



## Watch Out For That Trap!

"Un-Forgiveness"

(Intermittently, For the next few weeks, I will be starting a series that I am creating entitled, Watch Out For That Trap. I will be sharing with you the various traps that the enemy sets out to entrap Christians, which cause them to fail in their walk with God. This series is designed to not only educate us on the tactics of Satan, but to also open our eyes to the snares that we may already have found ourselves in.)

### 2 Timothy 2:26

King James Version (KJV)

**26** And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

*(Snares – take an example of a snare.)*

Snaring is one of the oldest types of hunting and trapping.

- People have used snares for thousands of years.

- It is very simple

- But it is also very deadly!

*(Explain how a snare works.)*

- Not dangerous if you leave them alone.

- Or if you find yourself in one, don't fight against it, because the more you fight against it, the more it tightens its deadly grip around you.

*(Talk about my hobby of trapping as a teenager.)*

When you lay a snare, you place it in the path that you know the prey is going to walk through.

- You watch.

- You scout out the paths.

- You study what animals are going to walk the path you are setting your snare on.

- You study the recent traffic.

- You don't set a snare where there has been no traffic.

- You set them where you know your prey has been frequenting.

- You look for some sign that the prey has been going in the direction of the snare that you have just set .

Can I talk to you about a trap that the enemy uses to ensnare people?

- Maybe he has used this to ensnare you.

- Maybe you are in fact caught in this thing as I speak.

- Can I talk to you about something I have had to learn an awful lot about through the years?

- Can I talk to you today about un-forgiveness?

**2 Cor 2:10** To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ;

**11** Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Well, let's back up a bit and read about it from the Message Bible.

Paul said...

**5-8** Now, regarding the one who started all this—the person in question who caused all this pain—I want you to know that I am not the one injured in this as much as, with a few exceptions, all of you. So I don't want to come down too hard. What the majority of you agreed to as punishment is punishment enough. Now is the time to forgive this man and help him back on his feet. If all you do is pour on the guilt, you could very well drown him in it. My counsel now is to pour on the love.

**9-11** The focus of my letter wasn't on punishing the offender but on getting you to take responsibility for the health of the church. So if you forgive him, I forgive him. Don't think I'm carrying around a list of personal grudges. The fact is that I'm joining in with *your* forgiveness, as Christ is with us, guiding us. After all, we don't want to unwittingly give Satan an opening for yet more mischief—we're not oblivious to his sly ways!

Apparently, there was an individual who had offended the church in some way.

- I am unclear as to exactly what the issue was, but vs. **6** Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many.

- Whatever he did deserved punishment according to Paul.
- It deserved a measure of correction,
- But after the reprimand was over, Paul said, "Ok, now it's time to forgive."
- "Now, he said it's time to get out of this trap that Satan has set for us that could destroy us.
- We're not ignorant of his devices he said.... "We know what this is really all about."

Has anyone ever offended you? They deserved punishment didn't they?

- Sure they did., but then Paul says...
- "Now is the time to forgive this man and help him back on his feet. If all you do is pour on the guilt, you could very well drown him in it. My counsel now is to pour on the love."

You see, this person may have offended you, but it's possible that your unwillingness to forgive them, may destroy them.

So Paul told the church here to COMFORT HIM?!

- Now I have to agree, that does not make sense.
- When someone offends us, we should clobber them – right?
- When someone does something that embarrasses the church or causes the church to have a black eye, we ought to set them down or cast them out – right?
- WRONG

In fact, the scriptures declare that we ought to comfort them all the more.

- My wife often times says - "Kill them with Kindness."

Here's why – 2 Cor 2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

- Understand, forgiving them not only releases them from the bondage of judgment
- You see the devil will use your judgment of another person as a snare or trap to destroy not only that person but you as well.

A snare alone is not a problem. It's what you do with that snare that can destroy you.

The snare was not the person doing something that offended you, but the snare is what you do with it.

- If you ignore it and keep going,
- If you keep being angry...
- If you keep hating...
- If you remain bitter...
- you will become strangled by the snare the enemy has set for you.

Can I say to you...

- People are going to offend you.
- People are going to say something that is going to upset you.
- They may very well mean it as kindness, but it may still offend you.

Here is why the Church – You and I need to learn the art and ministry of forgiveness.

- "I KNOW IT IS NOT EASY TO FORGIVE OTHER PEOPLE SOMETIMES."
- Some maybe, but not everybody – Right?
- "I have spent my lifetime learning how to forgive some people."

**If we are truly going to impact this world for Jesus Christ, we are going to have to learn how to forgive the absolutely unforgiveable.**

But what do you do when someone close to you offends you?

