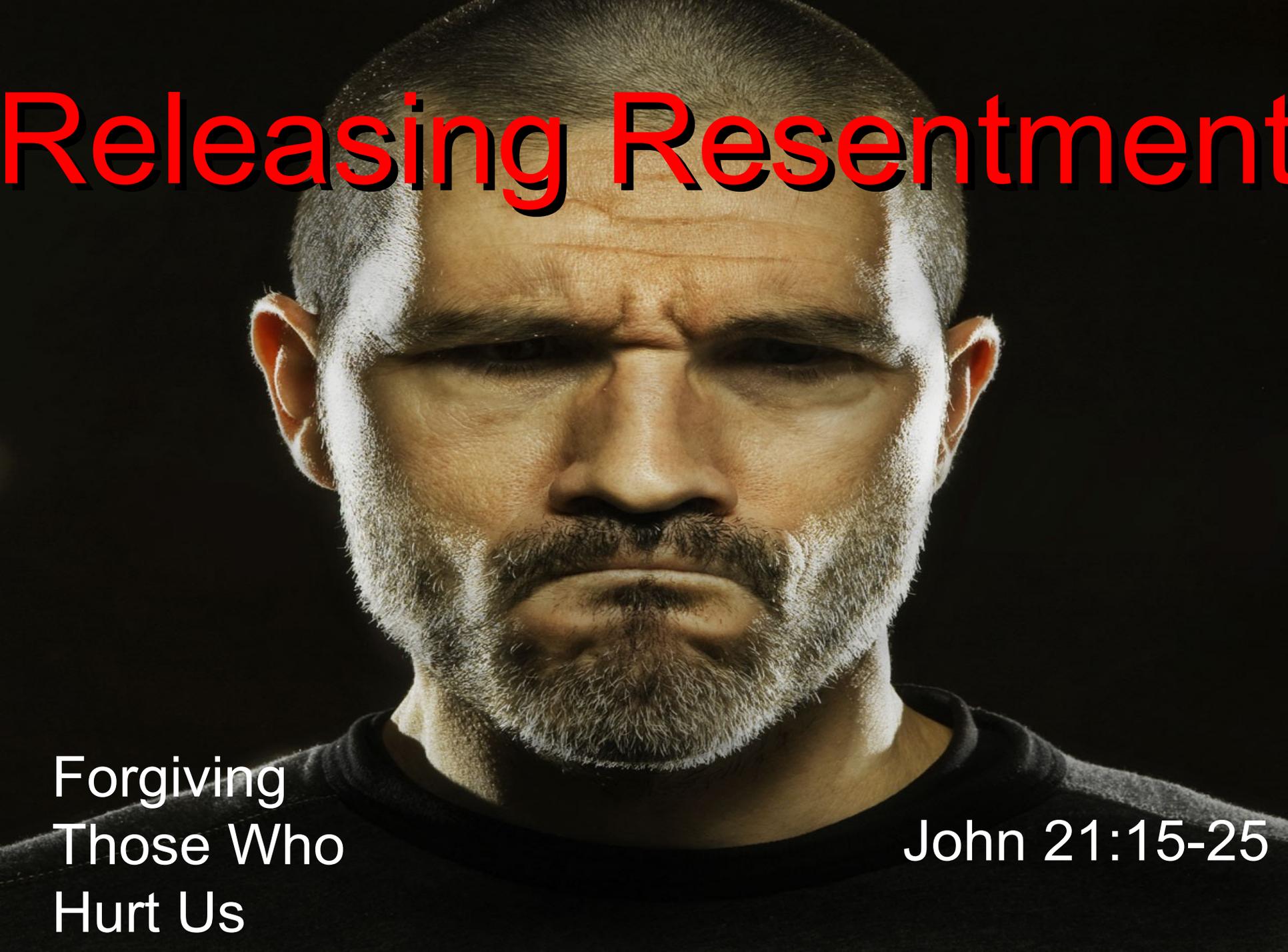


Releasing Resentment



Forgiving
Those Who
Hurt Us

John 21:15-25



John 21:15-25 NIV

- When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." (16) Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."*

