

An Apology from the Body of Christ

Recently I had a revelation from the Lord. He simply asked me a question. "Amy, if I am a vengeful, wrathful, angry God why would anyone want to follow me?" Many of us sang the song "Jesus Loves Me" growing up...Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so...but did we really know? Do you really know? I hope by the end of this article you will know in your heart what God's Word tells us is true...God is love and yes, Jesus does truly love you! (John 17:23, I John 4:16)

For some time now I have believed God is all the time good. Bad things, situations, sickness, disease, etc. are not from God. He does, however, use these things to bring about good, but He does not send them.

God is all the time good is a simple, but profound foundational truth. If we were really honest most of us have, at one time, not believed He is all the time good.

As I was contemplating the revelation/question the Lord posed to me, I felt the nudging of Holy Spirit to write this apology. This is a general apology to all humanity on behalf of the body of Christ.

Although this apology is written in first person I have not personally experienced them all. You most likely will not receive an apology from everyone who has hurt you in your lifetime, allow me to stand in their place.

I would encourage you as you read this to allow Holy Spirit to bring to your heart people in your life who have modeled, taught or done any of these things. Don't focus on the injustice, which would only allow bitterness or unforgiveness to take root (perhaps it is already there.) Instead choose today to forgive those people and the body of Christ in general. Then, in the end, you will be given an opportunity to repent of times when you have misrepresented the Godhead; Father, Son or Holy Spirit.

On behalf of the body of Christ I would like to personally apologize to you for times when I misrepresented God's love for you. For times when I have been hypocritical, sending a mixed message. Standing for one thing, but walking out another. Will you please forgive me for gladly receiving my salvation by grace, but placing expectations on you to receive it by works. I judged you. I made your sin look bigger than mine to make myself feel better. Please forgive me for being double-minded. It sent a confusing message to you and for that I am truly sorry.

As your Sunday school teacher I presented God to you incorrectly. I planted thoughts of burning in hell in your young, impressionable mind. You weren't old enough to understand God's love on your own and I didn't teach it to you. I scared you and told you if you didn't

accept Christ as your Savior that you would burn forever and ever in hell. I should have told you God loved you so much He gave His one and only Son to die for your sins. I should have told you it is God's desire that everyone should come to a saving knowledge of Him. It is not His will that anyone should perish. (II Peter 3:9) Because of my teaching you said the sinner's prayer as a child, but later struggled with doubts about your salvation, for that I am truly sorry.

As your pastor I taught every Sunday on hell, fire and brimstone when I should have taught it is His kindness that leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4). Please forgive me for yelling, belittling you and not offering and teaching the hope to be found in a relationship with a loving Father.

As a church leader I would like to ask you to forgive me for times when I hurt you. I didn't take your situation seriously. I brushed you aside and sent you the message your heart was not important. In truth your heart is on the Father's heart. He is never too busy for you. You came to me in search of healing, comfort and godly counsel. It was my job to point you to Him and I missed the opportunity and/or abused my authority. Will you please forgive me?

As your father, please forgive me for not representing Father God to you. I was absent from your life, sometimes physically, sometimes emotionally. Father God's lap is always open to you. You can climb up into it and find safety, provision and identity. I should have shown you the Father's heart by also being available to you. My lap should have been a safe place, but instead I abused you and for that I am truly sorry. I did not tell you who you are and what you could become. Instead I talked down to you, complained about your lack of performance in school, athletics and other areas of your life. You had true potential, but because of my own wounded heart, I did not see it.

Daughters, as a father I should have protected your innocence, but in some cases I stole it. You should have seen modeled in me what a good husband and father should look like. Because I didn't represent this to you, you went in search for significance and looked for love in all the wrong places. You sold yourself short and gave your heart away and it got trampled, used and abused. As your father please forgive me?

Sons, as a father I should have shown you what a godly husband and father looks like. I should have taught you to love your wives as Christ loves the church. I should have taught you by experience how to speak life and identity into your children. As your father would you please forgive me?

