

March 4, 2007 by Steve Brandon



# Forgiveness

## Philemon 8-9

1. **Forgiveness is the Proper Thing (verse 8).**
2. **Forgiveness is the Loving Thing (verse 9).**

In recent weeks at Rock Valley Bible Church, we have been looking at the epistle of Paul to Philemon, a loved friend of his. Each of my messages have been very applicational, because that's the nature of the book of Philemon. Of all of Paul's epistles, it is the only one that we have that doesn't contain any major doctrinal teaching. It's a book of application of Christian living. For this reason, it has been very good for us in recent weeks to hear.

This week, we are going to look at the book from Philemon's perspective. Philemon was on the receiving end of this letter. He was going to be confronted with the need to forgive his former slave who had wronged him in a major way. As such, we are going to deal with the issue of forgiveness. Some have argued that "forgiveness" is the theme of this epistle. Indeed, the title of my message this morning is, "Forgiveness." I want to use our text this morning to develop several facets of forgiveness.

Before we begin looking at our text, I want to speak first with you about what forgiveness is. On the one hand, it seems so easy to understand what forgiveness is. It's something that we learned as a child to do. And yet, it would be very helpful for us to gain some common ground here before proceeding. Forgiveness is experienced when four events take place. **First**, some sin is committed against another person. It doesn't make sense to extend forgiveness where there is no sin. Because, in fact, forgiveness is the process of dealing with this sin. **Second**, the sinning party confesses the sin and expresses sorrow concerning that sin. At this point, the sin should be identified for what it was. The severity of the sin shouldn't be diminished. Words like, "I didn't mean it" aren't good, as they miss the point. The point is that you did mean it, but that you are sorry now that you did it and are feeling remorse as a result. **Third**, a plea for forgiveness is made. The guilty party says something like, "I sinned against you. Will you forgive me?" **Fourth** (and finally), the party extending the forgiveness should acknowledge that the confession has been received and say, "I forgive you." This "forgiveness" isn't a feeling. It's not a statement that says, "All is well with me. I've overcome all the hurt you have inflicted upon me." Rather, this "forgiveness" is a promise. It is a promise never to bring up the offense again.

When forgiveness takes place, both parties let go of the past sin. It's not that they forget what took place. Rather, they both acknowledge what took place. The sinning party has expressed sorrow for the sin. The sinned against party has gone on record that forgiveness has been granted, and that no revenge will be sought. Finally, both parties will move on with freedom, as the burden of the offense has been lifted.

This is what forgiveness is. This is what forgiveness does. Forgiveness doesn't forget the offense. Forgiveness doesn't remove the offense. Forgiveness doesn't lessen the severity of the offense. Forgiveness doesn't ignore the offense. Rather, forgiveness is a promise that it won't take into account the wrong that was suffered (1 Cor. 13:5). Forgiveness is a pledge that the wrong done will not be brought up again with any malicious intent.

This is what God does when He forgives us. Consider the following verses. Isaiah 43:25, "I will not remember your sins." The idea here isn't that God has forgotten the sins of Israel. God can't forget anything. Rather, He is choosing not to bring them to remembrance. Jeremiah 31:34 says much the same thing, "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." Psalm 103:12, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." When God deals with your sin, He has removed it far away. He chooses never again to use the evidence in a court of law against you. (Now certainly the whole process by which God does this is a bit more complex, as it involves the cross and it involves our faith). But, at the core, these words are correct.

Let me show you how forgiveness works in a real-life example. A friend of mine is a pastor of successful church. His son was engaged to be married to a wonderful girl. However, this gal had not kept herself pure before marriage. In a previous relationship, she had lost her virginity. This pastor said to his son, "Before you marry her, you need to resolve this issue in your mind. You need to forgive your future wife completely. Her past sin is just that. It is a sin of the past. You need to make the promise that you will never hold it against her in the future. You will never bring it up. You will never use it against her. There may be a time in your marriage when things aren't going so well. And you will be tempted to hurt her by reminding her of her past sin. But, if indeed want to marry her, you cannot ever, ever bring it up again."

That's forgiveness. It's letting go of the offense. It's a promise never to bring it back again.

Perhaps this morning finds you with people in your life who have wronged you. Perhaps this wrong has been so deep and has hurt so badly, that you simply can't find the strength within you to forgive this person. I know that this is a very real probability for many of us. Then, this message is for you. This message this morning is all about forgiveness. Let's begin with my first point, ...

