

January 24, 2016

## Love And Forgiveness - How To Forgive And What Is Involved

Pastor Charles Mendenhall

The teaching today begins with a few comments regarding the prosperity that each believer is entitled to, because God wants that all should be blessed financially as well as spiritually. Many times the religious people think that the only thing that is taught in church is the giving of money, but this is incorrect. God has made every provision for the believer to be blessed. The following scriptures reveal the truth of what has been set up for the believer and what God has for them. Jesus not only came to deliver us from sin, but to deliver us from poverty also. Some will say that these scriptures indicate that Jesus became spiritually poor, but if that is the case, how was he able to do all the miracles that he did?

2 Cor 8: 9 "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." KJV

2 Cor 5:21 "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." KJV

3 John 2: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." KJV

In 2nd Corinthians chapters 8 and 9, we find that these two chapters have been used to teach the importance of the prosperity that is available to all believers. God is for us financially, He wants to prosper each of us, He is against covetousness, however the only way that we can begin to walk in this is to meditate the scriptures and what is said about prosperity.

Learning to walk in the principles of love and forgiveness will keep us growing spiritually.

1 John 2:6, 10-11 "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. 10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. 11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes." KJV

John is talking about the brethren in Christ which includes all believers that are in Christ. Learning to walk in love is challenging but is a mark of maturity, we measure maturity by the ability that one has to walk in love. Love is the royal law of the scriptures. We will encounter difficult challenges in our life as we learn to walk in love. Beginning our walk in love will cause the offenses, the hurts that have been bestowed upon us by others, and things that have been said, to be areas of challenge and must be overcome and that comes through forgiveness. Love and forgiveness go hand in hand; in order for us to grow in faith we must walk in love, because faith worketh by love.

Many times we have to recognize the fact that somewhere in the past someone has hurt us deeply, those hurts are lodged deep in our memories and will continue to bother us until we learn the principle of love and forgiveness. Learning these principles is the only way for the painful hurts to be dealt with and allow us to continue in our walk that the Lord has for us. Wholeness begins with forgiveness, if we cannot forgive we will never become whole in the

way that Jesus wants us to be. Unforgiveness is like a malignant tumor in our bodies that grows and is destructive. We do more damage to ourselves than the person we are not forgiving. Forgiveness is a strength, it is not a weakness.

Statistics tell us that 80% of Christian people have the inability to forgive after they have been wronged or hurt. This high percentage effects churches in their potential and ability and is limited because of unforgiveness in the church. Small churches have the same problems with unforgiveness as do the big mega churches.

Forgiveness is something that begins with a decision, there is a recovery time involved and needs to be worked out. During the recovery time we must maintain a good attitude, it effects all of us and unforgiveness is a like a poison and will take divine surgery in order for us to be healed completely.

Example given of a young, virgin lady who had been raped and was unable to forgive the man who had raped her, the authorities and judge which heard her case, dismissed her which caused her to be even more despondent. She became withdrawn, unable to talk about the experience and her family was ready to have her committed to a mental institution, but on the way, they made a stop at their pastors office where he began to speak to her about being institutionalized for the remainder of her life, then he began to tell her that deliverance and healing was possible but she would have to forgive, she first told him that she was unable to, but after a period of time was able to say the man's name and then forgive him. Consequently, she was delivered; set free from unforgiveness and her parents were able to return home with her.

Unforgiveness is devastating to each of us, depending on how we were raised, it depends on how we hand the injustice that happened to us, some are taught to get even, some to never forget what has happened to them, but walls will go up regardless.

Paul teaches that there is a time that we have to prove ourselves, correction must be made and accountability is needed. God is always for forgiveness and restoration.

Luke 7:23 "And blessed (happy—with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, apart from outward conditions—and to be envied) is he who takes no offense in Me *and* who is not hurt *or* resentful *or* annoyed *or* repelled *or* made to stumble [whatever may occur]." AMP

Offense always means to stumble or fall away and is a result of unforgiveness. There is a season that God gives us in order for us to deal with unforgiveness before it gets into our heart, because if not dealt with will turn into bitterness and will defile, it becomes something that is ugly and hinders every relationship that we have, whatever level it is on. Unforgiveness must be dealt with.