John 21:15-25 NIV

- *(17) The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep.*

John 21:15-25 NIV

- *(18) I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." (19) Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"*

John 21:15-25 NIV

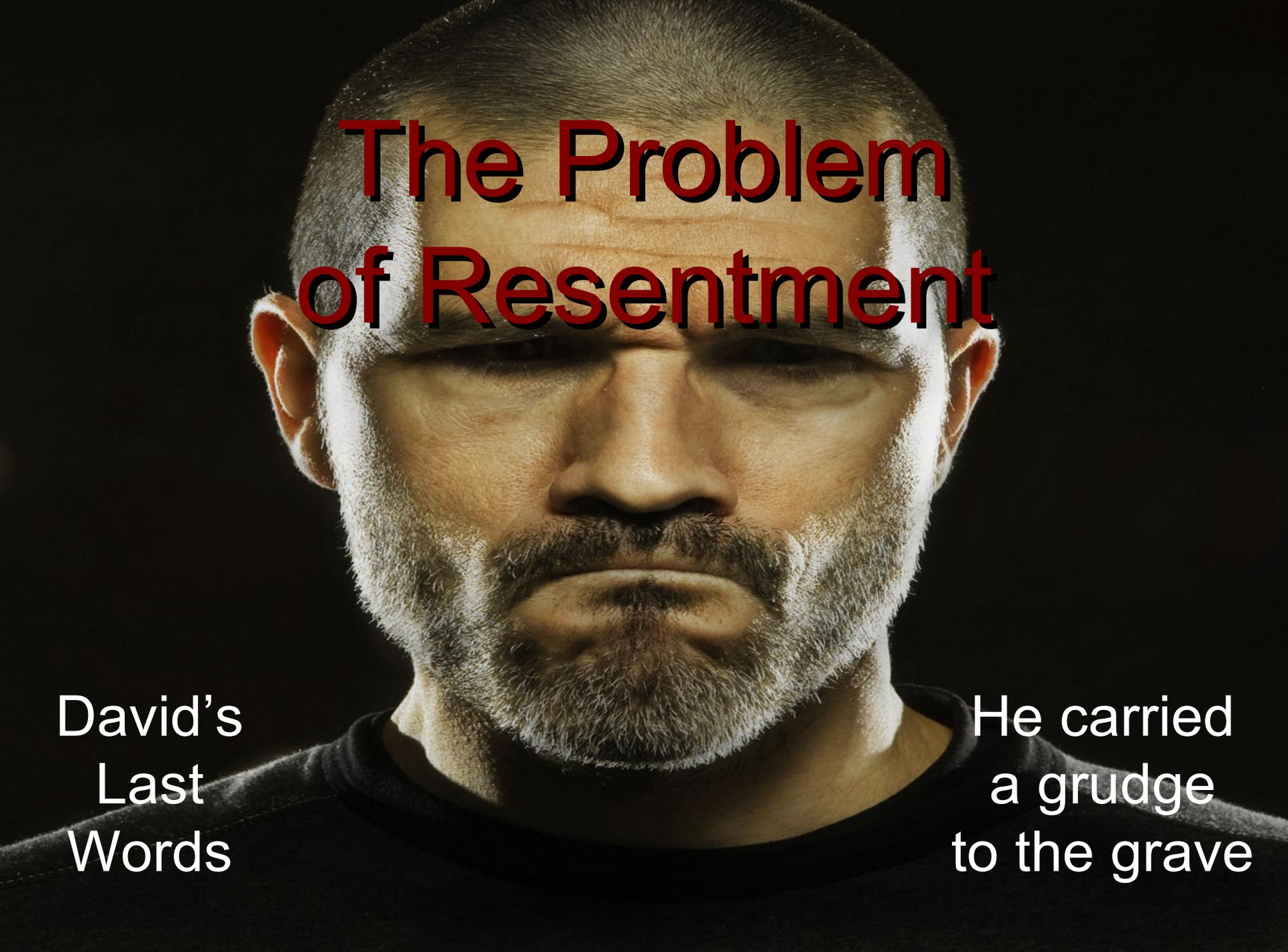
- *(20) Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?") (21) When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?" (22) Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me."*