### 1. **Forgiveness is the Proper Thing (verse 8).**

This comes in verse 8, where Paul writes, "Therefore, though I have enough confidence in Christ to order you to do what is proper, yet for

love's sake I rather appeal to you." Paul here is introducing the subject about receiving Onesimus back as a slave. (It's not until verse 10 where the appeal is finally heard in full, "I appeal to you for my child Onesimus.") Paul was appealing to Philemon, wanting for him to receive Onesimus back. Part of that reception would have required Philemon to extend forgiveness to his former slave.

Paul says that receiving him back is the "proper" thing to do. The NIV says that receiving him back is what Philemon "ought" to do. The NKJV says that receiving him back is the "fitting" thing. The ESV says that receiving Onesimus back is the "required" thing to do. All of these translations are getting at the same idea. Receiving Onesimus back is the "right" thing to do. Philemon should take back his slave, forgiving him of the wrong that he has done.

Now, you need to realize here that Paul was dealing with two believers in Christ. In verse 20, Paul is calling Philemon a "brother," which is an affectionate way of identifying another fellow believer. It is a statement affirming that both of us are a part of the family of God. In verse 16, Paul called Onesimus a "brother" as well. So, we are dealing here with two believers in Christ.

These are two people who have come to God, confessing their sins to Him. They have acknowledged their need of a Savior. Both of them have freely admitted before God and before others that they have failed to keep God's righteous standards of the law, and are thus, worthy of eternal damnation. They have felt sorrow for their sin. They have hated their sin. They have repented of their sin and turned to God, placing their faith in Jesus Christ, who bore their sin in his body on the cross (1 Peter 2:24). As a result, they have experienced the forgiveness of sins that only comes from God above. And as they both have freely received this forgiveness of sins from God, the proper thing is to extend this forgiveness to others who have sinned against them.

This is the clear teaching of Ephesians 4:32, "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

At this point, I need to clarify the scope of my message this morning. Here in Philemon, we are dealing with two people who are openly acknowledging their sin to one another. It is a different ballgame when one of these parties involved refuses to confess their sin. Jesus said, "If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times a day and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him" (Luke 17:3-4). There is a clear sense in this Scripture that if no acknowledgement of sin is made, the obligation of forgiveness is not there. In our forgiveness of others, we need to imitate God (Eph. 4:32). God doesn't forgive unrepentant people.

Now, before you let your mind wander into all sorts of self-justification for holding anger and hostility in your heart, consider the example of Jesus. He's hanging on a cross, being brutally murdered by uncaring, unloving, wicked men. His heart is for forgiveness to be realized. "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). They were crucifying the Lord of glory and now clue as to what they were doing (1 Cor. 2:8). Notice that Jesus wasn't forgiving them in this moment. Indeed, many of them there weren't forgiven for their acts in this moment of time. But, Jesus had a heart for forgiveness to be experienced. Whether or not the one who sinned against you is repentant or not, you still need to have a heart of forgiveness as Jesus had at this moment.

The call upon Philemon's life to demonstrate such a forgiving heart would have been clear in Philemon's mind. When this letter was brought to him by Tychicus, another letter was brought as well. It was the book that we know as Colossians. Paul gave clear directions that Colossians would be read to the entire church (Col. 4:16), which met in Philemon's home (Philemon 2). So, Philemon was certainly aware of the following verse: "Forgive each other; whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you" (Col. 3:13). Indeed, this is the call of every believer in Christ. We are called to extend a kind and tender heart toward others, especially when they have wronged us. Just as God has forgiven me, I'm called to forgive others who sin against me. Just as God has forgiven you, you are called to forgive others who sin against you. Whenever any has a complaint against anyone, we should freely forgive, just as the Lord has forgiven us.

And so, the question rightly comes up, how exactly has God forgiven you? After all, that's the standard to which our forgiveness of others should be compared (i.e. Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13).

First of all, realize that your sin has offended God greatly. The Lord Almighty is a Holy God, in whom is absolute purity. All of His ways are right. All of God's ways are just (Dan. 4:37). No evil dwells with God (Psalm 5:4). When one whom we consider to be a righteous man stands before God, his testimony is that he is undone and ruined, as a sinful man (Isaiah 6:5). When we sin, His anger boils against our wickedness and unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18) more than we could ever imagine. It is so bad that death is the consequence. The wages of our sin is death (Rom. 6:23). Our sin is so severe before God that we deserve to die. Ezekiel 18:3 says, "The soul who sins will die." God is ready to kill us for our sins.

