

Forgiving Others

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” Matthew 7:21-23

As I sit here pondering this scripture, I wonder how many professing Christians will die, come before God’s throne, and hear these terrible words. People who have attended church all their lives. People who have been deacons, elders, and Sunday school teachers. How many? If we knew the number, I think we would fall into shocked disbelief and horror. Why?

Because many Christians fall into the deception of believing that just because they have said the “sinner’s prayer” and attend church on Sunday, that they do not need to do anything else. They never stop once in their comfortable lives to think about the fact that Jesus said that *“he who does the will of My Father in heaven”* is the one who will be welcomed into heaven at the point of his death.

Am I saying that we must earn our salvation? NO! We can only be saved through faith in Jesus Christ. BUT, if we really ARE saved, then our whole lives will be dedicated to finding out what is pleasing to God and obeying Him. Oh yes, we will fall into sin occasionally, but the scripture makes clear provision for those occasions. We do not immediately lose our salvation.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

1 John 1:9

However, I believe the scripture I quoted in the beginning and other scriptures are a warning to us that we must not live a careless life of active, undealt with sin.

Immediately after that sobering statement in Matthew 7:21-23, Jesus goes on to give a parable.

“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ‘and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.’”

Matthew 7:24-27

Day after day, I get hundreds of letters, E-mails, and phone calls from people whose whole lives have fallen and been destroyed under the pressures of the “wind and rain and floods.” That is, the trials of life. Greater than 90% of those people have the problems they do because they “built their house on the sand.” That is, they did not think it necessary to obey God’s commands. They did not *hear the sayings of Jesus and obey them*. They are completely unable to accept the fact that what is happening in their life is the direct result of their own choices. Please listen to me well. *Every choice we make has a direct effect on our lives*. We may not experience the consequences of our decisions immediately, but we *will* face them eventually. What you are today, and what your life is like today, is a direct result of the choices you have made in the past!

With this in mind, the Lord has put it on my heart to address one of the most common sins amongst Christians that they either do not recognize, or refuse to deal with. This sin brings terrible consequences into their life, both here on earth, and in eternity. Jesus directly addressed this sin:

“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Matthew 6:14-15

“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” Mark 11:25-26

Brothers and sisters, forgiving others when they hurt you is a command, it is not an option!

In fact, this command is so important, that Jesus went on to illustrate it with a parable so that we could not fail to understand it.

“Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay the debt.’ And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart does not forgive his brother his trespasses.” Matthew 18:23-35

Pay close attention to Jesus’ conclusion to this story: *“So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”* I don’t think Jesus could have put it any more clearly. He forgave your sins, now He *demand*s that you forgive those who hurt you. AND, you do not just say you forgive, you must forgive from your heart. That is, with all sincerity.

You may say, “that’s fine, but what about someone who sins against me over and over again? Peter asked Jesus that same question:

“Then Peter came to Him and said, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.’”

Matthew 18:21-22

Unforgiveness is a huge problem amongst Christians! People hold grudges and unforgiveness for years, many times for all their lives! The root of the gossip and slander that is so rampant in the Christian church is unforgiveness! I know in my own case, people reject me completely because of the slanderous accusations against me on certain internet web sites of things I supposedly did more than 20 years ago! I did none of those things, but even if I did, where is the blood of Christ? Is there no forgiveness? Obviously not, in many people's minds.

What about you? Are you harboring unforgiveness and anger against people who have hurt you in the past? If you are, then do not be surprised if your life is in a mess and you are experiencing great difficulties. One of the most common things I see is people who have been abused living their whole lives in destruction. Why? Because they refuse to forgive those who have hurt them. Jesus paid the price on the cross for the complete healing and freedom of every person who has been hurt and abused. Why then are so many people still hurting and living in serious problems because of that past abuse? Usually it is because they are harboring unforgiveness and bitterness about the abuse. This completely stops the flow of God's power in their lives to heal them.

Since the act of forgiving is so very important, I want to talk about it in more detail. There are four basic steps in the matter of forgiving someone who has hurt you.

1. We do not forgive because we feel like it. We forgive as a pure act of our free will in obedience to God's command. Believe me, if you wait to forgive until you "feel like doing so" you will never forgive. We get so used to living with unforgiveness that we do not even realize we are doing it. I challenge you, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you if there is anyone in your life whom you have not completely forgiven for the things they have done to hurt you.

