

Sermon Topic: Reconciliation vs Grudge Holding by Mrs Lai-Kheng Pousson

Sermon Text: Matthew 5:21-26

Quality of Relationships: Closely knitted, Cordial or perhaps cold and conflicted?

Singapore, Materially rich but Relationally poor?

Pitfalls of being a relationally poor nation: Higher probability of frustration and irritation, anger and grudge holding seeps in easily.

Holding a grudge is a persistent feeling of ill will caused by a past hurt, which could be deeply seated within, even to the point of being vengeful and last for long periods of time. Holding a grudge is to withhold forgiveness.

Grudges, a luxury we cannot afford

Holding a grudge brings about a sense of victimization, this is comparable to a willing possession of toxins, which brings about pain. Removing the grudge from our hearts will set us free from this pain.

1. Holding a grudge displeases God. Matthew 5:23-24 (NIV)

23 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

"Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sins us." - The Lord's Prayer

God reconciled himself with us through Christ our Saviour.

Romans 5:8 (NIV)

8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Luke 6:36 (NIV)

36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

James 2:13 (NIV)

13 because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

2. Holding a grudge devastates us

Grudges causes the holder both physical and mental stress, back pain, headaches, etc.

3. Holding a grudge destroys community

Personality clashes stemming from wounded pride and selfish ambitions often cause grudges to form. Short tempers often catalyze the trigger of disputes, which originated from these grudges. Leadership within the church must seek to avoid grudges at all cost to prevent fallout that could crush the followers' faith and trust.

Satan's biggest ambition is to destroy communities by inciting anger and breeding unforgiveness, this often leads to the splitting of communities as people take sides and actualize the divide.

4. Holding a grudge diminishes our witness

It is not plausible to minister and pursue a mentoring relationship while holding a grudge. The grudge diminishes one's standing not just as a believer but as a minister for those whom minister and is unscriptural. It tarnishes the name of Jesus Christ.

It is pertinent to examine our relationships across our lives, not just at home but out in the workplace as well. The withholding of grudges could potential hinder someone from finding Christ.

5. Reconciliation is an obligation we must not overlook

Reconciliation is Christ-like

2 Corinthians 5:19 (NIV)

19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

It is important to be the living example of reconciliation in all our relationships. When Jesus was crucified, he did not resent his crucifiers but loved them and prayed for forgiveness on their behalf.

"To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you." - CS Lewis

6. Reconciliation is a command

Matthew 18:15-17 (NIV) Dealing With Sin in the Church

15 "If your brother or sister[a] sins,[b] go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. 16 But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.'[c] 17 If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

3-step plan to reconcile:

1. Approach them in private
2. Approach them with two-three people to reconcile
3. Focus on reconciliation and not resolution, repair broken relationships, not just the issue that caused the grudge, resolution may never take place due to complexities but reconciliation is a choice that can be immediate.

7. Reconciliation can be a channel of blessing

Matthew 18:18-20 (NIV)

18 "Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be[a] bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be[b] loosed in heaven. 19 "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

Jesus is actually saying that when we seek reconciliation and restore relationships in the spirit of forgiveness, we can expect to be set free to pray with a confidence and get the results we need. We will enjoy the shalom peace of God and his presence which is impossible if grudges exist.

1 Peter 3:7 (NIV)

7 Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. Husbands should honour wives with selflessness. Forgiveness and reconciliation are not a sign of weakness.

"Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong." - Mahatma Gandhi

"A love of reconciliation is not weakness or cowardice. It demands courage, nobility, generosity, sometimes heroism, an overcoming of oneself rather than of one's adversary." - Pope John Paul VI

The right thing to do is to forgive.

QUESTION/DISCUSSION:

1. What negative results have you seen anger produce?

2. Discuss ways you can potentially remove anger from conflicts at home, at work, or in society.