

# THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

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In the past two lessons we have uncovered the following:

- We were able to recognize that we can **WIN OVER GENERATIONAL STRONGHOLDS**, even if they have been in our families for years.
  - We know that **NEGATIVE THOUGHT PATTERNS AND HABITS** can hinder our spiritual growth and threaten future generations.
  - Judgments and inner vows can produce **A CLOSED HEART** within us.
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- BUT IF WE LEARN TO FORGIVE, GOD CAN PRODUCE **A BRAND NEW HEART** WITHIN US.
  - *I HEARD SO MANY TESTIMONIES AFTER TESTIMONIES*
  - *TESTIMONY: SOME OF OUR LEADERS CALLED OUR PARENTS FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME AFTER 5 YEARS OF NOT TALKING.*

TODAY WE'RE GOING TO TALK ABOUT 'THE POWER OF **FORGIVENESS**'

## WHY IS FORGIVENESS SO IMPORTANT?

### 1. WE FORGIVE BECAUSE GOD HAS FORGIVEN US FIRST.

- **Freely we have personally received forgiveness of our sin, so we must also freely forgive others (Matthew 18:23-35).**
- Bible story (*Matthew 18:21-35, Parable of Unforgiving Debtor*)
- *A man owing millions of dollars, couldn't pay but begged the masters to forgive him — his master was filled with pity, released and forgave his debt.*
- *But when he went out, he found his fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars, he grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment.*
- *Even when he begged for a little more time, he had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full.*
- *"Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?" Our Heavenly Father wants us to forgive our brothers and sisters from our heart.*
- THE KING WAS MAD, HOW COULD YOU??
- YOU HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN MUCH!
- YOU HAVE BEEN LOVED MUCH!
- YOU DIDN'T DESERVE THAT LOVE.
- YOU DIDN'T DESERVE THAT FORGIVENESS..
- BUT HOW COME YOU DON'T PASS ON THAT LOVE AND FORGIVENESS TO OTHERS PEOPLE WHO HAS WRONGED YOU!
- SO GOD WANTS YOU TO FORGIVE NOT FROM YOUR GOODNESS.
- BUT GOD WANTS YOU TO FORGIVE OTHERS FROM HIS GOODNESS TO YOU.
- IF YOU ARE TO FORGIVE OUT OF YOUR GRACE, GOODNESS AND KINDNESS, YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DO IT.
- BUT IF YOU UNDERSTAND THAT GOD HAS BEEN SO GRACIOUS TO YOU....
- OUT OF HIS GRACE & MERCY FOR YOU.... WE ARE CALLED TO EXTEND THE SAME THING.

### 2. FORGIVING OURSELVES REMOVES GUILT FROM YOUR LIFE AND ENABLE YOU TO RECEIVE GOD'S BEST.

- The power of guilt.
- Guilt prevents us to receive.
- "Too good to be true" --- is this even real??
- **The lost son.**
- When he came back to his father....he was embraced fully, back to his rightful place, as the son of the house.
- Yet he said, "No just put me as your slave"
- That's the sound of guilt.
- The sound of grace.

### 3. FORGIVENESS EMPOWERS US TO REACH AND LOVE OTHERS WITH THE TRUE LOVE OF CHRIST.

- When we forgive, all of the sudden we can love.
- We can love our friends, we can love our enemies.
- But most importantly we can love ourselves.
- Some people cannot love others, cannot even love themselves....
- Even if they want to, they tried, but they can't.... Because your tank is empty.
- Unforgiveness is closing your tank, lid.
- Forgiveness is removing that lid.
- And once God's love filled your tank, he filled it until it's overflowing, ....
- **TAKE MY LOOOVE I'VE GOT SOOO MUCH OF IT, I CANT CONTAIN IT!!!**

### 4. ACCEPTING CHRIST'S FORGIVENESS BRINGS SALVATION.

- UNFORGIVENESS MAKES YOU UNABLE TO ACCEPT THE LOVE OF GOD.
- WHY? BECAUSE 'ITS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE'
- HOW CAN YOU FORGIVE ME FOR WHAT I'VE DONE TO YOU??
- BUT WHEN YOU FORGIVE OTHERS, IT ENABLES US TO ACCEPT FORGIVENESS FROM OTHERS.