John 21:15-25 NIV

- *(23) Because of this, the rumor spread among the brothers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?" (24) This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.*

John 21:15-25 NIV

- *(25) Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.*



The Problem of Resentment

David's
Last
Words

He carried
a grudge
to the grave

David's lowest moment: Absalom's revolution against him

- Absalom – a charmer
 - David too old & ineffective
 - Led civil war & stormed Jerusalem
- David & army fled Jerusalem
 - Preferred humiliation to civil war
 - It can't get any worse – but did
- Shimei taunted David
 - Threw clods of dirt and stones
 - Cursed him as a traitor
- Abishai: Let me run him through with a sword

David's response was incredible

- Let him go, maybe I deserve it
- Great end to the story – but it is not
- Memory festered in David's mind for years
- A decade later
 - David on his deathbed
 - David's dying words

1 Kings 2:8-9 NIV

- *"And remember, you have with you Shimei son of Gera, the Benjamite from Bahurim, who called down bitter curses on me the day I went to Mahanaim. When he came down to meet me at the Jordan, I swore to him by the LORD: 'I will not put you to death by the sword.' (9) But now, do not consider him innocent. You are a man of wisdom; you will know what to do to him. Bring his gray head down to the grave in blood."*



**Resentment
Dwells on Wrongs**

This story introduces the problem of resentment

- *1 Corinthians 13:5 NIV Love ... keeps no record of wrongs.*
- Accounting term for entry in ledger
 - Love does not keep a ledger of offenses
 - Love does not build up indebtedness
 - Love does not harbor a grudge
- But many people do
 - Nurse anger to keep it warm
 - Brood over wrongs until unforgettable

Most of us have had our Shimeis

- Critics from safety of the sidelines
 - Good student – poor athlete
 - Good athlete – poor student
 - Good personality – poor appearance
 - Good appearance – socially awkward
- Remember insults verbatim decades later
 - Like replaying video in our minds
 - Keeping a record of the wrong
 - Resentment builds over time



