first step was to reveal your hurt the next step is to....

2. Release your offender.

- Let them go,
- Forgive him.
- You're NEVER going to have relief until you do.

Job's friends hurt him tremendously. They betrayed him. They were disloyal, criticized him, and misunderstood him. Nothing hurts more than being misunderstood or falsely accused.

It wasn't Job's fault at all. He was innocent. He had every right to be resentful.

God did a turnaround in Job's life.

Saints when did He do the turn around and break him out of the problem into a new life?

- Not after Job had retaliated.
- Not after Job had got revenge.
- Not after he had been resentful.
- But after Job had released his offenders.
- He let them go.
- Forgave them.

Then God began to be able to work in his life. The Bible says he not only let them go he prayed for their success.

Job 42:10 "After Job prayed for his three friends, God made him prosperous again and gave him twice as much as he had before."

How and when did God do it? After and when he had released his offenders.

Why is that important, that I release my offenders?

Because we become what we focus on. It's a law of life that whatever you focus on is what you move toward.

"I'm not going to be resentful...!" What are you focusing on? Resentfulness.

"My dad was so mean I'm never going to be like my dad." You're focusing on the very thing you don't want.

"I'm never going to be like my mom." If you don't release them you're going to start to resemble them. It's a fact of life. If you don't release them, you're going to start to resemble those who've hurt you.

Bitterness in your heart does very strange things to your personality. We're not meant to walk around carrying grudges. It takes its toll on our life.

You've got to forgive them so you can release them and release yourself.

How often do you have to do it? Peter asked Jesus this question.

Matthew 18:21-22 "Peter asked Jesus, 'Lord, how many times should I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?'"

If you count it's not forgiveness. Do you store up little ammunition in your marriage? "You did that and I'd better remember that so when I do something I can say, 'You did that...'" If you're doing this you're not being loving.

Love keeps no record. If you're doing that you're just destroying your marriage. That's all you're doing! He says 490 times. **Forgiveness must be continual.**

There's a thing going around Christian circles that makes it seem like forgiveness is just a onetime shot. "I was severely hurt, abused, early in life. I come to a service, bow my head and say 'I forgive them.' Is that all I need to do?"

I sincerely doubt it. Forgiveness is a process.

The Bible says it's continual, you keep on forgiving.

Every time that memory comes up you forgive them again until you know that you've released them. Then you don't have to do it anymore.

How do I know when I've fully released them?

It doesn't hurt anymore.

You can understand their hurts. You can pray for their success. You can feel comfortable in their presence. The Bible says, "Pray for those who spitefully use you." Like Job did. When you finally release them, when you feel like forgiving them, you can usually stop.

If you don't feel like forgiving them, that's why you need to do it. I don't know that I ever feel like forgiving anybody. But I do it, not because I feel like it, but because it's the right thing to do.

I do it in order to free myself, to personally benefit from it. God says it's the right thing and the second thing, it benefits me.

Matthew 6:14-15 (NASB)

¹⁴ "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."

Clara Barton was the founder of the American Red Cross. There was a man who had hurt her deeply early in her life. Years later she was involved in his life again. She was speaking about him to another person very kindly. The person said, "Wasn't that the guy who hurt you?" Barton said, "Yes, I distinctly remember forgetting that hurt." It's a choice. You can hold on to the hurt and let it turn to hate. Let it go. You reveal the hurt, you release the offender. Not just when you feel like it but when you don't feel like it because it's the right thing to do.

The next time someone's actions hurt you, try telling them how you feel. For example you could say, when you raise your voice, I feel scared or disrespected, or when you ignore me it makes me feel unappreciated.

Try and express yourself in a calm and balanced state of mind, your words have more effect if you are able to express them from a strong healthy standpoint.

That's why I need Jesus Christ in my life. That's why you do too. I'll never make it on my merit, my goodness. I'm not good enough. Neither are you.

I've said it time and time again from this pulpit, but the only difference between me and the sinner that is dying in his sin, is Jesus Christ and him alone.

Life is not fair. But one day God is going to even it all out. Settle the score. My suggestion to you is do what God says to do.

Forgive the person and let God worry about evening it up.

Who has more resources at His disposal anyway, you or God?

Who can do a better job at evening things out, you or God? While you're waiting on God to even the score to give you justice, you forgive them so you can get on with living so you can be free.

Reveal your hurt is step one. Release your offender is step two and finally step three is...

3. Refocus your life.

That's how you heal that hidden memory. As long as you focus on somebody you resent they control you.

You're worrying about something they've already forgotten about.

One of the key things that will help in your refocus is the ability to forgive them!

Forgiveness sets you free from resentments confines, it breaks down the walls that anger builds up and negativity reinforces.

When we forgive, we stop letting our past dictate our present and future.

We acknowledge we want the very best for ourselves, accepting that our past makes us the person we are today.

