

## Bitterness & Forgiveness - June 30, 2013 @ICC-MI

Stand Firm in Forgiveness: Savor Sweetness and Abandon Bitterness  
Prepared in Florida: the Land of the Orange.



What a sweet treat! But...



Toothpaste and Orange Juice.

<http://incompatiblescomics.blogspot.com/2012/09/toothpaste-and-orange-juice.html>

## Why does orange juice taste so bad after you brush your teeth?

1. All citrus fruits have some bitter chemicals that are present in the juice as well as the peel.
2. There is a surfactant (sodium lauryl sulfate) in the toothpaste that gives the mouth a clean feel.
3. The surfactant also removes certain fatty acids that inhibit the bitterness taste bud receptors.
4. The surfactant suppresses the sweetness receptors in your mouth's taste buds.
5. Virtually all toothpastes have that surfactant. Thus, your toothpaste makes orange juice taste bitter.

### GOAL OF THIS MESSAGE:

Find the sweetness in life.



<http://lsmkomporsmi.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/indonesia-map-600.jpg>

### [MY OWN JOURNEY FROM BITTERNESS TO SWEETNESS

Story of Stephen in Indonesia & chaos on a mission trip. => I had to forgive, but could not reconcile. Thinking reconciliation was necessary, my heart hurt. Could anything good come out of fruitless trip to Indonesia?

1. Contacts with three Muslims in Togo who expressed interest in Jesus.
2. Marriage to Sheila.

I lost touch with the guys in Togo, but with Sheila, I have learned that forgiveness is a character quality, a trait, a habit. I could get bitter at things I don't like and she could easily get bitter too. But having made it to 17 years of marriage, I like to think one thing has made our marriage endure: forgiveness. This is the one thing I learned before marriage that has stuck with me. I have also had to be more honest with myself about how weak & wayward I am along with all other humans. These are not easy, but there is no other way to keep us coming back together since we have come together from a world apart. It is the way Christ showed us.

- Who is your enemy? Have you forgiven all who are hostile toward to or disagree with you?
- Have you forgiven everyone people who owes you?
- Do you live by merit or mercy?
- Do you love based on what people deserve or what people need?
- Will you get bitter or will you get better?

Bitterness about the past => Bound in the present => Barriers to the promises.

OR

*Forgive (let go of) failure & trauma => Free for today => Faith for the future.*

## I. Messiah made mercy mandatory Matthew 6:12, 14-15; 7:1-2

[Pray this way] "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (NIV) "Ampunilah kami akan kesalahan kami, seperti kami juga mengampuni orang yang bersalah kepada kami Karena jikalau kamu mengampuni kesalahan orang, Bapamu yang di akan mengampuni kamu juga. Tetapi jikalau kamu tidak mengampuni orang, Bapamu juga tidak akan mengampuni kesalahanmu". (TB) Soul, refuse to forgive, and you will be damned forever. Rather hate perfectly: Hating the sin & everything associated with it. But love the sinner & forgive them. Trust God with their future.

### A. Mercy requires humility towards God. Matthew 18:1-9 (v. 4)

whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." (NIV) Sedangkan barangsiapa merendahkan diri dan menjadi seperti anak kecil ini, dialah yang terbesar dalam Kerajaan Sorga." (TB)

OR Fall out of fellowship with God. (1 John 1:8-10)

### B. Mercy requires mercy to the least. Matthew 18:10-14 (v. 14)

"your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish." (NIV) Demikian juga Bapamu yang di sorga tidak menghendaki supaya seorangpun dari anak-anak ini hilang." (TB)

OR Fail to love one another & live in sin. (1 John 2:9-11)

### C. Mercy requires justice towards sin. Matthew 18:15-20 (v. 20)

"where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." (NIV) "Sebab di mana dua atau tiga orang berkumpul dalam Nama-Ku, di situ Aku ada di tengah tengah mereka." (TB)

OR Fruitless witness towards others. (Revelation 3:14-18)

### D. Mercy requires absolution of all others. Matthew 18:21-35 (vv. 34-35)

In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart. (NIV) Maka marahlah tuannya itu dan menyerahkannya kepada algojo-algojo, sampai ia melunaskan seluruh hutangnya. Maka Bapa-Ku yang di sorga akan berbuat demikian juga terhadap kamu, apabila kamu masing-masing tidak mengampuni saudaramu dengan segenap hatimu. (TB) OR Forgiveness is not in your future. (James 5)

*What is the term of suffering if you do not forgive?*

NOT just suffering in this life, though you may get sick & die or end up in a mental hospital.  
NOT purgatory, though you will suffer. You should always be ready to die having peace with God.  
NOT karma, though you will reap what you sow. If you sow resentment, you will be resented.  
It IS eternal judgment by the Lord God Almighty. Until you forgive, you are under God's wrath.

