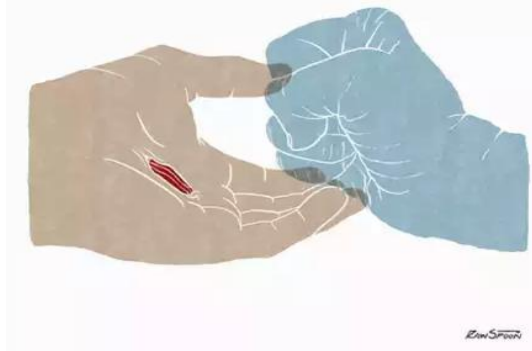


# **HOLY FORBEARANCE**

Excerpted from the booklet *The Open Church*



When too many things go wrong at once, we tend to abandon ourselves to a stormy mood. We become angry with the world. The phone rings, and we're ready to bite off somebody's head. Our spouse asks an innocent question, and we're at their throat. They can't seem to please us. Everybody around us is walking on eggs, while we indulge in our mood. After a few days, we come to our senses, realize how childish we've been, and snap out of it.

Our bad mood has a tenacious cousin which takes up residence in our hearts and makes itself perfectly at home. I'm talking about an attitude toward people called contempt.

Contempt blocks our vision of God.

It hinders our ability to live the life of the redeemed in this world.

On the surface we are devout, we smile, we shake hands, we hug.

**But beneath it all is contempt.**

.....

Once God has brought us into his presence and manifested himself to us, healed us, restored us to unity with himself, the one thing he requires of us is that holy forgiveness immediately takes on substance in our relationship with all people.

If it doesn't, the salvation we have experienced will slip away.

Here is the chief stumbling block to power in the Body of Christ. We are slow to translate the forgiveness of God into substance in our dealings with each other and with all people. We come to the cross, fall on our faces before it, see the Lamb of God draining our sin into his own dying body. We hear the Spirit of God saying to us,

***Your sins are forgiven. Go in peace.***

As we walk down from Calvary who should we run into but our worst enemy? Now it quickly will be seen whether anything real happened to us at the cross.

We approach the Lord's table to eat his body and drink his blood,

***This is my body given for you.  
This is the blood of the new covenant shed for your sins.***

Getting up from the table we look into the face of a woman who has slandered us. Now we find out whether this food we just ate has been allowed to do its healing.

***Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.  
Let all men know your forbearance.***

Rejoice in the Lord ... let all men know your forbearance... If I fail to show forbearance to my fellow man, then my rejoicing in the Lord is a sham.

Forbearance ... holy forbearance ... is an attitude of generosity, kindness, patience, mercy, forgiveness, grace that flows down from heaven and burns like fire in our hearts.

Holy forbearance is not weakness, but power.

Holy forbearance is the power by which....

the chains of Satan are broken

the gates of death are destroyed

the walls of Jericho shattered.

In order to overcome evil in our personal and corporate life, we don't need assertiveness training or seminars on how to cast out demons.

**We need holy forbearance.**

Taking the mercy of God that comes to us at Calvary and turning it to reality in our dealings with each other and all people.

***'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.'***

Until you get hold of that, you will neither see nor serve the living God."

***At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath." He said to them, "Have you not read what David did, when he was hungry, and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are guiltless? I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless."***

*Matthew 12:1-7*

...."If you would have known what this means, ***'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,'*** you would not have condemned the guiltless."

Jesus always ties our vision of God to a transformed vision of our fellow man.

If I see the glory of God and want to hold on to it, I must start seeing the people around me in terms of the mercy I saw at the Throne. Otherwise I lose my vision. Jesus reminds us time and again that all the law and all the prophets boil down to these two commandments:

***You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind.***

***You shall love your neighbor as yourself.***

***"Let all men know your forbearance."***



**Once we've been to the cross we have no choice but to see people with eyes of respect instead of eyes of contempt. That's holy forbearance.**

The Pharisee saw everybody except himself with contempt.

