

December 2, 2012

Forgiveness and Love **Pastor Charles Mendenhall**

When we were born again, God accepted us just as we were. All the weaknesses, all the faults, everything that involved our lives. Then we begin to work out our salvation, we learned by proving and while working under pressure, areas of our lives that needed to be dealt with.

God knows what each of us needs, regardless of the length of time that we have been born again. The enemy is still on the job to destroy and defeat us. God is still on the job and He is Lord and He will cause us to overcome.

2 Tim 3:16 "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" KJV

Without being fully furnished with the Word, we will not be equipped as we should be. Over time we will be alright, if we are quick to repent, quick to forgive and quick to walk in love. Several opportunities will present themselves to us, but if we are able to apply the principles mentioned in the above scripture we will receive the help that we need. It is not the enemy who defeats us so much as it is; wrong thinking that produces wrong believing, wrong believing produces, wrong talking which produces wrong actions.

By renewing our minds and getting our thinking straightened out, we will become quick to repent, to forgive and walk in love. Tests will be continual throughout our lives. It is not just a onetime situation.

James 2:8 "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:" KJV

There is no greater law in the scriptures, but the law of love.

Paul deals with love, you can have all the faith in the world, but without love it is nothing. Charity is the God kind of love. Having all our dreams and goals in life fulfilled but without love, it is nothing. When we learn to love extravagantly we will find ourselves going the second mile. We will become mature, learning to overlook all the offenses and persecution that comes our way. We will begin to pray for those responsible for all that is happening to us.

1 Cor 13:13 "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." KJV

1 Cor 13:13 "But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love." Message

John spoke of loving one another at all times. Don't let the busyness of life take away from us the

love that we should be giving to others. Pursue love; don't let anything stand in the way. The spirit of deception has come to cause our priorities to be wrong.

1 Cor 14:1 *"Eagerly pursue and seek to acquire [this] love [make it your aim, your great quest]; and earnestly desire and cultivate the spiritual endowments (gifts), especially that you may prophesy (interpret the divine will and purpose in inspired preaching and teaching)."*
Amp.

Pursue means "to pursue with the intent of overtaking" your focus is to "catch it". Ex: given of the greyhound pursuing the rabbit. His focus is to catch. Many times we start trying to catch it, but for whatever reason are unable.

We pursue love to be able to walk in it and to know the benefits of love. Faith works by love. Most Christians don't harbor unforgiveness and bitterness. During some seasons of our lives we may fall into this situation for a time, but by learning to walk in love, we can overcome, but it must be dealt with. Refusing to walk in love will cause stumbling blocks in our lives causing us to fall away.

A word shared: "The Lord has your heart in His hands, therefore, it is protected." God has your best interest. He has your heart.

When bitterness gets into Christian people it is usually caused by an open door of unforgiveness. It doesn't matter what has happened, it can be major or minor, depending on the person involved. We cannot try to get even, regardless of what has been done.

Rom 12:17 *"Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men."* KJV

We cannot allow ourselves to get down on the same level as others, trying to repay evil for evil. We begin to act and think like they do. It is not a good thing. Don't allow for selfishness to get a hold of you by wanting to have our own way. Look at the example of Jesus and how He handled it.

1 Pet 3:16 *"If with heart and soul you're doing good, do you think you can be stopped? Even if you suffer for it, you're still better off. Don't give the opposition a second thought. Through thick and thin, keep your hearts at attention, in adoration before Christ, your Master. Be ready to speak up and tell anyone who asks why you're living the way you are, and always with the utmost courtesy. Keep a clear conscience before God so that when people throw mud at you, none of it will stick. They'll end up realizing that they're the ones who need a bath. It's better to suffer for doing good, if that's what God wants, than to be punished for doing bad. That's what Christ did definitively: suffered because of others' sins, the Righteous One for the unrighteous ones. He went through it all—was put to death and then made alive—to bring us to God."* Message

1 Pet 4:1 *"Since Jesus went through everything you're going through and more, learn to think like him. Think of your sufferings as a weaning from that old sinful habit of always expecting to get your own way. Then you'll be able to live out your days free to pursue what God wants instead of being tyrannized by what you want"* Message

Heb 12:1-3 *"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."* KJV

Many times offenses have been committed by someone, we think we have forgiven, but apparently not, because the offense has never been released and we still hang on to it. Be it either a long time ago or recently. Selfishness and unforgiveness becomes a life style if not handled properly and dealt with.

Examples given of characters from Charles Dickens novels of people who had unforgiveness and bitterness and how it destroyed them. A life that God had designed was destroyed.

1 Cor 13:5 *"or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged"* NLT

1 Cor 13:5 *"Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;"* KJV

"Thinketh" in the Greek: means "keeping or entering into a ledger with permanent ink" Love does not keep account of all the wrongs done.

When something is revealed to us about change in our lives, we must deal with it; we cannot hide from it, but pursue love and make the changes. When we understand the spiritual warfare that we are dealing with, love will put us on top. Love, however, keeps no record of the wrongs and we cannot either. Love is the highest, the greatest, the royal law of the scripture. God's love is shed abroad in our hearts. Love is in us. Unforgiveness shuts the door from the light, love wants to get out.

Rom 5:5 *"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."* KJV

Rom 5:8 *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* KJV

John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* KJV

When we love we give. We see needs and give to fulfill that need. That is God's love coming out.

Col 3:12-14 *"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. 14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."* KJV

Col 3:14 *"So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out*

for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it." Message

Love is our Sunday clothes and our work clothes. Love is an all-purpose garment to be worn at all times.