### ANALOGY

Anyone can win, but it is not chance:  
God chooses you.  
You only receive the super-portion if you share.  
If you do not share, you lose it all.  
You gain by giving.



[Michigan Powerball Winner Accepts \\$337 Million Check](http://abcnews.go.com/images/GMA/wjrt_mi_lotto_winner_120831)  
[http://abcnews.go.com/images/GMA/wjrt\\_mi\\_lotto\\_winner\\_120831](http://abcnews.go.com/images/GMA/wjrt_mi_lotto_winner_120831)

## II. Messiah made mercy mutual.

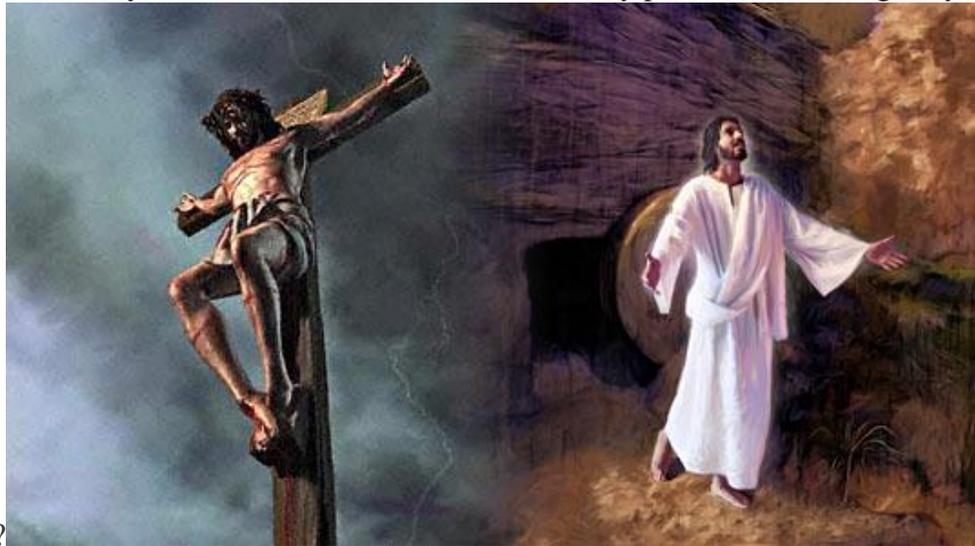
- A. Marriage: Matthew 19:1-12: Be sweet to your spouse & be satisfied. Invest now for the best later.
- B. Family: Matthew 19:13-15: Be kind to your kin & kids. You may have to depend upon them later. Often the closest relationships can hurt the most but are also where you learn and grow the most.
- C. Wealth: Matthew 19:16-30: Live simply and share with the poor. Don't store up treasures you can't enjoy. If you cannot give thanks for what you have or do while praying for the hungry and dying, change.
- D. Work: Matthew 20:1-16: Don't condemn co-workers just for being or performing differently than you. Do what you are asked to do while you can as long as you can and look to God for the reward.

Remember the cross? Matthew 20:16, 18-19

“See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified; and on the third day he will be raised.(NRSV)

Demikianlah orang yang terakhir akan menjadi yang terdahulu dan yang terdahulu akan menjadi yang terakhir. Sekarang kita pergi ke Yerusalem dan Anak Manusia akan diserahkan kepada imam-imam kepala dan ahli-ahli Taurat, dan mereka akan menjatuhkan Dia hukuman mati. Dan mereka akan menyerahkan Dia kepada bangsa-bangsa yang tidak mengenal Allah, supaya Ia diolok-olokkan, disesah dan disalibkan, dan pada hari ketiga Ia akan dibangkitkan. (TB)

We are all equal at the foot of the cross. We sinned, God had mercy. Jesus died. Now He lives. This is the heart of the matter: What will you do with Him? Messiah made mercy possible. Jesus forgave you.



Will you forgive others?

