

Forgiveness as a Way of Life

by Al Whittinghill

Jesus teaches that forgiveness is a key part of the Christian life and that we must forgive others as we have been forgiven in order to experience God's forgiveness and live a life of healing and restoration.

Duration: 1:07:38

Scripture: Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 6:14-15, Matthew 18:21-35, Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:13, James 2:13

Topics: "Forgiveness"

Description

In this sermon, the central theme is the importance of having right relationships and the power that comes from God working in our relationships. The speaker shares a personal story of a minister who experienced the tragic loss of his daughter and the subsequent struggles his family faced. Despite their pain, the minister and a stranger prayed together for God to break down the hardness in their lives. The sermon emphasizes the need for forgiveness and the transformative power of God's word in healing broken relationships.

Transcript

Well, in Matthew chapter 18, it's a sermon, I believe one sermon, a lengthy sermon by our Lord Jesus. And it has one central theme that goes all the way through. Chad spoke about vital relationships, and I believe that this whole chapter is to hold before our eyes the absolute importance of having right relationships and the power that we experience when God does what He wants to do in our relationships.

And it's an amazing thing. It starts off in that first verse of chapter 18 and talks about little children. At the same time, the disciples said to Jesus, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto Him and set Him in the midst of them and said, Verily I say to you, except you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And so He's talking about the little child who has just an open, abandoned attitude toward the Father and what a relationship that is meant to be. And then He says, And whosoever shall receive such a little child in My name receives Me.

But then He goes and talks about offending a little child like that, because what a dangerous thing it is to mess up a simple relationship and a precious relationship. Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones, which believes in Me, it would be better for him that a millstone were hung around his neck and that he

were drowned in the depth of the sea. He's talking about right relationships at the outset and not having them messed up.

Then He says, Woe to the world because of offenses, for it is necessary that offenses come. But woe to the man by whom the offense comes, the one who initiates the fault. Wherefore, here's how far you'd have to go to make it right.

If your hand or your foot offends you, cut them off and cast them from thee. It's better for you to enter into life, halt or maimed, crippled or maimed rather than having two hands or two feet and be cast into everlasting fire. And if your eye offends you, pocket out, cast it from you.

In other words, it's better to have an offensive member removed and have the whole body defiled. It's better for you to enter into life with one eye rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. Again, on the same thought length, if you know the theme of the chapter, take heed that you despise not one of these little ones.

For I say to you that in heaven, their angels do always behold the face of my father, which is in heaven for the son of man has come to save that which was lost. And so we see here how the whole purpose of God and restoration and reconciliation is bound right up and having right relationships. Then he sets about seeking the outcast before us.

How do you think if a man has 100 sheep and one of them has gone astray? And in other words, it's not reconciled. Doesn't he leave the 99 and go to the mountains and seek that one that's gone astray? And if it be that he finds it, I'm telling you the truth, that he rejoices more of that sheep than of the 99 which went not astray. Even so, it's not the will of your father, which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

It's the importance of going and recovering that which is out of step. And then he changes the subject again, but he goes in the same theme. Moreover, moving his way toward unity and vital relationships and the absolute necessity of it.

Moreover, if your brother will trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. And if he hears you, you've gained your brother. But if he will not hear you, then take with you one or two more that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word will be established.

It's so important that if he neglects to hear them, then tell it to the larger church. But if he neglect to hear the church as the church is exhorting him to dwell in unity, meaning let him be unto you as a heathen man and a publican. God is concerned with unity in the body of Christ.

And here's the reason why. Because that unity of the body of vital right relationships is for this purpose. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.

Whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. This is agreement in prayer in a powerful, authoritative way, not for unity, but from unity and pay any price for unity in the body of Christ. Again, I say to you, says the Lord Jesus, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my father, which is in heaven.

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Peter then tries to be practical, and he came and said, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me? And I forgive him

till seven times seventy. I mean, he knew the Lord, the Bible is seven full of sevens.

And so maybe seven times seventy, four hundred and ninety times, thinking that on the four hundred ninety first time you had it. You don't. That's the four hundred ninety time.

Don't come to me. And Jesus said to him, I say to you until seventy times, but until seventy times seven. He's he's saying not just four hundred ninety times, but as that's a symbol for just open ended forgiveness.

Then the Lord gives a parable. And this is our text tonight to show you the whole summation of this chapter. And I've never heard a message in its fullness on this.

I've heard a lot of messages, but I believe that that we've left this off in the body of Christ in most places because it is so pointed. Look at what it says. Therefore, is the kingdom of heaven likened to a certain king that would take an account of his servants? And when he had begun to reckon and count, one was brought to him which owed him ten thousand talents.

