



04 Ep #497 Separation Anxiety

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0:00:45.0 Sonja Corbitt: I'm Sonja Corbitt, Catholic Evangelista, and this is the Sacred Healing 12:30 Podcast. I have a lot of new listeners and I wanna welcome you. Thank you for being with us. This series on St. Thérèse of Lisieux's Little Way, which I have taken some liberties with, of course, which I explained in the very first episode. And although I am putting a certain little spin on it, I believe that it is entirely in line with the spirit of her Little Way, as I have been hoping to show you throughout each episode.

0:01:19.1 SC: So last week, we talked about the holidays and how to protect the inner child in us from abuse, and also understanding trauma bonds and how those trauma bonds work in a cycle and push us back into cycles of abuse. And if you had great families, and we are going to revisit that in a "little way" [chuckle] in the context of St. Thérèse herself. Because she had good saintly parents, and the loss of her mother at four and a half years old caused her to be super sensitive in ways where she acted out. She was whiny and she cried a lot and was super sensitive. And of course, that is an indication of trauma in a child. And so her father and her sisters tended to spoil her out of an abundance of compassion and sympathy for little Thérèse, who was so young when she lost her mother. And of course, her older sisters all left for the convent and deepened that mother wound, and she became somewhat spoiled.

0:02:33.2 SC: But my point is that Thérèse had great parents. She had good relationships with her siblings, very good. And she still suffered trauma, trauma that was a challenge to her life of faith, but when it was completely embraced, it made her one of the greatest saints in all of salvation history, perhaps the greatest to our time, our point. All of this, despite what some people have said of her being neurotic. She had neuroses. And I think reading her writings and her autobiography, I think that that's probably an accurate assessment. But you know, it's thought by therapists and psychologists and psychiatrists that most of us are neurotic to one degree or another. [chuckle] But what's beautiful about St. Thérèse of Lisieux particularly in that context, is that she shows us that those wounds can be healed by God. So whichever camp you style yourself in, whether you did grow up in trauma bonds with your abuser, or whether you suffered trauma in some other way,

perhaps grief like St. Thérèse of Lisieux did, all of us have wounds.

0:03:44.3 SC: And so that is why the Catechism makes this really shocking statement about our parents and the purification of our hearts. Now when it uses the word "purification," I'd like for you to think of the word "purgatory." I've mentioned this in the series particularly last week, but I want to come back to it 'cause it's really important. Purification or purging is where we get the Latin word "purgatory." In the scriptures, the word is typically "sanctification" from a Greek word, but they mean the same thing. Sanctification is this purgation of vice, this healing, that makes room for virtue.

0:04:24.9 SC: And the Scriptures are clear that it's supposed to happen here, now, on earth. And the Catechism says this in the section on Christian prayer, particularly the Our Father. It says, "Before we make our own this first exclamation of the Lord's Prayer, we must humbly cleanse our hearts of certain false images drawn from this world." So right off the bat, we can't see God and exclaim that he is our Father, our Heavenly Father, with this certain love that we should have for him until we have humbly cleansed our hearts of certain false images from the world. And it goes on to explain those. "Humility makes us recognize that no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him, that is, to little children."

0:05:15.1 SC: So if you have difficulty seeing God as a loving Heavenly Father, if you see him as remote or distant or uncaring or a taskmaster or harsh, those sorts of images have to be cleansed. Those are images from the world. And humility, being like a little child, is what helps us recognize who he is and who Jesus says he is, particularly. But the Catechism goes on to say this, and I use this all the time in speaking events and in my writings and in my one-on-one consults because this is the gist. "The purification of our hearts has to do with paternal or maternal images stemming from our personal and cultural history and influencing our relationship with God. God our Father transcends the categories of the created world. To impose our own ideas in this area upon him would be to fabricate idols to adore or pull down. To pray to the Father is to enter into his mystery as he is and as the Son has revealed him to us."

