

FORGIVING FROM THE HEART

Proposition: the biggest foothold that we can give Satan to robbing us of our victory and authority in Christ is forgiveness.

We have been talking about who we are “in Christ” about walking in His authority and His freedom, how to overcome the lies of the enemy and believe what the Bible says about us.

Today, I want to camp on the number one thing, that if you allow this to become a part of your life, will rob you of your freedom in Christ and open the door to your heart for personal torment. Do you know what it is;

THE NUMBER ONE THING THAT WILL ROB YOU OF YOUR FREEDOM AND OPEN YOUR LIFE TO TORMENT.

Is it? :

- a) The occult
- b) Sin
- c) Unforgiveness
- d) Demonic possession
- e) Chocolate

Turn to the person beside you and give them your answer.

Personally, based on my knowledge of scripture and my observations of life I think it is ‘c’. Unforgiveness. God said to the church at Corinth

2 Corinthians 2:10-11 (NIV)

¹⁰ Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, ¹¹ in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

I believe that Satan’s most effective ploy or scheme to robbing us of our authority and freedom and power as God’s children is ‘unforgiveness!’ We will experience the worse forms of mental torment if we don’t forgive from the heart.

Now most if not all of us would say, we have forgiven everybody that has hurt us. We know the bible tells us we must forgive those that hurt us and so we do but is that just words or is it real? What Jesus said in Matthew 18:34-35 is more than a bit unsettling.

Matthew 18:34-35

³⁴ The king was so angry that he ordered the official to be tortured until he could pay back everything he owed. ³⁵ That is how my Father in heaven will treat you, if you don't forgive each of my followers with all your heart.

What does it mean to forgive with all your heart?

Most of us would be a little uncomfortable with that. And just a few of you will be sitting here this morning thinking that you just cannot forgive or that you shouldn't forgive.

I hope what we are about to cover helps us all.

I want you to pause for a moment and recall the worst thing that anyone has ever done to you.

Why should you forgive that? Let's look at the reasons;

WHY FORGIVE THOSE THAT HAVE HURT YOU?

1. GOD REQUIRES US TO.

Matthew 6:9-15 Contemporary English Version (CEV)

9 You should pray like this:

***Our Father in heaven,
help us to honor
your name.***

***¹⁰ Come and set up
your kingdom,
so that everyone on earth
will obey you,
as you are obeyed
in heaven.***

¹¹ Give us our food for today^j

***¹² Forgive us for doing wrong,
as we forgive others.***

***¹³ Keep us from being tempted
and protect us from evil.***

¹⁴ If you forgive others for the wrongs they do to you, your Father in heaven will forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Your relationship with God is inextricably bound up with your relationship to other people. You cannot be in a right relationship with God while you are

hating on and bitter at other people. If the horizontal is messed up the vertical will be as well. What God teaches us in the Lord's prayer and in other places is that we must learn to relate to others in the same way that God relates to us.

God has forgiven us our sins, now we in turn need to forgive those that sin against us.

Now Christians are divided over what verses 14 and 15 mean

¹⁴ If you forgive others for the wrongs they do to you, your Father in heaven will forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Those that believe in once saved, always saved say that unforgiveness won't affect your salvation but will affect your relationship to the Father.

Those like me who don't believe in once saved always saved, that there are cancers that we can allow into our lives that over a long period of time can harden our hearts to grace and his voice, have a much scarier view of this passage.

Whichever view you take, unforgiveness will mess up your relationship with God and rob you of the freedom and power you need to live a normal Christian life!

The second reason that you should forgive those that have hurt you is

2. FOR YOUR OWN FREEDOM

I was waiting at the Pharmacy at the Doctors surgery the other day and they had free Living Well magazines. In it was a large article on why each of us need to forgive for our psychological and physical wellbeing, from a Doctor's perspective.

When Jesus was walking the earth with His disciples some Rabbis were saying you should forgive someone their sins against you up to 7 times.

Matthew 18:21-35 (CEV)

²¹ Peter came up to the Lord and asked, "How many times should I forgive someone who does something wrong to me? Is seven times enough?"

²² Jesus answered:

Not just seven times, but seventy-seven times! ²³ This story will show you what the kingdom of heaven is like:

One day a king decided to call in his officials and ask them to give an account of what they owed him. ²⁴ As he was doing this, one official was brought in who owed him fifty million silver coins. ²⁵ But he didn't have any money to pay what he owed. The king ordered him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all he owned, in order to pay the debt.

²⁶ The official got down on his knees and began begging, "Have pity on me, and I will pay you every cent I owe!" ²⁷ The king felt sorry for him and let him go free. He even told the official that he did not have to pay back the money.