Now, that's the equivalent of one hundred and twenty five pounds of pure metal preciousness times ten thousand. That's over a million dollars in our day, at least. But for as much as this one that owed him had nothing to pay, his Lord commanded him to be sold and his wife and children and all that he had in payment to be made.

And the servant, therefore, fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience on me and I will pay you everything. Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion and loosed him and forgave him this debt. What an amazing move of grace to forgive him millions of dollars like that.

But then that same servant went out and obviously he knew he had been overextended and he couldn't bear to be in that position again. So he found one of his fellow servants which owed him a hundred pence. That's about twenty dollars.

And he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me what you owe me. And the fellow servant fell down at his feet and besought him, saying, Have patience with me. I will pay you all the exact same words almost to the letter.

And this man would not. But he went and threw him into prison until he would pay this debt. So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry and came and told unto their Lord, the big boss, all that was done.

Then his Lord, after that he had called him, said to him, These are the words of our Lord Jesus. Remember, O thou wicked servant, I forgave you all of that debt that you ask of me because you ask of me. Shouldn't you also have had compassion on your fellow servant, even in the same way that I had pity upon you? And the Lord was angry or wroth and delivered him over to the tormentors until he should pay all that was due to him.

And now these amazing words. Lord Jesus applies this sermon, this chapter about unity and vital relationships and the importance of forgiveness. He says so.

Likewise, like the rich man who threw that middle man into prison because he wouldn't pass on the forgiveness. And the mercy that had been extended to him, he would not be a steward of that grace. He threw him into prison to the tormentors.

He delivered him over to be tormented. Likewise, so shall my heavenly father do also to you. If you from your hearts, from your hearts forgive not everyone, his brother, their trespasses, not just outward passive getting along, but an inward from the heart coming to grips with the irreconcilable situation and passing on the pure grace of God.

You see, the way that we relate to other people is a direct gauge of our relationship with God. And if I have an unanswered prayer list, I need to check my unforgiveness list and see what how long it is. And you'll find the two are related.

You see, our Lord Jesus here makes it clear. He takes it personally how we relate to other people in this chapter. And in as much as you've done it to the least of these, my brethren, you have done it unto me, he says in Matthew 25.

So everyone seems to be talking about priorities for Christian businessmen and for priorities of the church and with the busyness of this life. What is first and foremost? And of course, we all agree that prayer is certainly one of the very most important priorities that you could ever have. But back in Matthew chapter five, look at that for a moment and you'll see how these two are married.

Prayer and relationships being right in Matthew chapter five, the Sermon on the Mount. It says in verse 23, therefore, if you bring your gift, meaning a worship gift to the altar of God and there you remember that your brother has ought against you, leave your gift in the before the altar and go your way. Here's God's priority and first.

First, be forgiving, first before worship, first before service, first before sacrifice, first be reconciled until your brother and then come back and offer your gift to the Lord, because, you see, broken relationships contaminate us and hurt our fellowship with God so as to render our worship and service unacceptable. According to these scriptures here on the outs on Earth really means out of touch with heaven. If you're on the outs on Earth and I'll tell you, all of us have difficult relationships.

I'm sure that we struggle through and to hear this word tonight could put us under some degree of condemnation, but probably most of it is not condemnation. It's good, healthy conviction because we overlook these things. We cannot ignore the necessity of godly, merciful forgiveness as a way of life and expect God to bless our lives and our families and our churches.

Forgiveness must start at home among our vital relationships with our children and our wives and those others in our home. And I want to ask myself and you tonight, are we known as a forgiving people? Are we known as a forgiving people? Those people, the kingdom of God teaches us the people that have been forgiven ought to be forgiving the people of God who owe a debt that could never be paid. We remain debtors to our dying breath.

We own a debt like Paul said, I'm a debtor to all men. We could never pay that debt, the debt of sin, the debt of love. And and God comes and forgives us freely through his grace and God forgives our sins.

And so the one who's been forgiven like this man in this parable ought to then go to those who he has trespassed against him and forgive them in the same way. And many people aren't willing to do that. We pray it in the Lord's Prayer.

We say forgive us as we forgive those who trespass against us. Every time we pray that we're praying, Lord, let me experience the forgiveness of God in the proportion and measure that I am willing to forgive

those who have wronged me the same way I've wronged you. And God takes that seriously.

Even if I think we don't know what we're even praying. You see, unforgiving spirit in a believer actually begins with somebody trespassing on our rights, what we and I use that in quotes, our rights, it's what we consider what is due to us, whether it be deeds that haven't been shown to us or words that haven't been given to us. We feel robbed.