0:06:22.2 SC: So several things here. The purification of our hearts, the purgatory, the sanctification of our hearts, of these wounds and these trauma bonds and these attachments, have to do with paternal and maternal images. So they come from our parents. And our parents then we either put them up on a pedestal and make them gods and we obey them rather than God or else we have made them an idol for ourselves in some way, or because they have been terrible parents we want to tear down this image of God that Jesus gives us. We tear it down by saying, "I don't believe that. I don't believe he loves me. I don't believe he cares about me. I don't believe he protects me. I don't believe he provides for me." That's tearing down the image that Jesus gives us of God the Father as a loving Heavenly Father because of trauma and abuse and all kinds of woundedness.

0:07:23.2 SC: So either way, whether our parents were permissive or whether they were tyrants or whether they were somewhere in the middle, we have a tendency to either put them on a pedestal and adore them to the exclusion of God, or attribute to God their faults and their deficits and their woundedness and all of those really ugly things. And so you can see then why the Catechism says that the purification of our hearts has to do with paternal or maternal images that influence our relationship with God; and we have to become like little children, humble, in order to be healed of those erroneous images, and trust that he is who Jesus says he is.

0:08:10.4 SC: And I have shared, particularly in my first book, *Unleashed*, that this was the very beginning of my relationship with God. I saw Jesus in the bosom of the Father in John 1 and I thought, What does Jesus know that I don't know? 'Cause I don't want to be anywhere near God's bosom. I don't want to be in his lap. But I trusted that Jesus knew something that I clearly didn't know. I trusted what the Word said about God and what Jesus shows us about God. I always wondered, Why in the world would Jesus go to the cross and suffer and endure all that he suffered and endured for love of the Father if he didn't know that God's love is somehow worth it? I know that sounds like a cheap reduction: "Jesus knew that God's love was worth dying for," but that's just kind of how I looked at it from my 20-ish-year-old point of view.

0:09:08.0 SC: And I could even say that that is a childish way of seeing things. We all have a childish way of seeing God, and Jesus calls us to childlikeness. And he talks about that in Matthew 18, which we're getting to, I think, [chuckle] today. But childishness is petty. It sees God as petty. It sees faith as petty. It sees the Church as petty. Childlikeness though is that wonder, that trust, that simplicity that Jesus is speaking of particularly in Matthew 18. And St. Thérèse of Lisieux exhibits that sort of childlikeness. She left her childishness behind and instead she embraced the childlikeness.

0:09:53.8 SC: Now, I mentioned in the first episode of the series that St. Thérèse of Lisieux's mother died of breast cancer. And spiritually speaking, breast cancers and other female issues indicate mother or other woman wounds. So a sister, an aunt, a grandmother, those sorts of female issues usually indicate spiritually some sort of female wound. And so it's likely that Thérèse's mother, Zélie, may have had her own mother wound, and of course Thérèse herself, having lost her mother so young and then her sisters leaving for the convent. Now, it's not true that they abandoned her. Of course not. But a child will feel it that way, whether it's literally or logically or rationally true or not, doesn't matter to a child, they feel it a certain way, and Thérèse would have felt abandoned by her mother and her sisters. And her autobiography shares those feelings of loneliness and abandonment and grief.

0:10:58.1 SC: And it's not surprising then that because Thérèse seems to have had such a tender, gentle, good nature combined with her youth, that would have... And it did, it internalized her wrestle with God. Who is he and what is he like? And what is my role in his love and in his kingdom and in his Church? She didn't show that to a lot of people. She didn't show it to her sisters in the convent, and she didn't share it much. And if we hadn't had her autobiography, most of it would have been completely lost to us. We wouldn't even know it.

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0:13:12.8 SC: Many of you, after listening to last week's episode on abuse and trauma bonds said to yourself, "Well, that's not me. My family was great. I haven't had abuse. That doesn't apply to me at all." And if that's you, I want to ask you something. Because sometimes when we have like Thérèse, that simple good nature, that tenderness and gentleness of personality and temperament, the abuse occurs interiorly. Does it not? If the definition of abuse given by that study that I posted last week is that "emotional abuse is any non-physical behavior or attitude that is designed to control, subdue, punish, or isolate another person through the use of humiliation or fear," what I would ask you is, Do you abuse yourself interiorly in these ways in order to please and placate the people around you, particularly your mother or your father, your family, or those with whom you are closely related or your friends or perhaps coworkers? The people around you though, do you use abuse interiorly to force yourself, to control your emotions, to subdue your actions, to punish yourself, to isolate yourself through humiliation or fear? -which usually is a coverup for shame and guilt.