²⁸ As the official was leaving, he happened to meet another official, who owed him a hundred silver coins. So he grabbed the man by the throat. He started choking him and said, "Pay me what you owe!"

²⁹ The man got down on his knees and began begging, "Have pity on me, and I will pay you back." ³⁰ But the first official refused to have pity. Instead, he went and had the other official put in jail until he could pay what he owed.

³¹ When some other officials found out what had happened, they felt sorry for the man who had been put in jail. Then they told the king what had happened. ³² The king called the first official back in and said, "You're an evil man! When you begged for mercy, I said you did not have to pay back a cent. ³³ Don't you think you should show pity to someone else, as I did to you?" ³⁴ The king was so angry that he ordered the official to be tortured until he could pay back everything he owed. ³⁵ That is how my Father in heaven will treat you, if you don't forgive each of my followers with all your heart.

7 is the number of completion, its God's perfect number in prophetic literature. So 70x7 simply means Jesus wants his followers to forgive in every situation and always. Without limit, just as He has forgiven us.

Interesting in the parable the amount the servant owed the master was an impossible figure for him to repay and yet the amount the forgiven ungrateful servant was owed by his fellow servant was only three months' wages. That kind of puts our sin against God and the sins of others against us in perspective.

The servant cannot put himself right with his master, the amount he owes is impossible. And so, mercy is required.

God is so determined to keep us free that he says just keep on forgiving 70 x 7 which means forever and in all situations.

3. BECAUSE YOU NEED TO SHOW MERCY JUST AS YOU HAVE BEEN SHOWN MERCY

Justice is righteousness or fairness. It is giving people what they deserve. God is just and cannot be unjust or unrighteous. If he gave people what we deserved, we would all go to hell.

But God is also merciful and He found a way to forgive and accept us all by allowing our punishment to fall on Jesus.

Mercy is NOT giving people what they deserve. We are told in Luke 6:36 to be merciful to others as God has been merciful to us. In other words, we are not to give other people what they deserve.

Christians are to go the extra mile for people and give them what they don't deserve. And that is what Grace is.

Freely we have each received God's love and forgiveness and now we are to freely give it (Matt 10:8).

4. SO SATAN CANNOT MESS WITH YOUR HEAD

2 Corinthians 2:10-11

In the parable of the unforgiving servant the idea of the servant being tortured carries the idea of a spiritual torment. I.e. if you don't forgive others, crazy ideas will start to form in your mind and seem so real.

5. SO THAT THE PAIN WILL STOP

So often people say I won't forgive my dad for what he did to me, he needs to suffer. Then you meet that dad and you realize that the only person suffering is the victim. The dad is having a great time in life. The one that suffers if you won't forgive is you. You carry the poison. But if you choose to forgive and let God be his judge, the memory might remain but the pain goes, in fact it's like the puss goes out of the memory so that it doesn't poison the now.

You never need to go to the person who hurt you and say you forgive them.

According to the bible the process of forgiveness does not involve the person who hurt you at all. It's an issue between you and God. God wants you to forgive those that have hurt you so that your pain will stop. It's for your sake.

You don't need to talk to them at all. The only time you need to go to a person over a forgiveness issue and talk is when you have been the offender, you have been the one that has caused hurt. Jesus said in Matt 5:23-24 that if you go to church and remember that someone has something against you, then you should leave your offering and go to that person and be reconciled. If you have hurt someone else go to the person and ask for forgiveness and put things right if you can but if someone has hurt you, you need to go only to God and tell Him what has happened and how you feel and that you now choose to forgive that person and be healed.

I think to be free of the pain you do need to

- a) Remember what happened and acknowledge the pain**
- b) Recognise that you alone can forgive them and show them mercy just as God has shown you mercy.**
- c) Recognise that forgiving them is not something you do with them but something you do with God.**
- d) You let God be their judge**
- e) You accept that their sin has had consequences on your life and that you are resolved to live with that.**

Forgiveness is NOT

- a) Forgetting (only God can do that)**
- b) Trusting someone who is not trustworthy (legal action may still be required to protect others)**
- c) Is not seeking revenge**

Romans 12:19 (CEV)

¹⁹ Dear friends, don't try to get even. Let God take revenge. In the Scriptures the Lord says,

***"I am the one to take revenge
and pay them back."***

A model prayer to help us forgive others (pray through slowly and from the heart)

Dear Lord Jesus,

I thank You that You have forgiven me so much! Today, dear Lord I choose to forgive for what they did (specifically) or failed to do (specifically to me) which made me feel

.....(verbally tell the Lord *every* hurt and pain that then comes to mind). I choose to let you be the judge. I choose not to take revenge or to make them suffer for what they have done to me. I forgive them Lord and release them to You Lord for your blessing.
In Jesus name I pray. Amen