2. When we forgive someone, we must acknowledge that we no longer have any right to revenge on that person. God's Word says:

“For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. And again, ‘The Lord will judge His people.’ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Hebrews 10:30-31

“But I say to you who hear: ‘Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.’”

Luke 6:27-28

Our problem is, when we are hurt, we want to get even. We believe that the person who hurt us, owes us! We will not forgive or forget until that “debt” in our mind is paid. I have counseled with so many couples where one spouse spent their whole married life “getting revenge” on the other spouse for something done to them by a parent. I’ll bet every one of you reading this knows someone like that. People spend their whole lives in anger because they want revenge for some wrong done to them in the past. They lash out at others who have not hurt them, because they have not forgiven and let go of their past hurts.

When you forgive someone, you give up any right you feel you may have to revenge!

3. When we forgive someone, we must do so following God’s example. Once we have forgiven someone, we no longer have any right to allow the memories or thoughts of what they have done to hurt us, to stay in our minds. We **must** discipline our minds and stop thinking about ourselves and our past hurts!

“For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” Hebrews 8:12

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ . . . “

2 Corinthians 10:4-5

Let me ask you something. How many times has your spouse or child done something to hurt you, time passes, and all of a sudden you start to think about the incident. As you think about it, you get madder and madder. Then when you come into contact with your spouse or child, you are so angry that you snap or yell at them for no reason at all, except that you are reacting to your memories of what they did in the past to hurt you. The other person is left confused as to why you are angry with them because they have no way of knowing what has been going on in your mind. Oh yes, every one of us has done this! It is sin! We are required by God to rebuke such thoughts and refuse to allow them to dwell in our minds.

This is where true forgiveness is manifested. True forgiveness “from the heart” as Jesus said, shows itself when we control our thoughts and refuse to think about and dwell on what has been done to us in the past to hurt us.

Understand this: demon spirits will inject thoughts into our minds from outside of us. They will continually bring back to us the memories of what has been done to hurt us. We have to battle against this. Every time such a thought comes into our head, we need to speak out loud and say, “NO, you demon, get those thoughts out of my mind right now in the name of Jesus. I will not have them!” This will enable you to control the stream of thoughts going through your head. If you will do this consistently, pretty soon the demons will give up and stop putting the thoughts into your mind. Why? Because, as you act in obedience to God’s word, He will honor that and control them and make them stop. I have written a whole chapter on this concept in my book *Prepare For War*. It is titled “The Double Minded Man.”

4. Once we have taken these steps in obedience To God, we can ask God to control and change our emotions in the situation. We human beings can do very little to control or change our emotions. But the Lord can and will, as we obey Him and forgive those who have hurt us.

Too often, Christians completely side-step the whole issue of forgiving by repressing their emotions. Since we know that we should not be bitter or angry when someone does something to hurt us, it is much easier to push the unacceptable emotions out of our conscious minds than to deal with the necessary forgiveness or confrontation in the situation.

We need to express our emotions fully and honestly to God. If you need to cry, or yell, or scream, or hit something, go ahead. Perhaps you need to get a base ball bat and go out and beat it against a tree until you have fully expressed your anger about a situation. However you chose to express your anger and hurt about a situation, do so in a *non-sinful way*. Do so fully and honestly before God – ONCE. Then that's the end of it. Forgive, and move on with your life, controlling your thoughts. You will be amazed at how God will move to heal your emotions if you will just take these four steps for each hurt in your life.

Remember this: *love is a gift, trust is earned*. God does NOT require you to immediately trust someone who has grievously hurt and deceived you. Every situation is different. In some situations, you may need to separate yourself completely from the person hurting you. In some situations, such as a marriage, or children, God requires you to stay there and work out the problems. But ALWAYS, God requires you to fully forgive the person who has hurt you.

Once again I challenge you. Pray this prayer:

“Blessed Holy Spirit, Jesus told us that You would reveal all sin to us. I am asking You right now to completely examine my life and reveal to me if there is any person whom I have not forgiven, even if that person is no longer alive. I ask you for this and thank you for it in the name of Jesus.”

As the names flow into your mind, write them down, and then work through them one-by-one before the Lord. Take the four steps I have outlined here and forgive each one. If you will do this, you will set God free to begin to work on the problems in your own life.