0:14:48.1 SC: How often do you use shame and guilt to make yourself do things that you either know are not right or know are not fair in order to please other people? You use shame and guilt to make yourself do things to please other people or to placate them so that they'll like you, so that they'll love you, so that they'll spend time with you, so that you're not abandoned or lonely, or those kinds of things. Now, the outward expression of that is people like me who are super passionate and so all of their emotions come out, all of that strength of emotion comes out on other people. So we're the outward abusers. We use manipulation and yelling and silent treatment and throwing and breaking things to sort of manipulate and control the people around us. But those who don't have that sort of outwardly strong, passionate personality, those who are more interior, those who are more introverted, more gentle, those are the people who most often abuse themselves so that they remain docile, so that they remain pleasing to the people around them because they don't want conflict, they don't want confrontation.

0:16:00.8 SC: And so those people are the people who enable people like me when I had the anger problem. So do you force yourself out of fear of not being liked or loved, to go along with actions and relationships that are destructive emotionally, spiritually, physically, or intellectually? Do you lie to yourself, manipulate yourself, shame and guilt yourself, force your body to do the boundary setting for you through sickness or fatigue or something like that? And then when it has done that job separating you, then you're isolated. So you're punished, you're punished either way, right? And if we have an outward sort of aggressive personality in this kind of emotion, we know better. And so we may rein that in after we've learned a little better. And we're following God, we realize, well, we can't go around exploding on people. So we begin to internalize it more like the good natured people who pretend then, and they gather all this resentment and bitterness because they're stuffing the emotion.

0:17:05.2 SC: And those people like me who are outwardly aggressive then, you learn not to do that. But then you go to the opposite extreme and then you pretend you're not emotional at all, [chuckle] when we need some balance. And that's exactly why we're looking at Matthew 18. Because the overview, the main point, the main takeaway of Matthew 18 is that in my estimation, I think that Matthew 18 is probably the best chapter in the Scriptures on boundaries and how to erect good, healthy boundaries than anywhere else in the entire Bible. Because it talks about interpersonal relationships. It's not just like the Ten Commandments where, "Do this and don't do that." And it does include interpersonal... Relationships. I'm sorry, I got tongue tied. It does later on when it talks about honoring your father and mother and it talks about your relationships with other people. We don't steal, we don't kill, we don't envy, we don't covet.

0:18:06.0 SC: But what I love most about Matthew 18 is that Jesus is not calling us to be a doormat. And in fact, he makes setting boundaries with one another a hallmark of being little. Who are the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? They're vying for position. Who's the greatest? And Jesus says, "Unless you are converted and become as little children..." And then he goes on to talk about all these boundaries, and he shows us that true humility is accepting correction, offering correction, and forgiving offenses. But he does so in the context of Christ followers. So there's a distinction that comes out particularly in the commentaries by the Church Fathers by way of which they reserve this boundary setting for Christian brothers and sisters only, and everyone else is consigned to a different group and a different way of treating them, which I promise we'll get into.

0:19:09.8 SC: But it's important to just look at Matthew 18 from a bird's eye view. It's about boundaries. And we know that boundaries are of the Lord. He gave us the Ten Commandments, and he gave us the Pentateuch or the Torah, the Book of the Law. So there are five books according to Jewish tradition that are dedicated to the Law of God. Which for us law is maybe a dirty word because it brings with it this idea of justice and condemnation and accusation perhaps, and indictment. And oftentimes, even hypocrisy because the world uses this principle against us, and we don't know any better, so we capitulate to it instead of understanding what Jesus is teaching here, and how to employ these boundaries for the good of our inner child, and our families, and our Church. So I hope after a really good explanation of Matthew 18, you're gonna stop falling for this worldly objection to calling out sin, and this worldly demand that we be tolerant of absolutely everything. I hope you're gonna set that aside when this understanding of Jesus' teaching here is complete for you.