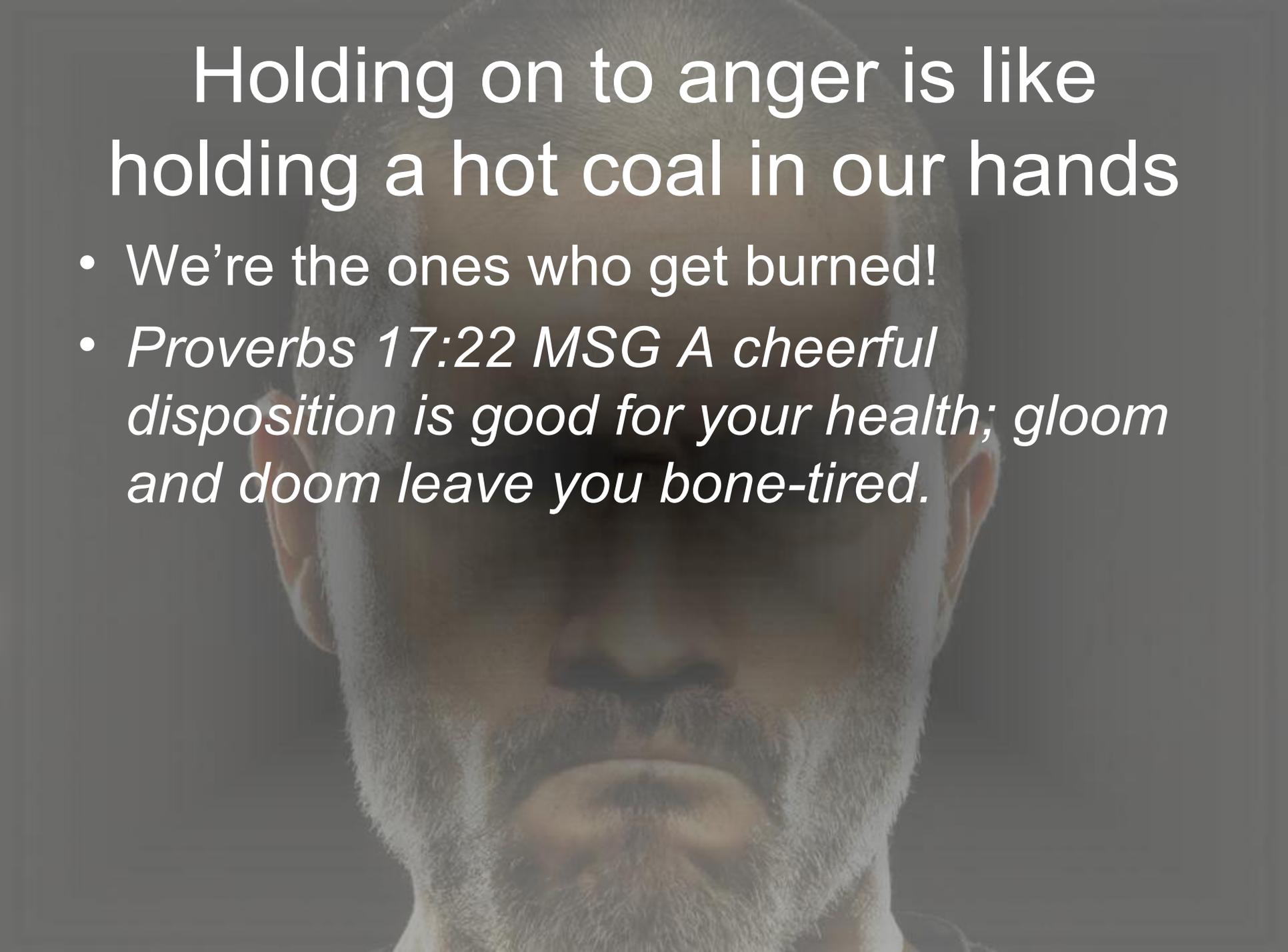
**Resentment
Destroys Relationships**

We may be so bitter over our Shimei

- Won't talk to offender
- Won't have anything to do with offender
- Even though a relative or former friend
- Carry pride & alienation to the grave
- We see it in divorce
 - Family divides into camps
 - If a friend of one, enemy of other



