



The Importance of Forgiveness

YOU CAN'T HAVE MERCY FOR YOURSELF
AND WANT JUSTICE FOR OTHERS!

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Introduction

- ▶ My burning bed story
- ▶ David: A man after God's own heart.
 - ▶ Psalm 27:4 –One thing I ask.
 - ▶ Psalm 51 – quick to confess and repent
- ▶ Travelling on a train in India in 2000
 - ▶ The Indian yogi recognised the distinctiveness of Christianity
 - ▶ Christianity = forgiveness
- ▶ If we practised confession, forgiveness and repentance more often we would have more impact

Forgiveness leads to Intimacy

- ▶ Intimacy, Openness, Trust, Healing Hurt (Forgiveness)
- ▶ 1st Reaction to Hurt is Anger
 - ▶ Rhino – shows their anger right away
 - ▶ Hedgehog – curls up and hides their anger
- ▶ 2nd Reaction is Retaliation
 - ▶ Justice, getting your own back
 - ▶ Anger has a role to play but only for a short time

Jesus on the Cross

- ▶ Father, forgive them for they know not what they do
- ▶ The greatest injustice that has ever happened in the world
- ▶ The greatest example of forgiveness
- ▶ No one can say that what has happened to him is too much to forgive – Jesus knows
- ▶ Isaiah 53 – despised, rejected, wounded, etc
- ▶ He has made a way for all our sins (those we have committed and those committed against us) to be forgiven

- ▶ **Forgiveness is a big deal for Jesus**
- ▶ It is the heart of the gospel
- ▶ Meaning of forgive – ***aphiemi*** – to leave behind, to cancel a debt

Biblical Platform

- ▶ **Mat 6:12-14:** And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.
- ▶ **Mat 7:1-2:** Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.
- ▶ **Luk 6:37:** Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned

Biblical Platform

- ▶ **Rom 4:7-8:** Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account
- ▶ **Eph 1:7:** In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us
- ▶ **Jam 2:13:** For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

The parable of the unmerciful servant

- ▶ **Mat 18:21-35 –**
- ▶ If we do not forgive, from the heart, those that sin against us, God will not forgive us
- ▶ Unforgiveness will imprison you – tortured by the tormentors
- ▶ What happens when we don't forgive? - We give legal access to the enemy (tormentors) to come and harass our lives. Satan is a legalist and when we harbour bitterness, anger, revenge, desire for justice, hatred – which are all sin – he knows that he now has the legal right to come and mess with our lives in those areas of unforgiveness
- ▶ The reverse is true: when we do forgive, the Lord and his angels are released to bless and help us

How much do you want the blessing of God in Your Life?

- ▶ Do you want to see the favour and blessing of the Lord in your life, the anointing, the presence, a deeper sense of closeness and intimacy with the Lord? Or would you rather stay in your tormented state?
- ▶ I understand that there are many of you, who have gone through horrendous things in your life which I have no clue about. You have suffered gross injustice, great loss, over the course of your life and I may not be able to identify with some of those painful things. **BUT I KNOW SOMEONE WHO CAN.** And he is longing to meet you in that place of pain, anger, bitterness, hatred, desire for justice. He wants to trade these sufferings and pain for his yoke which is easy and light.

How much do you want the blessing of God in Your Life?

▶ I do not want to minimise your suffering or the injustice done to you. But I do know that,

- a) nothing hurtful that happened to you was the will of the Father – we live in a fallen and broken world with broken hurting people; we also have an enemy who loves to wreak havoc
- b) God has made a way for these injustices and sufferings to be reversed through what Jesus accomplished on the cross
- c) there is nothing that has happened to you that Jesus cannot fully identify. In fact, nothing that has happened to you comes close to the injustice that he voluntarily went through to make a way out for us

You have a choice to make!

- ▶ The way of Jesus is for you to totally forgive from the heart those that have hurt you. Don't suppress the pain, bitterness, anger, hatred and desire for justice. Don't deny that it is there. Face it. Get in touch with those feelings. Deal with it and get it out of your system through confession, forgiveness and repentance. You are not a victim.
- ▶ Jesus has made the way for you to escape your tormentors – forgiveness. Not only do you escape your tormentors but you also now position yourself to receive the blessings that the Lord has for you. You are now back under the canopy of God's protection and care.

The two levels...

- ▶ Back to Mat 18:35, the parable of the unmerciful servant
- ▶ You have been forgiven so much. The Father has shown you so much mercy yet when you don't forgive what you are doing is asking for justice. When you want that person to repay you, when you want that person exposed for what they did to you, when you secretly want them to suffer, when you want everyone to know how you have been hurt – you are asking for justice.
- ▶ You can't have it both ways. James 2:13: ***For judgment will be merciless to the one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.*** You can't have mercy for yourself when you do something wrong and justice for those who wrong you.
- ▶ There are two levels – justice (law) and mercy (grace).

The two levels...

▶ Grace (river flows)

- ▶ Mercy
- ▶ Kingdom of God operates – miracles, signs and wonders
- ▶ Blessings, favour, anointing, prosperity
- ▶ Satan has no legal rights to you!