And so it may begin small and it may begin big, but we feel that we are in the position of a creditor. You owe me. You owe me more respect.

You owe me more affection. You owe me more time or whatever money, whatever it might be. We are a creditor and we hold on to that debt and we say that person owes me.

And whenever we see them, we may have a taste down deep that says they owe me. And so what we're doing is we're waiting to be paid, waiting to be paid emotionally, waiting to be paid positionally, whatever it might be. But whenever the name is mentioned, something rises up in us.

It might be another leader in the church. It might be a deacon and it's and something rises up. This is so common with us as Christians that we think it's normal.

It's so common that we have grown to tolerate it or overlook it. But this parable teaches me and you it is really a contradiction of God's grace not to deal with it. In fact, in Colossians chapter three, verse 13, it says to us that we are to measure with the same cup that God's poured into our life.

Listen to what it says. Colossians 3, 13, for bearing one another. That means putting up with one another and forgiving one another.

If any man have a quarrel against any in the same way as Christ forgave you, so also do ye over in Romans 15. It doesn't just mention about forgiving. It mentions about receiving one another, not just forgiving and kind of a let bygones be bygones kind of way.

But it says in Romans that we are to receive one another in the same way that Christ has received us. So the Bible is clear, very clear. If it's so clear, how can we act like we do? Are we blind? Are we deaf? The answer is yes, we are.

We are blind and we are deaf. And we've got to begin to take this relationship with the Lord seriously and pass it on. When we are unforgiving, what happens is that fellowship on the anointing level with God and on the conscious level in the abiding way is cut off.

And you see, he whose attitude is full of grace cannot fellowship with the one who refuses to forgive. He cannot. This is a very real reason for the low state of our churches all around today, for the low condition that we find ourself in.

We've got to forgive from the heart or the glory will depart, as the old brother said. And what will be left will be with a form of godliness without the power thereof. And we'll have superficial, shallow getting along on a level that will never sustain us for what's coming on the church will be fragmented in the days ahead.

It's got to be from the heart. If I persist in unforgiveness, I damage my relationship to God and my Christian life suffers. And even my physical health, as we'll see in a moment, can begin to give me signals.

And like the man who went to the doctor who had all these ulcers and the doctor looked him right in the eye and said, who do you hate? He knew that something was going on on the inside to refuse to forgive. If you could persist in that after God speaks to you is to really put yourself in doubt scripturally as to whether you've even been forgiven. Because you see, because you see, we love because he first loved us.

We learn about God's love. And so we forgive because he first forgave us. And that's how we learn the kingdom of God's forgiveness, passing it on, passing being a channel of love and a channel of forgiveness.

But if I cannot and will not forgive on a persistent basis, then you may biblically say, I don't even know if this person knows truly the forgiveness of God. In fact, it says over in Luke seven, when this woman who'd been a woman of ill repute came and washed Jesus feet with her tears and dried him with her hair. Jesus said he she's been forgiven of much.

Therefore, she loves much. You see, she knew what it meant to be forgiven, and therefore she was full of the channel of God's love and she was a conduit of that. Well, the test of salvation, I believe, can almost be in some cases.

Have you forgiven everyone? A man who's experienced the grace of God will want to pass it on and failure to do that will put everything else in jeopardy. Well, it takes the shine out of your Christian life to have this harbored on the inside. You see, the man in our story here has three options.

He can sell everything he has and and tragedy, sell his wife and children into slavery. That would never work. And given time, he could he can never even pay this debt back.

It was so big. And but he had the other option of grace and that's the grace option that came. And so what happened is somebody had to lose ten thousand talents.

Somebody to forgive had to forego bearing shame and suffering, rude in my place, condemned. He stood. God could not forgive me without foregoing to forgive.

You must forego. And he emptied himself. They go together.

We've got to forego our rights. We've got to lay down that demand. And if we're going to forgive if I've been cheated and I can't forgive unless I'm prepared to forego.

Listen to this. I read this just the other day. A minister had received a call that his family had been hit by a drunk driver.

His wife and two young children were in the hospital in intensive care at the hospital. The doctors told him that his wife had many internal injuries and they were not sure they could save her. The little boy was seriously hurt and they were not sure they could save him either.

The little girl was already on life support. The minister felt anger, numbness. He felt shock.

Why? Why would God allow this to happen? And after four days, the doctors told the minister that they could not save his little girl. They removed the life support system and she died. A few days later, he received word that his wife would be OK and the little boy was brain damaged, but would probably live in the midst of all the minister's pain.