- Do you stop speaking to them?
- Do you talk bad about them?
- Do you avoid them?
- Do you try to offend them back?
- Or do you forgive them?

Human nature says that when someone offends you, that you should offend them back.

- You should protect yourself.
- You should avoid them.
- You should remember their offence.

But Jesus says to forgive them.

- Because when you forgive them, you free yourself from the snare that has been set to trap you.

The worst thing that could happen to this church is not that someone would steal the offering today.

- It's not that someone might slash all the tires of the cars in the parking lot.
- The worst thing that could happen is that we would fail to forgive the person who offended us in some way.

Jesus said...

[Mark 11:25](#) And when ye stand praying, **forgive**, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may **forgive** you your trespasses

[Mark 11:26](#) But if ye do not **forgive**, neither will your Father which is in heaven **forgive** your trespasses.

See, we've all got some stuff we need God to forgive us of, am I correct?

- Forgiveness seems to be something that Jesus was very serious about.
- In fact, He was so serious, that He let's us know that if we don't forgive others, He would not forgive us.

Forgiveness is more than something that we do when people make us mad.

- Forgiveness is a character that we can have.
- Forgiveness is a disposition that we can carry.
- It can become a part of our personality.
- It can become a part of our individual and church make up.

How many of you know someone that if you offend them, they are very slow to forgive?

Ok

- How many of you know someone who when you offend them, they are quick to forgive.
- You know that if you offend them, you can trust that they are going to forgive you and even restore your friendship very quickly?
- So one person has a disposition of unforgiveness and the other has one of forgiveness – right?

Here's what I'm saying...

It's possible to have a disposition of forgiveness to where the enemy knows that whatever offence he puts in front of us is a waste of time because we always respond a certain way when we are offended.

- Remember, He's a trapper.
- He knows the paths you take.
- He knows the routes to go when someone offends.
- He's paying attention to how you respond to certain circumstances in your life.

So the question we have to ask every time we are offended in some way is – will this be a snare the devil will use to harm or destroy me – or will it be an opportunity for me to minister to this person.

But I said, "Let's talk about the small stuff."

- What about the person who does something you think they should not do?
- What about the person who lives in a way that you don't feel is appropriate?
- What about the person whose standards of Christian conduct are not what you expect for them to have?
- Do you forgive them or do you judge and condemn them?

Understand something this morning...

- Condemnation entraps.
- Condemnation snares.
- Condemnation destroys,
- But forgiveness ministers to that person.
- Forgiveness enables them to overcome whatever it is that is keeping them from their promises in Jesus Christ.

We all know that Acacia is a new church.

- We have "all kinds of people" here today.
- But, We are going to grow.
- We are going to grow rapidly.
- Pretty soon, there are going to be more – "all kinds of people".

We may get some people like you who are sweet, kind, forgiving, loving people, but we may also get some stinkers.

- We may also get a few who don't look the way you think they should look.
- We may get some that don't act the way you think they should act.
- We may get some who flat out act in a way that is offensive to anything we call right and Holy.

- But the question is, "What are you going to do about it?"
- Are you going to condemn and judge them or are you going to forgive them so we can minister to them.

Be careful what you call clean or unclean Peter.

- If God sanctifies it, He will use it for His purpose and His design and no condemnation from the peanut gallery is going to stop God from blessing and using a life that has been consecrated to Him regardless of the imperfections you or I may see in them.

You see, what could hold this church back is not the offences of people who come this way,

- But what could keep us from experiencing an incredible move of God...
- What could snare us...
- What could trap and destroy us both individually and corporately will be attitudes of unforgiveness and the lack of true Christian Grace that we might display.

Can I say to you today...

- Watch out!
- It's a trap!
- He's trying to destroy us.
- He's trying to stop the miraculous move of the Holy Spirit that is getting ready to sweep across our communities.

I say let's watch out for the traps.

- Let's realize that if we don't forgive everything that others do that may offend us, then God is not going to forgive everything that we do that offends Him.
- I don't know about you, but I need God's forgiveness.
- I need him to overlook a few things in my life.
- I need him to minister to me when I really deserve for him to condemn me.
- But I realize that I'm not going to get to enjoy His forgiveness if I don't forgive others.

Let's Forgive

- Let's show grace.
- Let's minister to people
- Let's show them Jesus

When they walk through that doorway, let's show them a loving and forgiving savior.

- On our job tomorrow, let's show them someone who genuinely cares about them, regardless of the wrongs that they have committed.
- In our homes this week, let's demonstrate to our families who it is that died on that old rugged cross for their sins.

Acacia, let's show them Jesus.

- Let's forgive... Amen? Amen!