But, then, realize how freely God grants us forgiveness based upon our faith in Christ. We need simply to turn from our sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and we are forgiven! (Acts 3:19). All we need to do is cry out to God for mercy, and He will justify us through the blood of the cross (Luke 18:13). We don't need to perform any religious sacrament. We don't need to make up for our sin by acts of righteousness. We don't need to make promises for our life in the future to somehow repay. We don't need to confess our sins to a priest and say certain prayers. No. None of that. We simply need to confess our sins and as 1 John 1:9 says, "He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Though the magnitude of our sin before God is so great that it deserves death, and though the forgiveness that God grants is by a simple plea for mercy, Our forgiveness in Christ is vast and broad! By faith in Christ, God has "forgiven us all our transgressions" (Col. 1:13). Oh, let that sink in! All of our transgressions are forgiven by God! "Though your sins are as scarlet, [through faith in Christ] they will be as white as snow" (Is. 1:18). "The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

God doesn't hold back His forgiveness. He doesn't forgive partially now and partially later. No. It's all freely given to us in Christ. God's forgiveness isn't like that of David toward Absalom. Absalom had done a wicked thing by taking vengeance into his own hand against Amnon, who had violated his sister, Tamar. Fearing the wrath of his father, Absalom fled from the city. Later, David called him back into

Jerusalem. However, he was prohibited from seeing David's face in the palace. That was partial forgiveness. But, this isn't the sort of forgiveness that God extends. He extends a full and complete forgiveness, with nothing held back.

Though we may come to God like the Prodigal Son, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men" (Luke 15:18-19), God will have none of that. He won't even hear of it! He won't make us like hired men who need to earn something more. No. He will kill the fattened calf! He will rejoice and celebrate! Full restitution is made!

This is how God in Christ has forgiven us. Though our sin is great, our pardon has come to us free and full and complete: no strings attached, no payment plan, no need for promises to repay in the future, nothing further to be done. Our slate is wiped clean. Our relationship with God is restored. We stand complete in Him (Col. 2:10).

And now, I ask you: How ought one who has been forgiven in this way forgive others? This is the clear teaching of Ephesians 4:32, "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." Realize that any offense toward you is nothing like what God has faced and freely forgiven. Be willing to forgive based upon the word of another. Freely forgive, with no strings attached! Consider the cross. Jesus forgave many responsible for nailing Him to the cross. There were 3,000 on the day of Pentecost who were guilty of this crime who were forgiven. Peter told them, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36). Many of these 3,000 converts were in the crowd before Pilate screaming "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" (Matt. 27:22, 23).

When you encounter another believer in Christ and deal with them concerning their sin, you need to deal with it exactly like God has dealt with it. If God has forgiven them their sin, I have no right to withhold forgiveness from them. In fact, the basis of my forgiveness of them is the same as God's basis of His forgiveness of them. He took their sin. He nailed it to the cross (Col. 2:14). He has taken it out of the way (Col. 2:14). He no longer holds it against them. As God has forgiven their sin and let it go, so also do I need to forgive them as well.

Forgiveness is the proper thing (verse 8). Jesus illustrated this excellently in his parable, ...

#### Matthew 18:23-35

The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, "Have patience with me and I will repay you everything." And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, "Pay back what you owe." So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, "Have patience with me and I will repay you." But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. Then summoning him, his lord said to him, "You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?" And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.

the main thrust of this parable is very easy for us to understand! Suppose you were in debt far beyond any possibility of your being able to pay it in several lifetimes. Suppose you were freely forgiven that debt, by a sheer act of grace. There is a proper way for you to respond. If another person, who owed you a small debt that could be paid with a bit of discipline over the next year, was willing to pay the debt, what ought you to do? You ought to extend similar grace to that individual. "Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?" (Matt. 18:33). As mercy is given to you, you ought to extend mercy to others. If you don't, you will only incur the wrath of the one who forgave you the great debt. That's how it works in life here upon earth. That's how it works in the spiritual realm as well.

The debt of sin that we owe God is monstrous. It is so high that you can't possibly hope to climb it. There is no way that you would ever be able to repay it! And the wages of your sin is death. And yet, it's inconceivable, really, but it's true. By God's grace through faith in Christ, that sin is removed from your account. You stand completely forgiven. Washed perfectly clean. With no sin before God. And now, along comes another believer in Christ, who sins against you. What is your moral obligation? It is to grant forgiveness just as freely as it has been granted to you. Despite all appearances, the sin committed against you is small compared to the sin that you committed against God. Forgiveness is the proper thing to do.

One can easily make the case that forgiveness in these circumstances is the **required** thing to do. Jesus said, "Should you not also have had mercy?" Let me remind you, that's how the English Standard Version translates Philemon, verse 8, "though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required."