Testimonies

“After church tonight I went out to look at the motorcycles of the folks from the Tribe of Judah ministries who had come. I stopped one of the members on his Harley as he was revving up to take off, because on the rear fender of his Harley was painted the front cover

of your book "He Came To Set The Captives Free." It was so cool and when I spoke to him about it, he proceeded to tell me about his previous years of heavy involvement in the occult. He told me that through your book he not only got saved, but was set free and is now a long standing member of the Tribe of Judah and riding out with Terry Walker to reach outlaw gangs, etc." B.L. via E-mail

Praise God! I have no idea how many lives the Lord has used that book to touch. Someone wrote to me recently criticizing me for continuing to publish it when I have learned so much more in terms of spiritual warfare. BUT God is continuing to use that book to bring people to Christ. That's why I continue to keep it in print.

"I just wanted to write to you and tell you what a blessing your newsletter was to me when I read it just now. I've been one of those people who have had death on my mind lately. The biggest thing that had been on my mind was what would things be like from the time I die until Jesus comes to take us all away if He does not come before I die. I'd been wondering would I be conscious all that time or would I not know what's going on around me. But, you have opened my eyes to what the scriptures say on this. God has been using you so well and I'm so grateful for people like you. I really loved what you wrote about your mother's death. Reading the newsletter also reminded me that my own mother has been given glimpses of other Christians who have died and she has seen the angels take them away. I thank God for using you to remind me of things I really already knew." B.W. via E-mail

"I just read your book *Standing On The Rock*. It gave me renewed faith in the Father-God, Jesus-God and the Holy Spirit-God. It actually lifted my spirit. I'm going through a similar situation as you did, not quite as magnified though. This book has given me much strength to endure this battle I'm currently in. I praise God because He met me where I needed him the most. He gave me exactly what I needed. I covenanted with Him, He told me He'll give me the tools I need to fight the battle. Sometimes we humans look for more power as a weapon. After reading your book, I learned that the Holy Ghost is the Power that worketh in us all! What a revelation, meaning I don't have to sit in bondage, when someone is in need of prayer, I can take authority in Jesus' name and cast out that demon, instead of relying on my own strength. I feel so victorious! Because I'm not doing it, He is. All I'm required to do is obey! I would suggest any one in spiritual warfare to purchase this book." P.L. via E-mail

"I received the copies of the messages on tape that I ordered while attending one of the meetings in Lompoc, CA. I ordered the entire set and I have listened to them over and over again. There is so much information in them, the Lord

speaks to me about something new each time I listen to them. And, I have prayed over and over again, thanking God for messengers that will speak the truth. During one of those prayers I heard, "Don't you think the message was a little strong?" I just started to laugh and said, "Of course, how else do you expect God to get my attention that I'm not doing something right? You think I'd listen if He sent me a quiet, soft spoken person that was afraid to offend me?" I intend to share the messages with others. However, I have given them a very stern warning, "These messages will either change your life, or cause you to hate Daniel and Rebecca for the rest of your life." P.H via E-mail

Something to Think About

No excuse is good enough. The next time you think you have an excuse why God can't use you, remember the following people:

Noah was drunk

Abraham was too old

Isaac was a daydreamer

Jacob was a liar

Leah was ugly

Joseph was abused

Moses was a murderer (like David & Paul)

Deborah was a female judge

Gideon was afraid

Samson had long hair

Rahab was a prostitute

Jeremiah and Timothy were too young

Elijah was suicidal

Isaiah preached naked

Jonah ran away from God

Naomi was a widow

Job lost everything

John the Baptist ate locusts

Peter was hot tempered

John was self-righteous

The disciples fell asleep while praying

Martha was worried about everything

Her sister Mary was lazy

Mary Magdalene was demon-possessed

The boy with the fish and 5 rolls was too unknown (and still is)

The Samaritan woman slept with many men

Zacchaeus was too small

Peter was too impulsive

Mark had given up

Timothy had a stomach ulcer

And Lazarus – he was dead.

Now, what's your excuse?

Love Offerings

We are a faith supported ministry. We depend on your love and obedience to God to continue and expand this ministry. We ask you to pray about supporting us. We pray that God will grant each one of you His richest blessings as you give to us. We have included an envelope you can use to mail us your gift.