Letting go of resentment doesn't necessarily lead to forgiveness, however, when you embrace forgiveness, resentment ceases to exist.

We cannot control what other people do but we can control how we react to it.

Let us get back to the story of Job and see how he refocused his life by doing a few very simple and yet powerful things...

Job did three things in refocusing his life:

Job 11:13-16 NASB

¹³"If you would direct your heart right And spread out "your hand to Him, ¹⁴ If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away, And do not let wickedness dwell in your tents; ¹⁵"Then, indeed, you could lift up your face without moral defect, And you would be steadfast and not fear. ¹⁶"For you would forget your trouble, As waters that have passed by, you would remember it."

Long before psychology came along Job said there are three steps for inner healing.

IV. Steps for Inner healing

1. Put your heart right.

That's the first step if you want to be emotionally healed from a hurt. This means do the right thing, what God has said, release the offender.

Whether I feel like it or not I'm going to do the right thing.

- I forgive them,
- I release them,
- I'm not going to try to get even with them.

So I do the right thing, that's the first step. Let them go and forgive them.

2. Reach out to God.

You need to ask God into your life.

Invite Christ to come in and fill you with His forgiveness.

Why? (Because you can't do it by yourself)

I don't think you can manufacture enough forgiveness in your life to handle all the hurts you're going to face, not only those of the past but those you'll have between now and when you die.

You'll be hurt so many times, I don't think you can manufacture enough human forgiveness to handle it. You need God's forgiveness in your life.

Think of Corrie Ten Boom, the lady who hid Jews in her apartment to protect them from the Nazis. When they were caught, not only were the Jews shipped off to the

concentration camps but Corrie and her family were too. Everybody in her family was killed in the concentration camps except Corrie.

She endured torture and abuse and all kinds of things. She later went back and met the guards that had abused her and forgave them.

You can't do that with human forgiveness. You need God's supernatural power in your life in order to let it go and be able to say,

- "It wasn't good.
- It wasn't fun.
- It was bad.

But I believe that God can even bring good out of the bad and somehow the rest of my life is going to be the best of my life."

So you reach out to God and ask Him to fill you with His forgiveness. That's a process, not a one shot deal. You do this over and over as you're healed of these things.

3. Face the world again.

When we're hurt we're tempted to withdraw, back into a shell, put up a wall...

- "I'm never going to let another man get close to me,"
- "I'm never going to have any other relationships,"
- "I'm never going to let my guard down so people can see what I'm really like.

I exposed myself and they took advantage of it. I was hurt deeply. I'm going to build a wall." You're only hurting yourself when you do that.

It says you've got to "face the world again." If you're always looking at what happened to you in the past, letting that define your identity, it's like driving a car looking into a rear view mirror.

You're going to crash.

You've got to face the future.

Resume living. It's not so much the matter of where I've been but in what direction my feet are right now, today, it is where I'm headed.

My past does not have to dictate my future, or limit how high I can grow.

You need to say aloud, "I'm not a victim anymore." You need to stop focusing on the past and look ahead.

- Put your heart right,
- reach out to God,
- Then face the world again firm and courageous.

Once you have done that then your troubles can start to fade from your memory like floods from your past.

The happy ending of the story is in Job 42:12. *"God blessed the last part of Job's life even more than He blessed the first."*

The rest of Job's life became the best of his life. I think God brought you here so He could say to you through me, "You matter and I care about you and the rest of your life can be the best of your life if you'll let go of those past hurts."

What hurtful memory are you choosing to hold onto?

- Something somebody said?
- Or did?
- Or thought about you?

It still causes pain today. Maybe it happened years ago but when something triggers your memory it's just as painful as it was on that day.

How many of us have said "I'm never going to be like that person." If you don't release them you start to resemble them.

Resentment does strange things to us.

Some of you need to forgive your parents.

We all had imperfect parents but some of you had parents that hurt you and you loved them and hated them at the same time.

Some of you need to forgive a former spouse.

They made your life miserable in the past; don't let them make your life miserable now.

You don't have to. They can't hurt you any more unless you hold on to a grudge.

Resentment is not worth it. It's unreasonable, unhelpful, it's unhealthy. For your sake forgive them.

"But I just can't forgive them!" That's why you need Jesus Christ.

You need Him in your life. He can provide the power to forgive that nobody else can. He can heal that hurt that no one else can. Open your life to Him. Do what Job said, "Reach out to God."

Prayer:

I'm sure that God has spoken to some of you very pointedly. Would you pray this simple prayer in your mind, "Jesus Christ I want my heart to be right.

In faith, I'm reaching out to you. Please take this resentment out of my life.

I choose to forgive them. [If someone comes to your mind, forgive those situations.]

I choose to forgive them right now.

Help me to face the world again.

Help me to focus on you in the future.

Replace my pain with your peace.

Jesus Christ, replace my hurt with your healing.

Replace my fear with your faith.

Replace my bitterness with your love.

In Jesus' name. Amen."