

Forgiveness Revisited

- 5 years ago, I did a message that was that was very close to my heart
- And that was on forgiveness.
- And I want to address it again, because it's very crucially important.
- I have come across so many people who claim Christ as Savior,
- Yet at times their hearts are hardened against their fellow man or woman.
- We sometimes carry grudges and hurts
- That we just seem not to be able to cast aside.
- Maybe it was something that was said,
- Either to our faces or behind our backs.
- Maybe we were slighted, intentionally or unintentionally.
- But regardless of what it was, it sticks,
- It permeates our very being,
- And in turn it damages our hearts and our souls.
- We are so fortunate that we have God in our life.
- As we age or even look around, we see that life is short.
- And having the knowledge that we can have the hope of eternal life,
- Is beyond comforting to us.
- John 3:16 – God loved the world...
- Who is the world? It is everyone in it!
- Romans 2:11 tells us that God is not a respecter of persons,
- He doesn't care if we are white, black, Asian, European or Indigenous.
- He isn't concerned with our looks, our ages, our wealth, or our social status.
- God loves all of us so much that He sent His son down to this earth.
- And the Word became flesh and He made His dwelling around us.
- 100% man and 100% God, exposed to all the temptations that men had.
- Yet, he never sinned. (Hebrews 4:15)
- He showed us how we are to live, He showed us the Way (John 14:6)
- And because He was the sinless Lamb,
- He took on the burden of all our sins.
- And made ransom for all the sins of the world, for all time.

- And He allowed himself to be nailed to that tree.
- He allowed himself to suffer a horrible death.
- He did it for each one of us.
- And when He yelled out... it is finished,
- It was not with a whimper, but with a shout. A victorious shout.
- And by rising from the dead, He pummeled Satan and defeated death.
- And by receiving Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we have been forgiven.
- So because we are forgiven.
- We need to make sure that we forgive others as well.
- We need to forgive everyone who has hurt us in any way.
- Jesus told us that we are to love our enemies.
- That we are to love those who persecute us.
- Back a long time ago, Jesus upon a request, taught us how to pray.
- And He gave us the Lord's Prayer.
- The Lord's prayer is a model prayer, which is a sermon in itself,
- But in it are some key words.
- And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
- You see... even though God loves us unconditionally,
- They are conditions that we have to meet.
- It's kind of like a parent to their children.
- You can stay up late tonight and watch the movie, IF you finish your HW.
- You can use the car, IF you drive safely.
- I will pay for your college education, IF you do your do your work.
- But sometimes that doesn't happen.
- God is telling us, that He will forgive us IF we forgive others
- One thing I will not do in a sermon.
- And that is that I don't give anyone my personal opinions.
- If I did, you would most probably not invite me back to preach.
- But what I will do, is preach the word of God with boldness and truth.
- And I'm telling you that if you are holding grudges,
- You are putting yourself at a great risk.

- And that is not my opinion, or my personal take on it.
- Let's see what the word of God says.
- **Matthew 18:21-35** ²¹ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" ²² Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.
- **Matthew 18:27** "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. **24** As he began the settlement, a man who owed him 10000 talents was brought to him. **25** Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. **26** The servant fell on his knees before him. Be patient with me, he begged, and I will pay back everything. **27** The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.
- The servant owed his king a tremendous amount of money
- Worth in today's money - \$101,400.116.57.
- An amount that he could not repay
- Perhaps even if he had lived multiple lifetimes
- And he was forgiven 100% - Can you imagine that?
- Somebody telling you they will forgive all your debt – your mortgage, plus much more? - And you never have to worry about that again?
- **28** But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. Pay back what you owe me, he demanded. **29** His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him. Be patient with me, and I will; pay you back. **30** But he refused. Instead he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. **31** When the other servants saw what happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. **32** Then the master called the servant in. You wicked servant, he said. I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. **33** Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you? **34** In anger his master turned him over to the jailors

to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed, 35 This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart. “