### 5. FORGIVING OTHERS BRINGS RESTORATION.

- FAMILY IS BEING RESTORED.
- FUTURE IS BEING RESTORED.
- WITH ONE WORD "IM SORRY", "I FORGIVE YOU"

### 6. GOD'S WILL IS FOR US TO LIVE OUT WHAT HE DEMONSTRATED ON THE CROSS.

- WE ARE HIS SONS AND DAUGHTERS.
  - WE OUGHT TO BE LIKE OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.
  - HE DEMONSTRATED TO US.
  - **HE LOVED US EVEN WHEN WE WERE A SINNER.**
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- **Ephesians 4:31-32 "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice... be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another; even as God in Christ forgave you."**

## WHY ARE WE SO AFRAID TO FORGIVE?

### 1. WE MAY BELIEVE THE PERSON WHO HURT US DOESN'T DESERVE FORGIVENESS.

- *YEAH I GET IT, IT'S NOT FAIR, THEY HAVE HURT ME WHEN I WAS A KID, I COULDN'T FIGHT BACK.*
- *YEAH I GET IT, IT'S PAINFUL, THEY HAVE ABUSED ME THROUGH THEIR WORD (STUPID, MEANT FOR NOTHING) EVERY SINGLE DAY.*
- *YEAH IT'S BITTER, WHY DID YOU LEAVE ME AND MOM WHEN WE NEEDED YOU THE MOST?*
- *HOW COULD YOU DO THAT????*
- *YOUR MIND CAN'T EVEN COMPREHEND IT.*
- *HE/SHE DOESN'T DESERVE MY FORGIVENESS.*
- SO WE THINK BY NOT FORGIVING THEM, WE ARE ACTUALLY PUNISHING THEM.
  - BUT THE TRUTH IS UNFORGIVENESS IS NOT PUNISHING THEM, IT MAKES US TRAPPED IN BONDAGE.
  - IT'S LIKE SHOUTING 'I HATE YOU, I WILL NEVER FORGIVE YOU, I WILL PUNISH YOU' FROM INSIDE A JAIL OF UNFORGIVENESS.
- UNFORGIVENESS = TAKING GOD'S PLACE AS A JUDGE
  - IT'S NOT OUR PLACE TO JUDGE. LET GOD DO IT FOR YOU.
  - YOUR JOB IS TO FORGIVE AND BE SET FREE.