0:20:20.0 SC: Again, that sort of reticence or resistance to or abdication of setting good boundaries usually comes from a false sense of guilt and shame. The forehead is the seat of shame in the Scriptures. It is thought by some rabbis that the mark of Cain was a particular mark or something on his forehead. But we have a really clear picture of this in Exodus 28, verses 36 through 38. And before I even get into that, I want to make a distinction here. We would think to ourselves, "Well, I am guilty, so therefore I should feel shame and guilt." And perhaps that's true that you are guilty. However, shame and guilt come from the enemy. They're loaded with condemnation and judgment in the sense of, "You suck. You are bad. You are terrible. You aren't worthy." All of these condemnation and accusation, shame and guilt are just loaded with that. That doesn't come from God. Contrition comes from God.

0:21:24.1 SC: And this isn't a Sonja-ism. This is scriptural. Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." There is no condemnation. The Apostle John

records Jesus' words. He says, "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through him might be saved. He who believes in him is not condemned but he who does not believe is condemned already because he hasn't believed in the name of the only begotten Son. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world and men love their darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. Everyone practising evil hates the light and doesn't come to the light lest his deeds be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light that his deeds may be clearly seen that have been done in God." And so what he's saying there is, there is no condemnation for those who continue to go to God for their healing and their cleansing and the truth. It's the evil who don't do that. It's the evil who practice their sin in the darkness and will not come to God for the truth of the light and the healing of the light.

0:22:35.9 SC: But the salient point is, there is no condemnation. So condemnation does not come from God. It comes from the enemy. Contrition comes from God. Contrition says, "Man, that was bad. I need to not do that anymore." It's detached. It's emotionless. It has mercy behind it. It pushes beyond the truth of the wrong toward the mercy of God. We saw that in our Holy Spirit series that the Holy Spirit always pushes us beyond this, the truth of the wrong, to the mercy of God. And there is no condemnation. The condemnation and the judgment and the shame and the guilt all come from the enemy to keep us trapped in it so that, first of all, we don't place boundaries for other people, we don't place boundaries for ourselves, and we suck up all the guilt and shame and condemnation that other people try to put on us because we don't know any better. God forbid, because he has announced something truer, something newer, holiness to the Lord.

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0:25:28.3 SC: In Exodus 28, we have the stipulation and the directions for the priestly garments for the Old Testament tabernacle and the priesthood in that Old Testament tabernacle. So that's the context. But there is a sense in which each of us is prophet, priest, and king, the Catechism tells us. And so each of us has a certain type of priesthood. It's a lay priesthood, obviously; we're not actually ordained priests. But look at what it says of the priest. "You shall make a plate of pure gold

and engrave on it like the engraving of a signet, 'Holiness to the Lord.' And you shall put it on a cord that it may be on the turban. It shall be on the front of the turban. And so it shall be on Aaron's forehead," Aaron being the high priest, "that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow in all their holy gifts. It shall always be on his forehead that they may be accepted before the Lord."

0:26:29.5 SC: So the high priest's turban was made of white linen, and there was a gold plate engraved with the words "Holiness to the Lord" that rested on his forehead. And it basically means that before the Lord, he is holy. There's a context here. It also actually indicates that the gifts that the people bring are only gonna be acceptable when they're presented through the mediation of a priest, which I find particularly interesting coming from a non-Catholic background because "There is no other mediator," they all say, and yet here again in so many places, but here it is specifically or explicitly that they have to bring the gifts to the priest and they're not holy unless the priest offers them on their behalf because he is holy before the Lord. So that's a digression there. But my point here is that as a kingdom of priests, we are all a type of prophet, priest, and king. And so we all have a certain mark we could say on our forehead, which is typically the seat of shame, but it has been made Holiness to the Lord.

0:27:38.0 SC: Now bring that forward into the Church. How is that true? Because Jesus bore our guilt and shame, because he is our high priest, he brings all of our offerings and all of our gifts, and they go through him and his sacrifice because he bore our guilt and shame. And because he bore our guilt and shame, we no longer have the condemnation that we deserve. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus," Paul says. And so that guilt and shame that you use to abuse yourself, to force yourself to do things that you know inherently are destructive or even sinful by enabling other people or tolerating their sin out of a fear of being unliked or unloved or abandoned or rejected, those... First of all, that guilt and shame is false. You are Holiness to the Lord. And so Jesus teaches in Matthew 18 this law of boundaries.