[http://ubdavid.org/advanced/way-to-heaven/graphics/4\\_jesus-cross-resurrection.jpg](http://ubdavid.org/advanced/way-to-heaven/graphics/4_jesus-cross-resurrection.jpg)

### III. Messiah made mercy manageable.

A. Will you forgive & love in the midst of suffering? Matthew 24:9-14 "because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved." (vv. 12-13) (NKJB) "karena makin bertambahnya kedurhakaan, maka kasih kebanyakan orang akan menjadi dingin. Tetapi orang yang bertahan sampai pada kesudahannya akan selamat. (TB) Persecution & suffering are the ideal context for standing firm in forgiveness.

B. The very relationships that hurt are intended by God to draw you closer to Him.

"In your hearts do not think no evil of each other?" (Zechariah 7:10d NIV'95) "Janganlah merancang kejahatan dalam hatimu terhadap masing-masing." (TB) This does not mean naive belief in the goodness of mankind. Joyfully & patiently love & respect one another.

At the beginning of the message, I gave a parable about bitterness in terms of orange juice and toothpaste. Here are some lessons to prevent bitterness in life if you want the sweet when you meet:

1. Accept the bitter with the sweet. Life is not all banana pudding. And if it were, that would get sickening too.
2. Accept imperfection. The root of all the bitterness in the orange juice scenario is a chemical designed to make you feel clean. While I encourage you to brush your teeth if you are really going to get a good kiss in with your wife ... you are sure to share some germs in the process. Accept the dirt along with the delicious, the duty along with the delight. People are imperfect, so be perfect and stop expecting everyone to be perfectly like you or to like you perfectly.
3. Accept the Holy Spirit as the ultimate gift. Fat such as the surfactant removes speaks of the presence of God. God gives fatness of soul to the righteous. I am not saying put on the pounds on purpose. rather, Prioritize pursuing the presence of God with passion.
4. Accept that there are times for suffering and times for sweetness. If you are trying to clean up your life, don't expect everything to be sweet all the time. Designate times to clean up and times to savor the flavor of the sweetness. If you find yourself in a situation where the Lord is trying to teach you a lot, prepare to face the difficulty by taking time to savor the flavor of the sweetness of the Lord by getting in the warmth of the Father's embrace.
5. Accept the invitation to give to others. Try cleaning your house & giving away instead of cleaning up and getting everything you can. Try cleaning up with something different: instead of common religion, abstain from the flesh and indulge in goodness. As Amos knew only too well in a time of social inequity: clean teeth are a sign of famine or fasting. Both are aligned with mourning & bitterness of soul. "Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities. And lack of bread in all your places; Yet you have not returned to Me," Says the Lord. ..." Stop looking after yourself all the time, give something away in Jesus name. Amos 4:6 And that leads to our final point:



#### **IV. Messiah made mercy your mission.**

Ever heard of the Great Commission? Luke 24:47 (Matthew 28:18-20)

Young's Literal Translation: "reformation and remission of sins to be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem"

The Message: "a total life-change through the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed in his name to all nations—starting from here"

"dalam nama-Nya berita tentang pertobatan dan pengampunan dosa harus disampaikan kepada segala bangsa, mulai dari Yerusalem." (TB)

What if the Indonesian Christian Church applied that principle and was passionate about missions to Muslims in Indonesia?

In the late 1990s, there was some intense persecution in Indonesia as some Muslims attacked Christians and Chinese and many of you fit to some degree in one or both of those categories. Is it possible that the lack of forgiveness, the bitterness towards Muslim peoples in the Indonesian Christian Church could be hindering our mission to Muslim peoples?

But the vision must remain the same: the whole church sharing the whole Christ from the Holy Bible with the whole person of every person of every people of every language of all lands for all time with all boldness, with a focus on the lost and the least to the last. We must stand firm. We must not be moved by every shift of our emotions.

Live it out:

1. To help you do that, I have brought some prayer guides for the Muslim world. While these thirty day prayer guides cover the whole range of the Muslim world, there are some days that feature Indonesia & South East Asia. Can you pray & seek God's blessing on Muslims for thirty days? Will you love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you?
2. The best antidote to bitterness is service & kindness so consider adopting a people group in Indonesia as an object of your prayers by praying for a language or tribe or ethnic group until it is transformed by the Gospel. Few things will hone your giving and witness as much as focused prayers with a view to action. Prayer disbands bitterness and fuels the fount of forgiveness in the heart. What language or people group will you pray for?  
<http://www.joshuaproject.net/countries.php?rog3=ID>