There can be a time in our lives when we can bless those who have offended but will probably take time. The following scriptures detail how we are to act regarding offense or bad things that had been done to us. Even in the Old Testament the people were shown what their response was to be regarding their situations and how to deal with them. God has an answer, a blessing for us. His plan is that He will take care of the situations that arise in our lives if we are obedient, if we continue with the right attitude and doing what is good.

Rom 12:14-20 "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. 15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. 16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. 17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. 20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." KJV

Rom 12:14-20 "Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. 15 Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all! 17 Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. 18 Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. 19 Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the Lord. 20 Instead, "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads." "NLT

Pro 25:21-22 "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: 22 For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee." KJV

We are able to enter into the presence of the Lord because of what Jesus did, but in the Old Testament they had certain requirements to follow in order to be able to enter into the Holy of Holies.

Lev 16:12-13 "And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail: 13 And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not:" KJV

If we will keep the right attitude and do what the Lord wants us to do, God's life will rest upon us and He will keep blessing us in the midst of what is happening, we can open the door for God to get involved on our behalf and if necessary bring vengeance if their correction has not been made. God will be longsuffering for others involved as well as for us. Doing good keeps a covering over us where God can continue to bless us. Do not overcome evil with evil but with good. Light always dispels darkness. Keeping the door open, by doing what is right to others.

The scriptures in Genesis 41 tell of the life of Joseph, what his brothers had done to him and how in the natural he had reason to have unforgiveness, but God had a plan for his life and because of Joseph being faithful to that plan, was able to save all his family and have God's blessing on his life. He had risen from a slave sold, by his brothers, into captivity, he was accused of wrong doings, keeping him in prison longer, then he was allowed to interpret a dream that Pharaoh had, resulting in his position being upgraded to second in command in Egypt. He was able to provide for his family, without their knowledge of who he was and forgave them of everything they had done to him. Forgiveness being the key in Joseph's life enabled him to forget the past and bring about the prosperity that he had.

Gen 41:51-52 "And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. 52 And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction." KJV

1 Peter 3:13-16 . 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. MESSAGE

Mark 11:22-26 "Jesus replied, "Have faith in God [constantly]. 23 I assure you *and* most solemnly say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea!' and does not doubt in his heart [in God's unlimited power], but believes that what he says is going to take place, it will be done for him [in accordance with God's will]. 24 For this reason I am telling you, whatever things you ask for in prayer [in accordance with God's will], believe [with confident trust] that you have received them, and they will be *given* to you. 25 Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, *\*forgive* him [drop the issue, let it go], so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions *and* wrongdoings [against Him and others]. 26 ["But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your transgressions."]" AMP

v. 25 - \* forgive means to let it drop, leave it alone, let go

In reality it sometimes is hard or challenging for us to forgive as we need to. If we say that we have forgiven and haven't stop talking about what has happened to us, how we were wronged, to everyone we come in contact with, it only makes the matter worse causing us to become ensnared, like an animal caught in a trap.

Story of a lady whose husband had gotten saved after their marriage, but everytime they were around other people, she continually brought up the fact of how he had mistreated her earlier before his salvation, she just wouldn't let it go. People tried to get her to drop it, let it go, but she had been snared by her words, later in life she was found to have terminal cancer and couldn't get her healing but before she died she forgave her husband but it was to late.

Isaiah 43:25 "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." KJV

When we forgive we let it go, we drop it so that we are not ensnared. The bridge of forgiveness is a bridge we must cross over in order to reach our destiny, from Gods side there are tremendous blessings, forgiveness is the only way to get over our disappointments and hurts and the unpleasant memories of the past.

Eph 4:32 "*And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*" KJV

Why does God forgive us so completely? It is because of what Jesus has done. Our forgiveness of others is based on what Jesus has done. When we stand before God and He asks us about our forgiveness of others what will our response be?