- This guy's debt was much smaller, maybe a day's pay - \$362
- Yet he showed no mercy - He refused to forgive
- He showed absolutely no mercy, or grace
- I heard someone say this and it is worth remembering
- It is impossible for us to become a forgiving person,
- Until we embrace that I am a forgiven person”.
- Our spiritual debt is certainly a debt that we could never repay
- But at times we become hardened and we are unable to forgive others
- Regardless of the size of the debt, And sometimes because of it
- At times we have difficulty saying the words. I forgive you.
- And If we can't forgive something small
- Will we ever be able to forgive something really big?
- Can we forgive a lousy parent for taking away our childhood?
- Can we forgive a spouse who broke our heart?
- Can we forgive a friend that betrayed us?
- Sometimes we say that we have forgiven someone, but we didn't really
- Sometimes it is so hard to forgive.
- But we must.... Because God told us that is His way.
- And God is right.
- In Matthew 18:21-22, Jesus had a conversation with Peter. ²¹**Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”** ²²**Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.**^[g]
- It is important to remember that both were exposed to Jewish culture
- In Jewish culture people were forgiven a total of three times.
- If they sinned against you again, they were not forgiven again
- They were considered unrepentant
- So you when Peter said 7 times
- He believed he was being extremely generous and magnanimous

- But Jesus said, no, it was 7 times 77 times
- Jesus was not going after any number
- He was going after Peter's heart,
- And our hearts as well.
- He was teaching us that forgiveness was to be our way of life.
- I mentioned this 5 years ago, and I'm going to mention it again today.
- I'm repeating it because I believe that one person,
- Or a group of people act in a certain manner,
- It can impact and change other people's lives.
- Back on October 10/2/06, there was a man named Charles Roberts,
- He was a husband, a dad, and a son
- On that day he entered a Amish Schoolhouse in Nickle Mine, PA
- And began shooting
- When he was done, 10 were injured and 5 were killed
- Before he turned the gun on himself.
- As you can imagine there was instant horror, sadness, and grief
- Yet individually, and as a collective community,
- There followed an instant reaction from the families,
- Though torn with grief, sorrow, and heartbreak,
- They immediately forgave Charles Roberts for his sins against them
- They went to the home of the Killers Family
- And told them that they were loved
- And that Charles Roberts was forgiven
- They comforted his wife and the children
- And one Amish man embraced and comforted Charles father
- Who wept openly in his arms for over an hour
- They forgave the killer.
- Not just individually, but as a community
- A few days later they went to the cemetery and buried their children
- The next day they returned and attended to the funeral of the killer
- How would we react if that was us?

- If it was our child who was injured or killed?
- Jesus Christ is our Lord and our personal Savior
- But we have to remember that He is not just our king,
- But that He is also our teacher and our example.
- If we read our bibles we see that His very life
- Was characterized by forgiveness.
- Whenever we are wronged ,
- We feel like we are owed something from those who were responsible
- We wouldn't mind hearing a public confession of guilt and wrongdoing.
- But many times we don't.
- Sometimes the person who hurt us,
- May not even be aware of it.
- And we most likely feel that if we forgive them,
- Without their admission, that we have lost.
- Isn't that the human feeling? Honestly?
- Our human fragility might cause us to think
- That if we absorb the total cost of forgiveness,
- We are just letting them get away with it?
- But, not forgiving them is much worse.
- The problem is that when we don't forgive,
- We are we are absorbing into our hearts everything that they owe us.
- We hold onto and absorb all the rage,
- All the bitterness,
- And all the anger.
- We need to forgive - So we can free ourselves
- If we don't, we are held in bondage
- Victor Frankel story..... If you don't forgive that prison guard,
- You will always be a prisoner.
- We need to understand something about forgiveness.
- Forgiveness is NOT putting an immediate end to our burden
- Forgiveness is NOT putting an immediate end to our pain

- It doesn't mean that our pain will go away
- It doesn't mean that we have to invite that person or group,
- Back into our lives to hurt us again.
- It doesn't mean that we have to trust them again.
- It doesn't mean that we have to be friends.
- What forgiveness means is this:
- It DOES mean that that we are saying this to them,
- You no longer owe me because you can never pay me back
- Because when I hold you hostage, I am holding myself hostage
- And by freeing you, I have am freed as well
- **Ephesians 4:32 says, And be kind to one another, being tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God has done in Christ Jesus**
- God doesn't want us to treat others as they treat us
- He wants us to treat others as He has treated us
- It's not easy, it's a process
- Can you forgive someone before they ask for forgiveness?
- What if they never ask for forgiveness?
- HS story
- It took me a long time to get back to that point.
- I still remember the hurts I have experienced in my life time.
- It still resurfaces....
- But you have to let it go away.
- Forgiveness is something that Jesus modeled
- And we need to follow His example.
- He didn't wait for confessions.
- He went to Calvary for you and me.
- Romans 5:8 say, "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
- He didn't wait until we said we were sorry, He forgive us all unconditionally
- We need to remember that Jesus has put a stamp of love,
- On the doorpost of our heart.
- We are new creation.

- Old things have passed away, and all things are become new.
- Closing Prayer