Just think a moment about the parable that Jesus told of the man who refused to forgive the small debt. What happened to him? "The Lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him" (Matt. 18:34). The forgiveness of the debt was rescinded. Somehow, it was never finalized and on the books, so that the owner could still demand that payment be made. Lest we lose the impact of the severity of the situation, Jesus says in the next verse, "My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart" (Matt. 18:35). In other words, the message comes loud and clear: "if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions" (Matt. 6:15).

It's not a matter that you lose your salvation if you don't forgive others. An unforgiving heart is simply an evidence that you don't understand your forgiveness in Christ. The plain truth is that "judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy" (James 2:13). In the Lord's

prayer, we pray, " give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." (Matt. 6:11-12). Jesus taught us to plead with God to forgive us in the same way as we forgive other people. In case there was any doubt as to what this meant, Jesus immediately commented about these words to His disciples saying, "If you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions" (Matt. 6:14-15).

Surely, this is weighty stuff. But, it's true. Before we move on to our next point, I simply want to stop here for a moment's reflection upon your own situation. It may just be that you have another person in your relational world who you need to forgive. The first step in this process is to work hard to fully understand the forgiveness that you have in Christ. Think hard upon the severity of your sin. Think hard upon the greatness of your forgiveness. Ask yourself about the proper thing to do. Plead to God that he would give you the strength to do it.

Let's move on to my next point this morning,  
2. Forgiveness is the Loving Thing (verse 9).

I get this from verse 9 of Philemon, "for love's sake I rather appeal to you." Rather than commanding Philemon to take back his runaway slave, Paul chose the route of appealing. The reason why he chose to do it this way is "for love's sake." It was "for the sake of love" that Paul didn't command.

The question rightly comes here, "who's love is Paul talking about?" Is Paul talking about his own love for Philemon? Or, is he talking about the love that Philemon ought to have toward Onesimus? The commentators are divided on this issue. Some say that it's Paul's own love for Philemon that would never seek to pull his own authority to force the issue in such a difficult situation as this (Matthew Henry). Others say that Paul is referring to the love that Philemon ought to have toward Onesimus (O'Brien). It's probably best to take this as referring to Philemon's love, as Peter O'Brien explained in his commentary, "It is precisely because Paul knows of Philemon's kindness and generosity in the past that he is able to entreat rather than command, and he looks forward to Philemon's love being shown once again, this time with reference to Onesimus." [\[1\]](#)

It takes love to forgive. It takes a lot of love to forgive. Consider the love of God toward us who believe. Romans 5:8, "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Christ didn't die for us when we were in a lovely state. No, Christ died for us when we were in a sinful, wretched state. In fact, two verses later, we discover that Christ died for us while we were His enemies (Rom. 5:10). How could God do that? Because of His love.

The same thing is taught in Ephesians, chapter 2, which begins by describing how dead in sin we were. We were "dead in our trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). "By nature [we were] children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3), which means that God was angry with us due to our sin. And yet, it was precisely at this moment when the love of God was demonstrated for all the world to see. Ephesians 2:4-5, "God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)." In our dead state, we were objects of the anger and wrath of God, because of our sin against Him. And yet, it was at that very time that God showed His love toward us in making us alive in Christ, forgiving all of our transgressions (Col. 2:13).

The point of these passages is of the incredible love of God! That He would forgive the unlovely, as we are. And when you look in the face of somebody who has wronged you, who is coming to you asking for you to forgive them, it takes a lot of love to do so. It takes a lot of love.

Several months ago, I read Corrie ten Boom's, "The Hiding Place." Corrie ten Boom was a native of Holland and lived with her father and her sister in a strong, Christian home. The book tells the story of how she and her family helped many Jews escape from certain death at the hands of the Nazis during World War II. She and her sister were in their fifties at the time. Her father was in his eighties. When the Germans invaded Holland and began to capture the Jews, their home became a holding place for many Jews, as they sought to hide from the Nazis. They built a room in the top floor of their house, where they could hide about a dozen people on a moment's notice, thus the name of her book, "The Hiding Place." Often, the Jews who came into their home were sent off to the countryside where a network of willing farmers would take them and hide them.

After two years of running their operation, the Nazis took them into custody and sent them to concentration camps, where they sent the Jews who were captured. Corrie's father died quickly after being captured, being too old to handle the difficulties of prison life. Corrie and her sister, Betsie, were shuffled between several prisons and concentration camps. Her life in prison was difficult. At one point, she was so sick, that they left her in solitary confinement, thinking that she would die. She experienced the horrors of solitary confinement.