**Resentment
Destroys Your Personality**



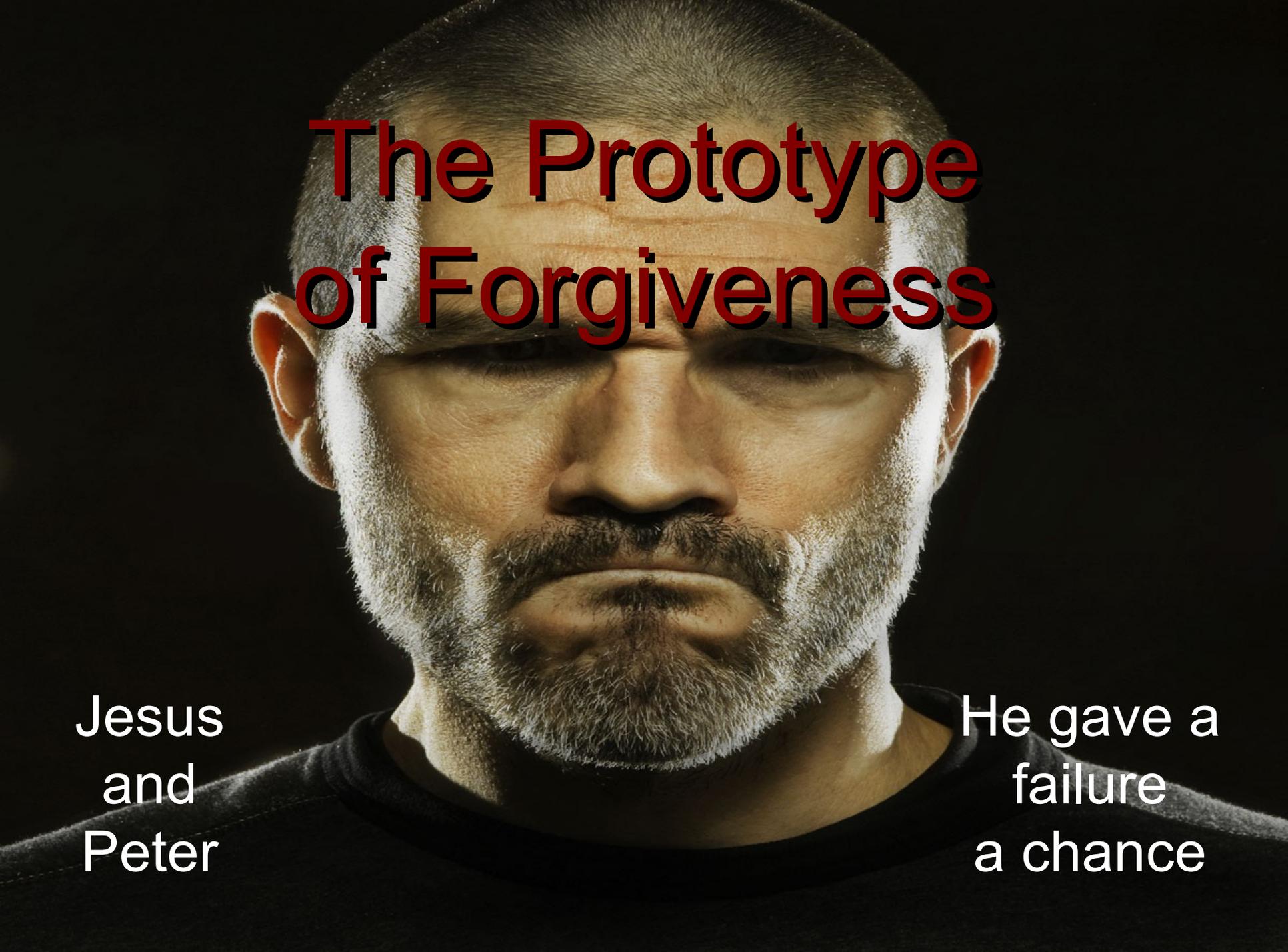
Holding on to anger is like holding a hot coal in our hands

- We're the ones who get burned!
- *Proverbs 17:22 MSG A cheerful disposition is good for your health; gloom and doom leave you bone-tired.*

Resentment destroys your personality



- Martin Luther – prolonged depression
 - Wife dressed in black; Luther: "Who died?"
 - Wife: "God did."; Luther: "God hasn't died."
 - Wife: "Well, stop acting like it."
- *Job 5:2 LB To worry yourself to death with resentment would be a foolish, senseless thing to do.*



The Prototype of Forgiveness

Jesus
and
Peter

He gave a
failure
a chance

John 21 – Postscript to the Gospel

- The gospel closed with the words:
 - *John 20:30-31 NIV Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. (31) But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*
- What is so important that God would add a P.S.?
 - After miraculous birth, ministry, death & resurrection
 - Anyone can be forgiven; no one beyond redemption

Jesus' great example of forgiveness

- *Matthew 26:33-34 NLT Peter declared, "Even if everyone else deserts you, I never will." (34) "Peter," Jesus replied, "the truth is, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times."*
- *Luke 22:61 NIV The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times."*

Three denials & three affirmations

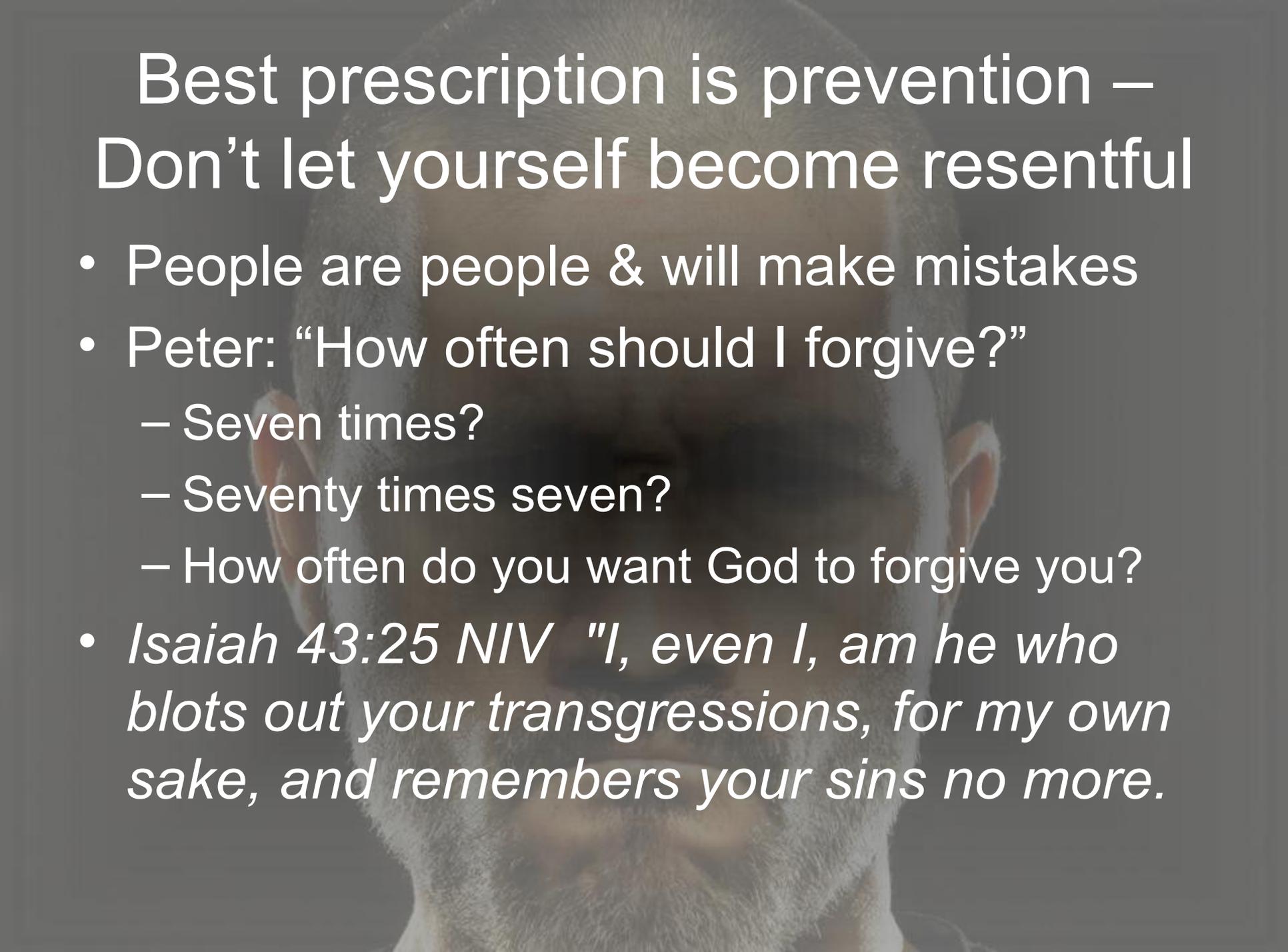
- *John 21:15 WEB Do you love me more than these? I have affection for you.*
 - No longer compares self with others
 - Q: *agapao* (love). A: *phileo* (affection)
- *John 21:16 WEB Do you love me? I have affection for you.*
 - Drops comparison & asks for self-analysis
 - Same answer claiming affection, not commitment
- *John 21:17 WEB Do you have affection for me? I have affection for you.*
 - Grieved that Jesus had to keep lowering the bar