Several days later, a man came to the hospital's intensive care waiting room and he began to tell the minister he didn't know who he was, why he was there. He had gotten drunk and hit a family with his automobile and he was there to find out how they were. And the minister took out his New Testament and led the men to Jesus Christ.

He led him to Jesus Christ. See, it would have been far easier to hurl blame than to forego and forgive and been easier to condemn rather than to see this man's need for Christ. I was so moved when I heard Corrie ten Boom tell about that time in a meeting when she was back in Germany and she preached and she saw in the crowd the very man that had been in the prison camp that had been responsible probably for her sister's death.

And that meeting, she began to close up. And after that meeting, that man came to her and she was able to lead that man to Jesus Christ. What an amazing story.

What a what a picture of the grace of God. You see, at the bottom of an unforgiving spirit is one thing. Pride, it's pride.

It's the pride that says, I'll stand up for my rights. But the truth is that we ought to be in hell. Every one of us, even today, in what our words have maybe said and what our mind has thought, we would be condemned from the presence of God justly if God didn't save us by his grace.

Even today, we've got to release and forego or we'll reap consequences in our in our lives. Well, I want to just give you some symptoms of unforgiveness. What I want to do tonight is get very, very practical, because I believe that in our hearts in this room, there are things, there are there are hard places down deep that you may have overlooked for even years that today affect your fellowship with God on the forgiveness or lack of forgiveness level.

How do you know if you have an unforgiving spirit? Well, first of all, one of the symptoms is a heavy heart, a heavy heart, and you have guilt or regret constantly in your life. Probably down deep, there's unforgiveness behind it all. Another symptom is no peace.

You have no peace. There's depression in and out of your life and and there's something you can't find it. And it's probably going to you'll find it tonight in the unforgiveness area.

No joy, no fruit. You can't seem to love. You see, because God's presence is not sensed when unforgiveness is present.

God's presence cannot be sensed in the heart that's bitter when you're focused on self and your rights, you lose all sense of God's presence. Fear and anxiety are symptoms of an unforgiving spirit. Anger erupting at a little notice.

Resentment, which means to feel again. It means to feel again in the Greek language, the word resentment. It's a it's a desire to retaliate versus that desire to pray for your enemies and for God to bless them.

You want to harm them. Sometimes you might even explode and hit a wall or something. That's a sign of an unforgiving spirit.

I'll tell you one that that we all wrestle with is a critical heart is a sign of an unforgiving spirit and focusing in with gossip and other things on some outlet. I heard an old man say when Satan can't go personally, he sends a critic. Isolation, wanting to be apart, wanting to be separate from everybody else, hating the whole concept of walking in the light with other people.

You can't afford to let anybody else close. And so you hide yourself. You're extremely busy.

You're just busy, busy. And if you aren't busy, you find a way to stay busy because things aren't really right down deep. And it's like a it's like a driving force down deep inhibitions can be a sign of unforgiveness in marriage, especially with women inhibitions, whether it comes to relationships sexually or emotionally.

Same thing for men inhibitions, deep pain in your life, involuntary signs in your physical life. You may not even know why 20 percent of American adults, according to Newsweek, which I think you have to take with a grain of salt, 20 percent of American adults, it says, suffer from some sort of psychiatric disorder. But I think Newsweek suffers from a psychiatric disorder.

So that's really serious if they think it's that many. But depression is often caused by pent up pain and failure to release harmful emotions that we've held on to. The Bible says a merry heart is a good medicine.

God wants to send healing to our heart. Let me just say, brother, unforgiveness, if I hold on to it, unforgiveness, I'd write this down. Unforgiveness keeps pain alive.

Unforgiveness keeps pain alive. And what will happen is that you will pay, not them. You will pay like in this parable.

Your attitude toward them won't hurt them. It might hurt their heart if they love you, but but it won't hurt them on any level that the resentment may want it to in that sense of being deeply you owe me. But what it'll do will be to hurt you.

You will pay. And if I decide to put someone in debtor's prison, God will do the same thing to me. As this parable teaches, he says, you want the law, then have the guilt, have the anxiety, have the turmoil, have the fear, have all the torment.

Fear has torment. Have all those things that come with that unforgiving spirit until you pay the last mite. In fact, in James, Chapter two, verse 13, God says he will have judgment without mercy who show up no mercy.

This is a principle of Scripture that I'll tell you, quite frankly, that until just recently, I've never preached on. I've never even seen it like this in its power. But I preached a message on this in a church not far from here, just north of here.

