

FORGIVENESS OR BITTERNESS- What is our response?

(An aspect of Holy Living)

INTRODUCTION:

When does forgiveness or bitterness become an issue? What happens in our lives? What and why do we get hurt? What is our reaction/response to hurt? Are there times or occasions in which we do not need to forgive?

PROPOSITION: We need to forgive despite the circumstances

INTEROGATIVE SENTENCE: Why and how should we forgive?

TRANSITIONAL SENTENCE: According to Ephesians 4:32, we should forgive because God has commanded it. We forgive by strength of the Holy Spirit- not ourselves as not able. It is a matter of choice- a decision to forgive despite feelings.

MAIN DIVISIONS AND TRANSITIONS:

1) Circumstances-

- i) Family- parents show favouritism- favourite child, husband/wife, brother/sister
- ii) Friends- friends let you down or said something that you find hurtful
- iii) Church- leaders or other Christians- may not be you directly but to someone you know- rejection with parents- hard as expect more from the church which is the reason given why some people turn away from God
- iv) Work Colleagues- boss/manager- end badly- when saw him a couple of years later- found it very difficult trying to be nice where needed God's help

- v) Acquaintances- bus driver who was very rude in the bus and shouted saying “Why are you making my job so difficult” without asking nicely for the passengers to move further down!
- vi) Catastrophe- war/weather- newspaper- 7-7- terrorists- imagine being the child of a victim or a husband or wife of a victim, 9-11- people in tower in New York, flood in USA

2) Response- There are many different circumstances can lead us to being hurt where we have a choice as to how to deal with the hurt that we feel. Be aware of what has caused the hurt and don't pretend its not there or else you won't deal with it so once you are aware of the hurt then be aware of the possible responses and decide to choose the right response- really there are two choices, not 3. If you choose to ignore it then not dealt with it.

- i) Bitterness and Anger- Ephesians 4:31- this is the most natural response- examples above can cause one to be bitter wanting “bad” to occur to those who hurt us

2 Samuel 13 –Absalom, Amnon and Tamar=*1 In the course of time, Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David. 2 Amnon became frustrated to the point of illness on account of his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible for him to do anything to her. Then 2 years later*³² *But Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother, said, "My lord should not think that they killed all the princes; only Amnon is dead. This has been Absalom's expressed intention ever since the day Amnon raped his sister Tamar. 33 My lord the king should not be concerned about the report that all the king's sons are dead. Only Amnon is dead."*

2 Samuel 3- Joab and Abner *7 Now when Abner returned Hebron, Joab took him aside into the gateway, as though to speak with him privately. And there, to avenge the blood of his brother Asahel, Joab stabbed him in the stomach, and he died*

Are there any things in our lives which we are holding bitterness or anger and so hold us back

- ii) Forgiveness- Ephesians 4:32- this is the response that Jesus said we should adopt. We just need to look at what happened in his life to see how he forgave. Release the person

Ephesians 4:31-32-Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

3) Practicalities. Why and how should we forgive?

- i) WHY- We forgive because God has directed us to forgive so will only be able to do it by his help.

Luke 6:37- 37"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Colossians 3:12-14- rules for holy living 12Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

- ii) HOW- We may have to keep forgiving over and over again. We forgive by strength of the Holy Spirit- not ourselves as not able. It is a matter of choice- a decision to forgive despite feelings It is not always easy. It may be a matter of will power as with the example with Corrie Ten Boon and the God's example

<p>Corrie ten Boom gives a powerful story who, together with her whole family who were also Christians, was arrested by the Nazis during the Second World War for hiding Jews in their home in Holland. Corrie and her sister Betsy were sent to Ravensbruck where they suffered appalling cruelty and Betsy died there. After the war, Corrie went back to Germany to speak to people about reconciliation, about the love of God to reconcile those who had been enemies.</p>

This incident happened in 1947 and Corrie had come from Holland to speak in a church in Munich with the message that God forgives.

As people were getting up to go at the end, a man in a grey overcoat clutching a brown felt hat came to the front to talk to Corrie. She recognised him... *'The man who was making his way forward had been a guard at Ravensbruck, - one of the most cruel guards.'*

In Corrie's words:

'Now he was in front of me, hand thrust out: "A fine message, Fraülein! How good it is to know that, as you say, all our sins are at the bottom of the sea!"

'And I, who had spoken so glibly of forgiveness, fumbled in my pocketbook rather than take that hand. He would not remember me of course...but I remembered him and the leather crop swinging from his belt. I was face-to-face with one of my captors and my blood seemed to freeze.

'..."since that time", he went on, "I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did but I would like to hear it from your lips as well, Fraülein' - again the hand came out - 'will you forgive me?'

'And I stood there - I whose sins had again and again been forgiven - and could not forgive. Betsie had died in that place - could he erase her slow terrible death simply for the asking?

'It could not have been many seconds that he stood there - hand held out - but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do. I had to do it - I knew that. The message that God forgives has a prior condition: that we forgive those who have injured us. "If you do not forgive men their trespasses," Jesus says, "neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses".

'And still I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is not an emotion - I knew that too. Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of

the heart. "Jesus help me!" I prayed silently. "I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling".

'And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. It was as if an electric current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm and sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes. "I forgive you, brother!" I cried. "With all my heart".

'For a long moment we grasped each other's hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God's love so intensely as I did then. I realised it was not my love. I had tried, and did not have the power. It was the power of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Romans 5:5 "...because the love of God is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us".'

God's forgiveness- 1 Kings 11:1-6 1 King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. 2 They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. 3 He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. 4 As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. 5 He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech [a] the detestable god of the Ammonites. 6 So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done. Solomon wives causing him to turn – despite him turning away where consequences to actions

Jesus' Forgiveness= Illegitimate child, effect of conception almost caused break-up between mother and fiancé, hated by others before birth and at birth, uneventful childhood, hated in adulthood, mistreated by others and spat at even though only showed

kindness, hatred by others led to his death and He still cried
“FATHER FORGIVE

Luke 23:33-35=33When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. 34Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." [a] And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

So next time you say the Lord's Prayer, just check- when you ask God to forgive your debts, have you forgiven your debtors
Matthew 6:9-15= Our Lord's Prayer 9" This, then, is how you should pray: " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11Give us today our daily bread. 12Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. [a]' 14For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

CONCLUSION: As Christ forgave, we too should forgive