Daughters and sons, as a mother I should have been there to comfort you when you were hurting. My lap should have been a soft, nurturing place. But instead I yelled and got angry and made you feel unimportant, like I was too busy for you. Sometimes I got really angry and abused you. As your mother, will you please forgive me?

I would like to apologize for being passive and not speaking truth to you when it was a matter of life and death. You held the false belief that there were many ways to heaven and out of fear I didn't correct you. I should have shown you that Jesus is the only Way, Truth and Life (John 14:6).

I would like to apologize to you for being selfish and greedy. You were hungry and I did not offer to feed you either spiritually or physically. You needed a place to stay and I didn't offer you one. This is not representative of Jesus and for that I am truly sorry.

I am sorry for the times I gossiped about you. I said hurtful things and wounded your heart in ways I could never repair. Sometimes you found out about what I said and other times I weaved destructive words about you and you were unaware, but it affected your relationships in a negative way. You felt rejected by me and others. Will you forgive me?

Will you choose to forgive me for times when I stole from you? In some cases I was in a position of authority and I embezzled funds that weren't mine to take. In other cases I was a trusted friend and I stole your spouse through adultery. I betrayed your confidence and now you struggle to trust in relationships. I am truly sorry for this.

I would now like to address particularly those reading this that do not profess faith in Jesus Christ. Would you forgive us (Christians/Body of Christ) for being so hypocritical we caused you to shun Jesus because of our misrepresentation of Him. We, like you, are nothing of our own accord. We were brought out of the darkness into God's marvelous light by no work of our own, but by the gift of grace. As Christians we are called to show others the way to the Father. Sometimes in our zeal we do the exact opposite. Would you forgive us? And please, do not make your conclusions about Jesus based on our ungodly actions. Seek Him and learn His ways and you will see He never misrepresents His Father.

Hopefully, this apology has touched your heart in some area. It is not exhaustive and inevitably I have failed to include every instance of offense. It would not be possible to touch on every area of pain in one article. But God knows your deepest area of woundedness and He is ready to touch you in that deep place of pain.

If you relate to any of the situations described in the apology, it is possible there are blocks in your heart to receiving the fullness of His love for you. Likewise if there are ungodly beliefs that formed because of life situations you might not be able to see Him as He truly is. Extending forgiveness and replacing ungodly beliefs with His truth will be fundamental in you walking in the fullness of life offered by Jesus. (John 10:10)

Lamentations 2:19 instructs us to "pour out our hearts like water." Sounds like a deep cleansing to me...what are you waiting for?

Before we conclude I mentioned we would also have a time of repentance. If you feel led would you say this prayer with me? You can put it in your own words or say this one Again, God knows your heart. Speaking of hearts, why don't you place your hand on your heart as you pray this out loud:

Papa God,

Thank you for searching me and knowing me. You know my darkest pain and my deepest secrets. You are truly a safe place. Thank you that nothing I can do will ever lessen your love for me! But because of Your kindness I am led to repentance.

Father, I have misrepresented you. I have given Christianity a bad name. I have hurt many with my tongue and my actions. I haven't loved others as You have instructed me to do. I have (if a certain area of sin is coming to your heart, name it now.)

I cut any ties and shut any door were the kingdom of darkness has had access in my life based on this sin. Papa I receive Your forgiveness based on the finish work of Christ Jesus on the cross! I ask for the Holy Spirit to come and fill those places in my heart where the darkness has been with more of Your presence.

Teach me Lord from this day forward how to represent Your kingdom with excellence. May everyone I come into contact with be brought into an experience with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

I confess, proclaim and declare, You are all the time good! In the name of Jesus I pray, AMEN!

If you would like further ministry we would love to work with you at Growing in Grace. Some of our ministries include inner healing, restoration, physical healing prayer, discipleship and Bible study (also available online.) If you have any questions I would personally love to hear from you at amydover@iggm.org