0:28:41.5 SC: Now, every single time I teach on boundaries, there are people who come to me and they present me and they actually do this to Jesus too; we're gonna see [chuckle] in Matthew 19. But people always ask me, they give me these specific situations and they want me to tell them what kind of boundary do I put up in this sort of situation? Now I do talk about those in one-on-one consults, but as a rule Jesus didn't get that specific. Why? Because the Holy Spirit is your rule of life. The Holy Spirit is your discernment. He is your wisdom. And the fact is, God wants us wrestling with these kinds of issues. Why doesn't he poof this person out of your life? Because you need to learn how to put good boundaries in place, because you're not gonna heal deeply if he just poofs that person away. You need to learn something really, really important and something very deep. There's a wound there that God is trying to get at. And so he allows these relationships to stay until we get a belly full, until we discover that it's so painful we cannot any longer tolerate the way it feels. And we start wrestling with, What is the right thing to do? The godly thing to do? The biblical thing to do? How do we deal with these people?

0:30:01.0 SC: And the entire Chapter 18 of Matthew and even part of 19 shows us this teaching on boundaries is sort of like stages. We have these three stages. There is a total separation, and then there is a confrontation. And I don't mean to do all these "-tions," but they sort of just all came together. And in the confrontation that there can be mediation and then either restoration or elimination. And then the third stage is forgiveness. So separation, confrontation, and always forgiveness. That's sort of the overview we see of Matthew 18 and a little bit of 19. Jesus teaches

and he's teaching in the context of two illustrations with children.

0:30:48.9 SC: He says at the very beginning of 18 when they ask him who's the greatest, he brings a child into the center of them and he says, "Unless you are converted and become as little children..." What is he saying? Unless you learn how to accept correction, how to offer correction and how to forgive offenses, you cannot be part of the kingdom of God. You can't be childlike. You can't be great in the kingdom of God. Because the people who are great in the kingdom of God are humble. They accept correction. We can't be upset when people correct us. And if you are, you're proud. It's unpleasant. Nobody likes to do it. But if we do it the way Jesus outlines for us in this chapter, it is humbling. Because you have to do it out of charity. You can't just spout off and just say it out of anger or say it in revenge. You can't do that and be under the guidelines of humility like a little child.

0:31:47.7 SC: Because it requires such a wrestling with the Holy Spirit in what to do and how to do it, we don't get these judicial precepts, these really specific situations. He just gives us the principles and sends us away to wrestle with the Holy Spirit and figure it out for ourselves. Because he knows that the process of wrestling with boundaries and people who require boundaries, Christians and non-Christians, the process of that teaches us many, many important things that we have to know in order to be healed. So why hasn't he just disappeared that person from your life? Because you have something to learn from them. And if you are miserable in that relationship, what you need to learn is that you need some boundaries. Resentment and unforgiveness, that right there is an indication that there, first of all, probably need to be boundaries. And secondly, that there is woundedness that is tying you perhaps to that person or those people.

0:32:50.0 SC: Now, I want to do a big overview of Matthew 18 and part of 19, and I am sandwiching these two chapters here between the illustrations that Jesus uses with the children. The very first part of Matthew 18, he brings a child into the midst of them and he starts to teach on boundaries, into 19, which remember, the chapter headings or the chapter numbers and the verse numbers are all... Those are artificial; they weren't actually part of the original scrolls first of all, but they're added by the translators for our convenience and our help. So the fact that it says "Chapter 19" doesn't necessarily mean that it's a different teaching, and I don't think it is because there's another illustration or example with children in Chapter 19, verses 13 through 15. And so I am including that bit of 19 and everything between these two illustrations that Jesus used children to make his point. Because this is about the little way of childhood. It's about the difference between childishness and childlikeness. It's about protecting the children in our lives and the children inside of us.

0:34:05.4 SC: After "Who is the greatest?" where Jesus brings the child in the midst and he says "Unless you're converted and become as little children," the next section Jesus warns of offenses and he talks about the necessity of separation. We'll get into that in detail. I'm just doing the overview. The next section is, "Do not despise one of these little ones." And then he talks about the lost sheep. The next section is dealing with a sinning brother or sister, and we have guidelines from the Church Fathers on how to do this, and the distinctions between Christian brothers and sisters and those who are not Christian brothers and sisters. The next section is the unforgiving or unmerciful servant. And we learn about forgiveness, what it is and what it's not, and the consequences of a lack of forgiveness.