### 2. WE FEAR THE DISCOMFORT OF REVISITING MEMORIES AND PAST WOUNDS.

- *I KNOW IT'S UNCOMFORTABLE, SOME OF YOU ARE CRYING RIGHT NOW JUST THE THOUGHT OF YOUR OFFENDER.*
- *I KNOW IT'S PAINFUL, YOUR CHAIR.... ALL OF THE SUDDEN BECOME VERY HOT, YOU WANT TO GO TO TOILET, ALL OF THE SUDDEN YOU WANT TO TAKE A DUMP.*
- DON'T MOVE! GOD IS ABOUT TO MOVE IN YOUR LIFE!
- DON'T LET YOUR FEAR OF TEMPORARY DISCOMFORT PREVENT YOU FROM RECEIVING YOUR TOTAL HEALING.... TONIGHT.
- DON'T WAIT FOR NEXT WEEK, OH TOMORROW.
- NOOOO ITS TONIGHT.
- **"IF IT'S HEALING WHY IS IT SO PAINFUL?"**
- WELL, YOU'VE BEEN COVERING YOUR WOUNDS FOR YEARS.
- YOU ARE NOT HEALING THEM, YOU'RE JUST 'COVERING' IT.
- SOME OF YOU ARE COVERING IT WITH JOKES.
- SOME OF YOU ARE COVERING IT WITH APPEARING STRONG.
- SOME OF YOU ARE COVERING IT WITH THE LOVE OF MAN.
- SOME OF YOU ARE COVERING IT WITH 'BEING PRIVATE'.
- BUT THEY ARE NOT HEALED, ITS STILL WOUNDS.
- BUT HOW MANY OF YOU KNOW THAT GOD WANTS TO OPEN THAT WOUND TONIGHT AND POUR OUT SOOO MUCH LOVE, SO MUCH GRACE YES YOU DON'T DESERVE IT, BUT HE IS POURING EVEN RIGHT NOW.
- HE LOVES YOU, HE WANTS YOU HEALED TONIGHT.
- HE WANTS TO MAKE YOUR WOUND, TO BE A BATTLE SCAR.
- IT'S NOT PAINFUL ANYMORE.
- IT'S NOT PERFECT.
- PEOPLE CAN SEE THE SCAR.
- BUT WEAR THAT SCAR PROUD, BECAUSE YOUR SCAR BECOMES YOUR TESTIMONY.
- YOUR BATTLE SCAR CAN HEAL OTHERS TOO.
- PEOPLE WILL SEE IT AND SAY 'IF YOU CAN DO IT, I CAN DO IT TOO!'

### 3. WHEN YOU CHOOSE FORGIVENESS, YOU CHOOSE FREEDOM.

- HOW MANY OF YOU WANTS TO BE SET FREE TONIGHT?
- NO MORE BONDAGE OF UNFORGIVENESS.
- NO MORE BONDAGE OF THE PAST.
- NO MORE BONDAGE OF BITTERNES.
- YOU CAN BE SET FREE TONIGHT.
- YOU CAN BE SET FREE TO PRAISE!
- YOU CAN BE SET FREE TO BELIEVE AGAIN!
- YOU CAN BE SET FREE TO LOVE AGAIN!
- Regardless of our own opinions, there must be willful obedience to do God's will, God's way. We MUST forgive.
- **Matthew 6: 14-15 "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your father will not forgive your sins."**
- **Luke 7:47 Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.**

THE MOMENT WE SAY "I FORGIVE YOU..."

- We actually walk out of that Prison Door
- It's fling wide open for you.
- Walk out tonight.

### 4. LAY IT ALL DOWN TONIGHT!

- Recognize the people in your life now, and from your past, whom you have held in unforgiveness.
- Repent for the specific areas of unforgiveness in your life.
- Release the offenders in your life.
- **FORGIVENESS LETTER**
- Write a forgiveness letter (15 mins) — *Optional.*
  - Address it to your offender and explain why it is being written. Example: "*Dear John, I'm writing this letter because....*"
  - Be specific about how the person's behaviour has affected you (relationships, self-esteem, etc.).
  - If your letter is asking for forgiveness, take responsibility for the damage and pain you have caused.
  - Close the letter in your own words. This is the part that you are going to **RELEASE FORGIVENESS.**
  - **STAY FOCUSED ON FORGIVING AND RELEASING**
  - Your goal in writing the letter is to **LET IT GO AND BE FREE..... FOR GOOD!**
  - **We don't recommend you read or deliver any letters to your offenders!**
  - IN SOME INSTANCES YOU WANT RECONCILIATION WITH YOUR MOM OR DAD, FOR EXAMPLE..... THAT'S AMAZING.
  - BUT IN SOME INSTANCES, YOU DON'T WANT TO RECONCILE WITH YOUR OFFENDER.
  - FORGIVENESS IS NOT NECESSARILY RECONCILIATION WITH THE OFFENDER, **FORGIVENESS IS RECONCILIATION WITH GOD.**

## GROUP DISCUSSION

SHARE YOUR FREEDOM STORY (15 mins)

- Get them to share their **FREEDOM** Story!
- Always close the discussion with **FAITH.**

PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER