

Freedom from Unforgiveness

- I. INTRO... Take a trip back into the OT for a moment... to the Torah
 - A. After being freed from slavery in Egypt and then being led for a generation in the desert wilderness of Saudi Arabia, the Israelites were on the precipice of the PL
 - B. Moses was dead. Joshua (the Lord is salvation) was now in charge
 - C. It was his job to lead the people into the PL, a land God had promised to their ancestor Abraham 650 years prior
 - D. God was bringing his people out of slavery into freedom, bringing them home
 - E. But the PL had enemies in it and as long as they tolerated the enemies freedom would be threatened
 - F. Every place (heb: maqom) they stepped would be declared as Holy Ground unto the Lord
 - G. If they allowed sin and Canaanite idolatry to fester, it would be like partially clearing a land of an invasive vine → it would come back and take over
 - H. Israel does NOT obey, and the Canaanites are described as thorns to them
 - I. 1,400 years later, Jesus is born
 - 1. A different kind of conquest, a different kind of commander in chief
 - 2. Not physical but spiritual
 - 3. Not Canaanites but demons, sickness, sin and death
 - 4. A greater enemy, but also a greater freedom
 - 5. Essentially, Jesus is leading his people into a new PL
 - 6. There is a sense in which (as a metaphor) the new creation of following Jesus is this new PL. The PL of our soul is his Holy Ground
 - J. It's not surprising, then, that Paul warns in Ephesians 4:27, "Do not give the enemy an opportunity... a foothold..." → Literally Gk: topos // Heb: Maqom
 - 1. The idea is not to give the enemy a plot of land in the PL
 - 2. If you let the enemy live in a corner of the house, eventually the closet is too small for him...
 - K. Think back to last week... what was the lie you ID'd
 - 1. The lie is a sort of vine, but why did it get planted in the first place? What's the root?
 - 2. Ex: Lie → you're not safe; Reason: Abused by a family friend
 - a) Deeper root... "Why didn't my dad keep me safe? Where was my mom? Where was God? What did I do to deserve it?"
 - 3. The enemy doesn't fight fair. He capitalizes on weakness, exploits your pain, and sows seeds of discord and catastrophe, which can afflict you for years and years and years
 - 4. God wants to break up that fallow ground, till it, pull out the weed and give you new freedom... maybe today
 - L. Hollywood taints our view of spiritual affliction. We hear demons and we think: exorcist!!!! Spinning heads, projectile vomit, etc
 - M. Instead, I want you to think of demonic affliction like a tick...

1. It is the enemy exploiting weaknesses, exploiting trauma, exploiting addictions, exploiting unrepentant sin, the occult, anger, rage, unforgiveness... when it grows, it gives way to something worse
- N. Christians can be oppressed and afflicted by spiritual forces, but they **cannot** be possessed... If you are in Christ the Holy Spirit owns you. You are “possessed” by the Holy Spirit if you are a follower of Jesus
 1. But you can be afflicted by a thorn in the flesh (messenger of Satan)
 2. You might be harassed by a lie that continues to torment you
- O. Where does it begin? At an open door... a topos... a place the enemy leverages for his evil devices to choke out your love, joy, peace, etc.
- P. Today we want to talk about the largest gateway: Unforgiveness**
- Q. Dr Neil Anderson wrote, *“We have never met a defeated Christian who isn’t struggling with bitterness. They carry emotional scars and the painful wounds inflicted upon them by others. They have never known how to let go of the past and forgive from the heart. Some have chosen not to. They hang on to their anger as a means of protecting themselves from being hurt again, but they are only hurting themselves. Forgiveness is to set a captive free and then discover you were the captive.”*
 1. Some very minor (being snubbed). Some very serious (rape)
 2. Unforgiveness is a plague that destroys and it subjects you to TORMENT
 3. The good news is that God is not out to get us; He is out to restore us.
 4. He knows that if we hang on to our bitterness, we will only hurt ourselves and others (Heb. 12:15). He wants to lead us into FREEDOM
 5. Instead of giving the enemy a foothold... “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you” (Eph. 4:31,32).
 6. We forgive others for our sake and for the sake of our relationship with God. What is to be gained in forgiving others is FREEDOM.
 7. At the same time, Paul warns in 2 Corin 2:10-11 that one of Satan’s SCHEMES is taking advantage of us in our unforgiveness of others, self
 8. This issue must be resolved to experience deeper freedom

II. The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

- A. [21] *Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” [22] Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.*
 1. Seventy-seven = until it is done
- B. [23] *“Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. [24] When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. [25] And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made.*
 1. STUDY NOTES: In NT times, a talent was a unit for measuring money (though not an actual coin), valued at about 6,000 drachmas, the

equivalent of about 20 years' wages for a laborer. (A common laborer earned about one denarius per day.) In approximate modern equivalents, if a laborer earns \$15 per hour, at 2,000 hours per year he would earn \$30,000 per year, and a talent would equal \$600,000 (USD). Hence, "ten thousand talents" hyperbolically represents an incalculable debt—in today's terms, about \$6 billion

C. *[26] So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' [27] And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.*

1. What grace // what forgiveness → we are the debtor, Father is the master

D. *[28] But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.'*

1. \$12,000 = 100 denaris with our same payscale

E. *[29] So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.'*

1. Same pledge

F. *[30] He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. [31] When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. [32] Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. [33] And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' [34] And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. [35] So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."*

1. Goes back to the master... master delivers him to the jailers. The ESV takes some interpretive liberty here. Other translations explain more accurately → delivered to the jailer to torture/torment him

2. So will my heavenly Father do to every one of YOU → What?!

G. Now, we KNOW the basis of our salvation is whether or not we trust in Jesus

H. So what is the torment? What is the torture?

1. Some will say hell, but that doesn't jive with the rest of Scripture

2. Some will suggest purgatory, but that – again – is an unbiblical concept

I. The torment here, I believe, is essentially demonic affliction

J. Who is the jailer? Satan! What will he do to us? Torment us! Who turns us over to him? God! For what purpose? The time in prison, being tormented by the devil, has one purpose: to bring us to the point of surrender, where we realize that we can never pay our debt. We need a redeemer to pay the price for our life.

K. And if we can never pay our debt, neither can those who are indebted to us

L. God wants us to experience FREEDOM in the forgiveness we have received and offer → who has been forgiven of much loves much

III. The Bible is clear (Lord's prayer and other places), so why don't we forgive?

A. We think we can't → lack of faith... it's impossible...

- B. We think we don't need to → I am JUSTIFIED in this (nope...)
- C. We don't want to → don't want to revisit the pain... grudge is comforting...
- D. We don't think we are harboring unforgiveness → "I've moved on... I don't think about it...I don't live in the past..."
- E. We have strings attached → "I will forgive once they..."
- F. Fear → "My anger protects me..." "This keeps me safe..."
- G. Spiritual Block → I've prayed with people who couldn't forgive until other steps were taken (like chopping away roots)

IV. What forgiveness is... and isn't

- A. **Not Forgetting** → You won't erase painful memories; forgiveness isn't about pretending wrongs didn't happen. It's choosing to let go of the grip those memories have on you. Once you chose to forgive someone, THEN Christ will begin to heal your wounds. We don't heal in order to forgive, we forgive in order to heal.
- B. **Forgiving doesn't mean tolerating ongoing abuse.** Exercise grace while protecting yourself against future harm.
- C. **A Deliberate Choice** → Forgiveness is an act of your will, commanded by God. Although our natural impulse is to seek revenge. We choose to let God deal with the person who wounded. Let him off your hook b/c as long as you refuse to forgive someone, you are still hooked TO that person.
- D. **Forgiveness is agreeing to live with the consequences of another person's sin.** We all live with others' baggage. You can either choose the bondage of bitterness or the freedom of forgiveness. Freedom for You
- E. **Forgive from your heart.** Allow God to surface painful memories, don't run from them. That's a tool of the enemy to prevent you from working through it. Too often we are afraid of the pain so we bury it. Let God bring it to the surface so you can forgive and ask God to free you.
- F. **Forgiveness is choosing not to hold someone's sin over him any more.**
Bitter people bring up things that happened years ago, weeks ago, months ago → silly things, stupid things. We must let go of those thoughts.
 - 1. If you lean towards constant offense, constant bitterness and grumbling towards people w/ small things, chances are you have a large root of unforgiveness you are ignorant to.
 - 2. E.g. you think you're offended by the guy who cut YOU off, but you are actually holding resent towards someone else
- G. **Don't wait until you feel like forgiving.** You will never get there. Make the hard choice to forgive even if you don't think you can.

V. The Forgiveness Process

- A. What's the fear? Why the fear?
- B. Ask God who you need to forgive and why?
- C. List every name without questioning. Include yourself... include thoughts against God, acknowledging any resentment toward Him for unmet desires, and choosing to let these go.

- D. Start with the first person on the list and forgive them for every painful memory the Spirit brings to mind. Don't brainstorm; let the Spirit guide you
 - 1. I forgive X for Y b/c it made me feel Z
- E. Do not be surprised if memories surface that you have stuffed down. Do not be surprised if they seem trivial. Let the Spirit guide you.
- F. Do not say, "Lord, please help me to forgive," or "Lord, I want to forgive." That is a tactic of the enemy to have you not forgive. God is already helping you forgive (that's why you currently feel like you're having a panic attack as I preach). You need to say, "I choose to forgive X for doing Y because it made me feel Z" out loud
 - 1. Who... for what... how did it make you feel
 - 2. I forgive _____ for _____ because it made me feel _____.
 - a) Often that final piece is the LIE from last week
 - (1) Unsafe; rejected; ashamed; <all related>
- G. Sit there... let the Lord bring more to the surface. Work through it until it's done.
- H. After you've forgiven every person that God brought to light and every situation, forgive yourself. Forgive God.
- I. Now, pray for God's blessing and salvation over those who hurt you.

VI. Why this matters

- A. Unforgiveness is an open door
 - B. We open the door, kick out the filth
 - C. We lock the door
- VII. Choice: Sometimes this can take moments. Sometimes this can take hours.
- A. We can pray now...
 - B. We can set up a time to pray...
 - C. We can pray on Monday during our prayer time...
 - D. The enemy will tell you not to... the enemy will tell you it won't work...