0:34:56.9 SC: And let's not even use the word "forgiveness" 'cause that's a stumbling word for

some people who are more introverted, more gentle, more tender sorts of personalities and temperament. They're not harshly unforgiving so much as they are bitter and resentful. So the bitter or resentful or unforgiving or unmerciful servant. That's the next section. And then we have a teaching on marriage and divorce under which there's also a little bit there on celibacy. And then in that context we're gonna talk about parenting, how to parent, how to place that number one thing in the top priority that will help guide your parenting, and help you pass along the values and the things that are important to you to them in a way that's effective and lasting and permanent.

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0:36:22.3 SC: I'm just gonna go ahead and tell you that this is gonna be so difficult for some of you, you're just not gonna do it. You're not gonna believe how the Church Fathers interpret this next passage. We've already looked at who is the greatest. We've looked at the fact that we have to be converted and become as little children. We know that the context shows us that we have to be humble. We have to be simple. We have to accept correction, we have to offer correction, and we have to forgive. Those are the hallmarks, according to Jesus in this passage, for what it means to become as little children in its most basic way. He's talking about boundaries. "Jesus called a little child to him, set him in the midst of them and said, 'Surely, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.'" And then he makes this statement. "Whoever receives one little child like this in my name receives me."

0:37:25.2 SC: And that really is the principle for the whole Little Way series, because we're talking about literal children here, the children in our families, the children, perhaps our grandchildren, perhaps our own. If you're a parent of small children or just children at home, adoption actually particularly comes to mind, or having a large family. That comes to mind as well. If we receive little children in his name, we have received him. That is a big statement from Christ. And by extension, through the example of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, we are also including the inner child. Whoever receives the inner child like this in my name, receives me. What is "like this?" Well, literally it means the child that's standing right in the midst of them. But it also means, it could mean what he's about to say. "Whoever receives the little child like this in my name, receives me": And then he goes on to warn of offenses.

0:38:22.0 SC: Now, this section, these two sections of 18 are gonna be the only two we're gonna get to today. I can already tell. So I'm gonna read this next section. Jesus warns of offenses, Verse 6. Chapter 18, Verse 6. "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were drowned in the depths of the sea." Now, he's talking there about a custom, a non-Jewish custom of drowning offenders. But

when he talks about a millstone here, he's talking about the kinds of millstones that require a large beast to turn. So you're not coming back from this. If you get drowned with a millstone, you're not coming back from it.

0:39:07.1 SC: Now, all of us with inner children who are in distress, we're saying, "That's right. How dare we be traumatized and abused and all that when we were young?" And we may have this sort of accusation in our hearts. But we have to also remember that a lot of us are parents too. And if we cause our children to sin, then we ourselves are guilty. And so again, we have to place ourselves in that childlike posture and just ask for forgiveness. We have to admit that we have done wrong to God especially, and even perhaps to the child, and ask for forgiveness and do penance. Because he says in Verse 7, "Woe to the world because of offenses, for offenses must come." And he's just saying that because of the Fall, of concupiscence, of original sin, "There are going to be offenses, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes."

0:40:03.1 SC: So if and when we are guilty of offending the little ones, offending the child, whether it's a literal child or the inner child, then we are guilty. And he says, "If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the everlasting fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It's better for you to enter into life with one eye rather than having two eyes to be cast into hellfire." Now, you're not gonna like what the Fathers say about this because they say unanimously that we must detach and separate from those who would cause us to sin, those particularly.

0:40:52.1 SC: Now, the context here is Christian brothers and sisters. That we must separate from relatives and friends, those parts of our natural family body, we must cut them off if they, who are Christian brothers and sisters, who are also relatives and friends, if they cause us to sin, this is a quote from St. John Chrysostom, "On this account Christ with great earnestness commands us to cut with those most near and dear to us when they are to us the immediate occasions of scandal or sin." St. John Chrysostom is also the one who said about anger that, "He who is not angry when he has cause to be sins, because excessive patience is the hotbed of many vices and causes even the good man to do wrong." How does the good man do wrong out of excessive patience? Because he tolerates sinful behavior. He tolerates the sinful person, the sinful Christian. I should say "Christian" because that's the context here. We're talking about Christian brothers and sisters.

