

Ministers:
the congregation

Kenny Chumbley
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Sunday:
8:00 AM: WGCY
9:00 AM: Worship

Wednesday:
7:00 PM: Bible Study

[gibsoncitychurchof
Christ.com](http://gibsoncitychurchofchrist.com)

This Past Week:
Worship—29
Wednesday—8
Contribution—\$540

For meditation:
Ecclesiastes 6.7–9
What wisdom does
v 8 pass along for
living life well?

Radio program:
WGCY FM, 106.3
Sundays at 8 AM

The forgiveness parable, part 3 **Matthew 18.28–35**

In Christ's best-known prayer—the one we call “the Lord's prayer” (Matt. 6.9–15)—there are five basic requests: for reverence, for the Kingdom, for daily bread, for forgiveness, and for help in trying times. Of these, Christ thought it necessary to add a postscript (vv 14–15) to the petition for forgiveness, making it clear that our relationship to God is conditioned by our relationship to men. The parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt. 18.21–35) illustrates the Lord's “P.S.” in dramatic fashion.

The recently forgiven servant (v 27) was owed 100 denarii (about three months' wages) by another servant. A 100 denarii were nothing compared to 10,000 talents (v 24), and you'd expect the man forgiven the greater amount to readily forgive the pittance owed him. But instead of granting forgiveness to his debtor, the creditor—the forgiven servant—had him prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. When the master heard about this, he was furious, and gave the servant a taste of his own medicine (v 34).

What about us? Are we forgiven people who are unforgiving? Is there someone we refuse to speak to for something they did or said? Is “I'll forgive, but I can't forget” a Christian attitude? Do we really want the Lord to forgive us our debts *as we forgive our debtors*?

And do we accept the obligation that being forgiven imposes upon us to forgive those who have hurt us? Do we understand that being unforgiving makes us unforgivable? The forgiveness of debts is a chief characteristic of real Christianity.

kenny

Gibson City church of Christ

Highway 47 South, Gibson City, IL

Kathy's paint can

“She came to our front door Tuesday morning, dressed in dirty rags, holding a little aluminum paint can in her arms. From the second she stepped inside our shelter, she mystified us. Whatever she did, wherever she went, the little paint can never left her hands. When Kathy sat in the crisis shelter, the can sat in her arms. She took the can with her to the cafeteria that first morning she ate, and to bed with her that first night she slept. When she stepped into the shower, the can was only a few feet away. When the tiny homeless girl dressed, the can rested alongside her feet.

“‘I'm sorry, this is mine,’ she told our counselors, whenever we asked her about it. ‘This can belongs to me.’

“‘Do you want to tell me what's in it, Kathy?’ I'd ask her.

“‘Um, not today,’ she'd say. ‘Not today.’

“When Kathy was sad, or angry or hurt—which happened a lot—she took her paint can to a quiet dorm room on the third floor. Many times, on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, I'd pass by her room, and watch her rock gently back and forth, the can in her arms. Sometimes she'd talk to the paint can in low whispers.

“I've been around troubled kids all my life. I'm used to seeing them carry stuffed animals. Every kid has something—needs something—to hold. But a paint can? I could feel alarm bells ringing in my head.

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Sermon:

Berlin speaking

31 August 2025

Jesus saw Himself as our medicine

They overcame him by the blood of the lamb. Revelation 12.11

In Dr. Paul Brand's book, *In His Image*, tells about an incident involving his family during their tenure in India. A measles epidemic hit the region where they lived, and his younger daughter was vulnerable due to her age. There was, however, no "convalescent serum" with which to inoculate her against measles. When the locals learned of this, the word went out that Dr. Brand's daughter needed the "blood of an overcomer"—someone who had contracted measles and recovered. When a person gets a virus, the immune system produces antibodies to destroy the virus. The blood of one who has recovered contains these antibodies, and when the blood of the *overcomer* is transfused into the body of an at-risk individual, the overcomer's blood acts as a vaccine, fending off the virus. Brand's daughter got past the measles outbreak "as a result of a battle that had taken place previously within someone else" (95).

[Sometime google the "Royal Maritime Expedition of the Vaccine" to read how a smallpox vaccine involving infected boys was sent to Spanish territories in the New World in 1803.]

Now, if you're facing a measles epidemic, the blood of one recovered from chicken pox won't help. Nor will the blood of someone who survived the mumps. To ward off measles you need the blood of someone who beat measles.

Our greatest threat isn't measles, bubonic plague (a case was just reported in Nevada last week), Covid, or any similar contagion—our greatest threat is death. And when facing death, it doesn't help to have the blood of someone who's recovered from a broken leg, or who lived to be 100. The only blood that can help us with death is the blood of one who has survived death.

Which is why we need Jesus.

When Jesus took bread and said, "This is my body which is given for you," we should trust Him as the medicine we need, because the grave couldn't hold Him. When He took a cup and said, "this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins," we can rely on Him because He overcame death. Whatever healing quality Christ ascribed to His blood, believe it, for in His death and resurrection He told death and Hades to "go to hell" (that's not cussin' but a perfectly good interpretation of Rev. 20.14). Christ isn't only the great physician, His blood is the medicine for what's killing us.

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"Early this morning, I decided to 'accidentally' run into her again. 'Would you like to join me for breakfast?' I said.

"That would be great," she said.

"For a few minutes we sat in a corner of our cafeteria, talking quietly in the din of 150 ravenous homeless kids. Then I took a deep breath and plunged into it . . . 'Kathy, that's a really nice can. What's in it?'

"For a long time, Kathy didn't answer. She rocked back and forth, her hair swaying across her shoulders. Then she looked over at me, tears in her eyes. 'It's my mother,' she said.

"Oh," I said. 'What do you mean, it's your mother?'

"It's my mother's ashes," she said. 'I went and got them from the funeral home. See? I even asked them to put a label right here on the side. It has her name on it.' Kathy held up the can before my eyes. A little label chronicled all that remained of her mother: date of birth, date of death, name. That was it. Then Kathy pulled the can close and hugged it.

"She continued. 'My mother was in the hospital. She had AIDS. I went to the hospital. I got to see her the day before she died. My mother told me she loved me. My mother told me she loved me,' she said as she cried.

"I reached out and hugged Kathy, and she cried in my arms for a long, long time. It was tough getting my arms around her because she just wouldn't put the paint can down."

Covenant House Newsletter

I don't know which is the sadder word in the English language, *unloved* or *unloving*, but I agree with anthropologist Ashley Montagu who wrote, "The most important thing to realize about the nature of human nature is that the most significant ingredient in its structure is love." To love and be loved is our most basic need. Life without love is like lungs without air. We are born to be loved—to experience the feeling of being wanted, needed, liked, appreciated, valued, and deeply involved with others—and we never outgrow it. Madalyn Murray O'Hair, who in the 1960s was the face of the anti-God, anti-religion movement, at least half-a-dozen times in her personal diaries wrote the plea, "Somebody, somewhere, love me."

It hurt to read the story of Kathy and her can. I can only pray that one day He who bears our griefs and carries our sorrows will bring peace to all the Kathys this world has known.

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