Peter refocused

- *Feed my lambs. Take care of my sheep. Feed my sheep.*
 - I.e.: *“Do not neglect the work among the flock, Simon. That is your real assignment! Get back to it!”*
- Jesus promised Peter the keys to the kingdom
 - Peter blew it, but Jesus gave him the keys anyway
 - Peter would preach the first sermon on Pentecost
 - Jesus didn't keep a record of wrongs
- When Jesus forgives, he puts us right back to work, as though we had never faltered!



The Prescription for Healing



Best prescription is prevention –
Don't let yourself become resentful

- People are people & will make mistakes
- Peter: “How often should I forgive?”
 - Seven times?
 - Seventy times seven?
 - How often do you want God to forgive you?
- *Isaiah 43:25 NIV "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more."*



**We Must
Decide to Forgive**

Forgive whether you feel like it or not

- Harry Emerson Fosdick overheard Dad tell Mom:
 - “Tell Harry he can mow the grass if he feels like it.”
 - “And tell Harry he’d better feel like it.”



Forgiveness – not a matter of feeling, but of obedience

- *Mark 11:25 MSG And when you assume the posture of prayer, remember that it's not all asking. If you have anything against someone, forgive--only then will your heavenly Father be inclined to also wipe your slate clean of sins.*“
- Do you want to be forgiven?
- If so, forgive!



**We Must
Take the First Step**

Jesus initiated the conversation with Peter

- After resurrection: "Go tell the disciples and Peter."
- When wounded, we make the offender pay
 - Wait for him to fall at our feet and beg for forgiveness
- Jesus says we should initiate reconciliation
 - *Matthew 18:15 NLT "If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the fault. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back.*
- Go tactfully, but take the initiative



**We Must
Release the Offender**

Let God judge them, if he chooses

- *Romans 12:19 MSG Don't insist on getting even; that's not for you to do. "I'll do the judging," says God. "I'll take care of it."*
- Forgiveness turns offenders over to God
 - Not denying the offense
 - Not accepting their blame
 - Refusing to be judge & executioner
 - Turning them over to God for Him to deal with

In *Psalms* 109 David struggled with resentment

- *O God, whom I praise, do not remain silent, (2) for wicked and deceitful men have opened their mouths against me; they have spoken against me with lying tongues. ... (6) Appoint an evil man to oppose him; let an accuser stand at his right hand. ... (9) May his children be fatherless and his wife a widow. (10) May his children be wandering beggars; may they be driven from their ruined homes. (11) May a creditor seize all he has; may strangers plunder the fruits of his labor.*

Ruth Graham: Not her job to change Billy



- “It was my job to love Billy and God’s job to change him.”
- It’s not your job to make somebody pay – release the offender to God



**We Must
Focus on the Future**

Get your eyes off the past

- A glance at the rearview mirror is a good thing
- But drivers can't spend much time looking there
- *Hebrews 12:15 CEV Make sure that no one misses out on God's wonderful kindness. Don't let anyone become bitter and cause trouble for the rest of you.*
- Your choice:
 - Kindness of God
 - Bitterness of spirit

If Jesus could forgive Peter, he can forgive you

- Took the initiative when Peter felt miserable
- Forgave Peter's failings & welcomed him back
- Focused Peter on future & new responsibilities
- What has he done for you?
 - Taken the initiative on the cross
 - Forgiven you of every sin, past, present & future
 - Commissioned you to his service
- If Jesus could treat Peter and you that way –
how can you treat offenders any other way?