0:42:01.1 SC: We treat non-Christian family far differently than we do the Christian family. If you have a father, mother, sister, brother, aunt, uncle who claims to be a Christian, this is how you treat them. If they transgress against the inner child, if they transgress against a child, if they transgress against you, it says in these verses, Jesus talks about us: "If *your* hand or your foot causes you to sin." And he is talking about those close members of the body, of the family. How do they do that? Because they sin themselves. Either they overdrink or overeat or are somehow caught in some sin that they want to drag you into, or they abuse you or their passive aggression and manipulation and all of that passive sort of abuse boils you to the point where you lash out. Those can all be occasions of sin.

0:43:04.0 SC: But you don't need me to tell you. You have the Holy Spirit. You know when those Christian mothers, brothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, friends have become for you an occasion of sin. And if they have, your duty according to the Church Fathers and to Jesus, is to cut them off. Now, it may be temporary, it may be forever. You'll have to experiment with that, as I mentioned in the last

show. Jesus goes on to give us two more steps so that we can discern. Do we make this permanent, or is it meant to be temporary in order to draw them to repentance and reconciliation? The separation is not meant as a revenge. And if it is, the Church Fathers say that you are guilty. It is for Christian brothers and sisters, family members, friends who need to be corrected and drawn back into a proper relationship with Christ, with his Church, with us who are his Church. And so we have to wrestle with this until we can come to that in our hearts, in the interior of ourselves, when we can truly extend this separation as a matter of love and not revenge because we don't wanna be guilty. On the other hand, Augustine, along with St. John Chrysostom, Augustine in The City of God, said that God punishes the good along with the bad for a time because the good have enabled and they haven't spoken out against the evil. So the longer we wait, the more we're gonna suffer.

0:44:46.2 SC: A couple of interesting things about this passage from the Fathers, Origen says that the eyes here are the bishops and the priests because they have oversight over the Church. And remember that Jesus is speaking here about Christian brothers and sisters. So the context here is the Church, according to Origen. The hands are the deacons because deacons are the servants in the Church. That's actually what the word means, "servant." And the feet are the lay people. That's one interpretation he gives it. But then he brings it down to even our level where he says that the eyes are sins of sight. Those would be lust, covetousness, greed, those kinds of things. That the hands are sins in our thoughts, and that the feet are sins in our actions. So he kinda gives a couple of little interpretations there. Another thing he said in the context of this casting out is that effeminacy is a deadly sin, which of course Paul says too. But the connection that Origen is making to the Church is that if the bishops and the priests are sinning, then cast them out. If the deacons are sinning, cast them out. Separate from them. If the lay person is sinning, cast them out. Separate from them.

0:46:04.3 SC: And remember that this is the first stage. It's not necessarily permanent. The point is to bring about repentance and reconciliation with the Church. So how does this look practically? Well, if this person is a true Christian, the fact that you have separated from them will probably draw them to ask you why. And that's when you move to the second stage. So long as you have kept the stipulations that the Fathers and Jesus himself insist on. The first being, well, Jesus says in Verse 10, "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones." Now, when we have been hurt or offended, we tend to get angry. And in our anger we retaliate by this separation. And if we have done that, we also typically have judgment and condemnation and accusation in our hearts. We despise them in our hearts.

0:47:03.2 SC: Jesus says, you better be careful not to do that "because their angels always see the face of God, and the Son of Man has come to save that which is lost." So the point in separating them is so that Jesus, we pray, that the point is that Jesus will go and seek them. We pray that Jesus will go seek the one that is astray, the one that is lost. He promises that he will do that so long as we do not despise them and we're not doing this out of retaliation. Rather, that we are doing it with true charity and true love for our Christian brother and sister, father, mother, family member, or friend.

[music]

0:47:50.4 Outro: Thank you for listening to the Sacred Healing 12:30 Podcast. Find out more at biblestudyevangelista.com, because love heals.