Justice (the law rules!)

Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth

Satan operates at this level

You've got to choose to forgive

- ▶ Forgiveness is not instinctual, or automatic, or easy. You've got to choose to be obedient to the commands of the Lord.
- ▶ You've got to give them a gift they do not deserve
- ▶ They owe you NOTHING
- ▶ ***They are released, you are released, and God is released to bless you in that area. The only loser is Satan!***

Forgiveness and Judgments

- ▶ Illustration of Daddy, Mummy and me.
- ▶ I had to forgive my mother
- ▶ I had to repent for the judgments that I made against her
- ▶ ***We may forgive someone but if we don't repent for our sinful judgments the task is not complete.***

Those we need to forgive...

- ▶ The people closest to us, and those in authority over us, are the ones who hurt us the most:
 - ▶ Father and mother
 - ▶ Brothers and sisters
 - ▶ In laws
 - ▶ Pastors
 - ▶ Teachers
 - ▶ Coaches
 - ▶ Best friends and friends
 - ▶ Schoolmates
 - ▶ Any other

Forgiveness and Reconciliation

- ▶ Often forgiveness leads to reconciliation but there is no guarantee.
- ▶ People have free wills and they get to choose if they want to enter the process of healing and reconciliation.

Categories of Forgiveness

- ▶ Forgiveness for our own sins
- ▶ Forgiveness towards others for sins they have done to us
- ▶ Forgiving ourselves
- ▶ Releasing God and repenting for harbouring disappointment, distrust, bitterness, anger, etc.

Forgiveness is first between you and God

- ▶ You don't have to go to the person and tell them that you have forgiven them. Forgiveness is between you and God. It is a spiritual dynamic. They may not even know that they have hurt you.
- ▶ You can go to a person and ask for forgiveness but don't tell them that you have forgiven them! You can forgive someone who is dead. You are not talking to them but to God about them.

Forgiveness is first between you and God

- ▶ Don't be tricked by the enemy. Sometimes after you have forgiven a person, a week or two may go by and you realise that the resentments, the anger, the bitterness are back! You may feel then that you have not forgiven them.
- ▶ You have already done so. You just need to reiterate what you have already done by going through the prayer of forgiveness until you are free of those feelings and thoughts and know that you have forgiven from the heart.

Forgiveness is hard

- ▶ Forgiveness is hard
 - ▶ Costly,
 - ▶ Giving up self pity, rights, justice, revenge, anger, resentment
- ▶ Forgiveness is a choice
 - ▶ Whether it is big or small
 - ▶ Waiting for something to happen to the other
- ▶ We need God's help to forgive

Some Signs to Show that You Have Totally Forgiven from the Heart

- ▶ Love keeps no record of wrong. 1 Cor 13:5
- ▶ From the story of Joseph and his brothers – Gen 45
 - ▶ You do not tell what they have done to you
 - ▶ You do not let them be afraid of you
 - ▶ You do not want them to feel guilty
 - ▶ You keep on forgiving them – they are eternally forgiven!
- ▶ ***Luke 6:37: Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned***

Forgiveness is NOT

- ▶ Let's pretend it never happened
- ▶ Demand that the person change before we forgive
- ▶ Forgetting it happened
- ▶ Thinking that time alone will heal the hurt
 - ▶ **Emotions are never buried dead, they are buried alive!!!**

Forgiveness IS:

- ▶ Facing the wrong done to us
- ▶ Recognising the emotions inside
- ▶ Choosing not to hold it against the other person
- ▶ Releasing the person to God
- ▶ Deals with anger and resentment – might still feel hurt until healing is complete

Forgiveness IS:

- ▶ It's a process – it's ongoing
- ▶ May benefit the person forgiven, BUT also benefits me from the bondage of bitterness
- ▶ We must let go of our anger and desire for retaliation if the person has not apologised, otherwise buried anger turns to hate
- ▶ We forgive because we have been forgiven

Forgive from the Heart

- ▶ **How badly do you want to be free? How much of God's presence, angels, blessings, favour, anointing do you want to experience in your life?**
- ▶ **Then forgive from the heart!**

Asking Forgiveness for Our Sins

- ▶ Father, I confess that I have committed the sin of _____ and I ask that you now forgive me of my sin. Father, I thank you for the finished work of Jesus on the cross which now makes it possible for me to be forgiven.
- ▶ Father, your word says that if we confess our sins you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). So Father, I receive my forgiveness now. Father, cleanse me and wash me clean of all defilement which I may have caused because of my sin.
- ▶ Thank you Jesus that I am forgiven and that you are setting me free. I ask you Lord to pour your blessing into my life now that I have chosen to live in that place of grace and mercy! Thank you Lord, for making it possible for me to be free and blessed!

Forgiving Others

- ▶ Thank you Jesus for dying in my place that I might be forgiven. By an act of my will I now choose to forgive those who have hurt me and sinned against me.
- ▶ I forgive _____ (say their names under your breath) for _____ (be specific about what you are forgiving them.)
- ▶ I give them a gift they do not deserve, the gift of my forgiveness. From now on they owe me nothing. And I ask that you bless each one of these, in Jesus name.