***"God I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.... how come your Master eats with tax collectors and sinners? .... (Luke 18:11)***

***How come you let your disciples pluck those ears of grain that's unlawful on the Sabbath day?"***

All the time they're watching him, they're looking with eyes that are angry and negative and cynical ---full of contempt. Who are these Pharisees? The Pharisees we see in the New Testament are mirror images of ourselves. Religious people. We don't realize how much contempt we hold in our hearts for the people who fail to ride our Christian showboat.

In fact, we have so much contempt we have plenty left over for each other.

When the Spirit speaks through Paul in Philippians 4:5 and says, "Let all men know your for-bearance," he's calling for repentance. "Repent of this contemptuous attitude and begin to relate to people with respect ...every-body, without exception". Jesus never belittles us ... where would we be if he did? He takes us where we are, and treats us with honor. How then can we receive such kindness from him, and turn around and treat each other---and those outside the Body, for whom he also he died---with contempt?

**Once we've been to the cross the driving force of our life has to be forgiveness instead of resentment. That's holy forbearance.**

The servant who grabs his fellow servant by the throat and says, "Pay me what you owe," has just been forgiven a million dollars! But the driving force of his life is still contempt. "Pay me what you owe!"

Contempt always carries within it the seeds of anger. Think of how much of our day is spent in anger.

- Anger at those thoughtless people.
- Anger at their injustice toward us.
- Anger at their vanity.
- Anger at their weakness.... What's the matter with them?

Many of us still carry anger in our hearts for things that were done to us when we were children. Maybe we were warped or twisted by selfish adults when we were children, but if we still carry anger in our heart, we're poisoning our own soul.

***The wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God.***

*James 1:20*

Jesus says to us, "My children, I've forgiven you, and you must also forgive. If you want to carry my grace in your life you have no choice but to forgive."

But we say, "Lord, how? I can't seem to do it!" He says, "I'll help you. I'll help you all the way. Just take that first step."

**One we've been to the cross we come out of our stockade where we've been hoarding our goods and keeping ourselves safe, and we start spending ourselves, giving, serving people outside the walls. That's holy forbearance.**

***"How come your teacher eats with tax collectors and sinners?"***

Because he's not afraid to come out of the stockade and expose his heart to people.

He's not afraid to risk his life .... to spend himself.

***He who saves his life loses it, and he who loses his life for my sake will keep it for eternal life.***

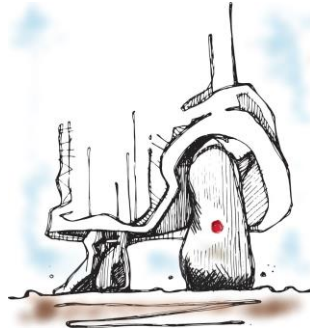
"O, but it's dangerous out there!" Perhaps it is. But far better to die serving and giving than to die of boredom inside the stockade. What other purpose is there in life?

***"Let all men know your for-bearance".... by serving them.***

***Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.  
Let all men know your forbearance.***

The cross of Jesus is holy for-giveness. Let's receive that forgiveness afresh at his cross right now--  
-and then let's go out and live forgiveness.

If we will deny ourselves, take up our cross, and truly follow Jesus, he will be our constant joy,  
and all people will be blessed by our forbearance.



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Messages: Richard E. Bieber ...unknown date found in the booklet *An Open Church aka This Ain't No Country Club-it's God's Banquet*  
Featured Art: Courtesy of Ross Boone at [rawspoon.com](http://rawspoon.com) (first two pieces) and *Follow Jesus* by Bernardo Ramonfaur (no website)

*Prayer: Oh forgiving, loving, merciful, forbearing Lord help us to embrace your holy forbearance. Help us to live it so that the chains of evil are broken, and the gates of death are destroyed, and the walls of Jericho are shattered. Oh Lord, forgive us, help us to not condemn the guiltless. Deliver us from the poison of contempt and anger and negativity. Help us, help us, let go of our wrath. We can't do it without your help. Help us let go so that we can dwell in your righteousness and its work is not hindered. Help us to truly offer people the same mercy we ourselves have received and to spend and give of ourselves. And yes may all people we contact be touched and blessed by our forbearance, a holy forbearance that comes from your Throne alone.... And our hearts will truly rejoice in you always, in all ways. Amen.*

*Maranatha Mirror*

## [Maranatha Mirror Messages](#)

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