Her life at these concentration camps was terrible as well. Their daily rations were minimal. They were poorly clothed, and yet, made to stand outside in the freezing cold for hours on end each morning. They crammed the women into these shelters, where disease spread quickly. The sanitation in these places was poor, adding to the spread of bacteria. Lice was often a problem. On the rare opportunity when they had a chance to take a shower, the German soldiers watched them strip of their clothes and take their showers, mocking them as they showered. The guards were merciless, beating those who were too weak to work.

And yet, throughout this difficult time, both she and her sister found much strength in the Lord. They had many opportunities for the gospel in these concentration camps. They led worship services every evening in their barracks for the many women who were eager to hear a message of hope. Near the end of the war, Corrie watched her sister die in one of these camps, as she got sick and simply couldn't make it any longer. By God's grace, Corrie was released from her concentration camp, and enabled to tell her story.

Soon after her release, she began her next work that God had given her. Rather than hiding Jews and ministering to other women in the concentration camps, she set about to tell her story, which has now been heard all around the world through her book. On one particular occasion, she was ministering in a church in Germany. She wrote this of her experience,

It was at a church service in Munich that I saw him, the former S. S. man who had stood guard at the shower room door in the processing center at Ravensbruck [which was the name of a concentration camp where Corrie was imprisoned]. He

was the first of our actual jailers that I had seen since that time. And suddenly it was all there--the roomful of mocking men, the heaps of clothing, Betsie's pain-blanching face.

He came up to me as the church was emptying, beaming and bowing. 'How grateful I am for your message, Fraulein.' He said, 'To think that, as you say, He has washed my sins away!'

His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who had preached so often to the people in Bloemendaal the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side.

Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him.

I tried to smile, I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again, I breathed a silent prayer. *Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me Your forgiveness.*

As I took his hand, the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder, along my arm and through my hand, a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me.

And so I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world's healing hinges, but on His. When He tells us to love our enemies, He gives, along with the command, the love itself. It took a lot of love." [\[2\]](#)

In the same way, it would have taken a lot of love for Philemon to have received Onesimus back. He as a runaway slave, who had certainly acted disrespectfully before his escape. He had brought shame to Philemon. And yet, here he comes back as a repentant man. With this letter in hand, I'm sure that he would have freely confessed his sins to Philemon and asked for forgiveness. What would Philemon do? His track record of love (verses 4, 7), probably show that he would have embraced this man, and welcomed him back.

Forgiveness is the Loving Thing (verse 9). I press upon you this morning the Golden Rule, "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you. For this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 7:12). When you have sinned against somebody, and have felt sorrow in your heart over the sin, there is nothing that you want more than to have them forgive you. So if anyone comes to you seeking forgiveness, follow the Golden Rule: do to them as you would like for them to do to you--forgive them.

I remember on one occasion in my life sinning against a man and his wife. I had offended them greatly. I had said some hurtful things to them. I had written a letter of formal apology and confession of sin to this man. I sent it off to him. A few days later, I followed up with him and said, "I'm here to tell you that everything in that letter is true. I read the letter to him, expanding upon my sin against him and I sought forgiveness from him. I said, "Will you forgive me?" I'll never forget his response. He sort of shrugged his shoulders, winced his face, told me how hard it was for him to forgive me, and finally mumbled some words of forgiveness granted. To this day, I'm not sure that he has ever dealt with the issues fully in his heart, but the burden is certainly off my shoulders as I have done all that I could do.

A few minutes later, we called his wife in to be with us. I confessed my sin to her as well. I'll never forget her response either. With a smile on her face, she said, "Steve, of course I forgive you!" From that day forward, things between her and I were completely settled. There is absolutely no problem between us at all.

Now, let me ask you, which of these two applied the Golden Rule? The wife. She was doing to me as she would like others to do for her. It makes a world of difference in dealing with our sin before others. Forgiveness is the loving thing to do.

I close with a few verses that demonstrate the close connectedness between love and forgiveness.

1 Corinthians 13:5, "[Love] does not take into account a wrong suffered."

1 Peter 4:8, "Keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins."

Proverbs 10:12, "Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions."

Proverbs 17:9, "He who conceals a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends."

May the Lord help us to do the right and loving thing when dealing with our forgiveness toward others.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on March 4, 2007 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see [www.rvbc.cc](http://www.rvbc.cc).

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[1] Peter O'Brien, Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 44, p. 289.

[2] Corrie ten Boom, The Hiding Place, p. 231.