And I'll tell you, it went down so deep in the people that they forgot every other message. The whole meeting and people for weeks were making things right with one another. And I'm trusting tonight that God will remind us of people and relationships that we have had in the past that we've allowed to gloss over and not just treat it lightly.

One woman went to the doctor and he said, you have rabies. And this woman, as she found out that she had rabies, she immediately began to write down names of people. And the doctor said, what are you doing, making out your will? And she said, oh, no, I'm making a list of people I can go bite.

You see, she was so full of hatred and bitterness that she wanted to get in all her bitterness while she could. Well, resentment means to feel it again. You see, you will pay and not them.

That's the first little point under this forgiveness keeps pain alive. Second point is that your past, if you're unforgiving, your past and those that who have hurt you control you. They're an idol in your life.

If you allow unforgiveness to stay in your life, you are making that person your Lord. They control you. And I remember being in Canada preaching at a church and there was this professional hockey player who was a really strong looking guy, scars all over his face.

And I'm telling you, he was a tough guy. But, you know, he loved Jesus. And during the meeting, I noticed one night he was gone.

I talked about a pure heart. One night he was gone. The next night he came back and he just was his face was puffy.

He had said he said, when I grew up, my father abused me and he died years ago. But I used to drive three hours to go to his tombstone where I would stand. And even as a Christian, I would stand there and I would curse him and I'd kick his tombstone.

I hated him so bad. I couldn't get to him. I couldn't tell him how I really felt.

That's full of hatred, my friend. He said last night before last in the meeting, God nailed my heart to the cross and showed me what a wretch I am not to forgive my father like Jesus had forgiven me. And I want to say yesterday I got in my car and I drove three hours and I fell across my father's grave.

Of course, he knew his father wasn't in that grave or couldn't hear him. It was a symbol to him. And he fell across that grave and he released that bitterness and forgave his father and received the forgiveness of God for his unforgiveness and was gloriously set free.

And he came back into that meeting and he stood up and testified. And the man looked like he had just taken 30 years off his age. It was an amazing thing to me to see that as God healed that man.

But if you don't do that, your past, those people like that control you, even as a Christian, and they will they will actually be that direction and focus of your life. Number three, if unforgiveness is allowed to stay, you become a garden for the devil. You become a garden that he tends.

It says over in Hebrews, we've made reference to it already, but in chapter 12, verse 14 and 15, we're told to follow peace with all men and holiness. And then in the next verse, it says, look diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God. That means not being willing to pass it on.

It says, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you and many thereby be defiled. A root is something that's out of sight. It's like this.

It's like this monkey grass that's in my front yard. I cut it off and say, Lord, please get rid of this stuff. And it always comes back because there's a little root down there.

I can't find. And that's what happens with bitterness in our heart. We can deal with it on a superficial level and come into a church setting.

We praise the Lord and we get in a situation and somebody does something similar to us as that root that's down there and bang up, it comes up, it comes. And not only you, but people around you are defiled. It's a poison.

It's like a it's like a can with poison on the inside that begins to seep out. And it's a corrosive that dissolves the can that it's in. Unforgiveness means anger and frustration, and it will mature into a deep bitterness.

Look at Ephesians, chapter four, and you'll see some things I trust tonight about the necessity of forgiveness. Ephesians, chapter four, verse 30. It says, Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed into the day of redemption.

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice, contrast, be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even in the same way as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you. So he's telling us how to deal with that by forgiving one another in the same way Christ forgave us. You see, it's a welcome mat for the devil if you don't forgive.

Look up a few verses at Ephesians four, verse twenty six. Be angry and said not don't let the sun go down on your wrath. Neither give place to the devil.

That's an occupying place like we talked about earlier today. And it's right in the middle of all these scriptures about relationships and unforgiveness for a Christian to give a place in a foothold for the devil. In fact, that's very clear from Paul's writings.

Look at Second Corinthians. Turn there. I want you to see this because this is such a it's a simple thing, but it's shocking.

I'd never seen until about six months ago. And I've read this, I dare say, a hundred times. And I'd never seen the relationship between verse 10 and verse 11 of Second Corinthians, chapter two.

Paul is writing to them. He's saying to restore this person that has offended God. And he had said to discipline.

And then in verse 10, he says to whom you forgive anything, I forgive. Also, I will forgive the person you forgave. For if I forgave anything to whom I forgave it for your sakes, I forgave it in the site or in the person of Christ.

He's saying, I tell you, standing in the presence of God. God is my witness that I have forgiven this person that you have forgiven. Next verse, less Satan should get an advantage of us.

I'd never seen those two together. He said, I've got to forgive like you forgive. I've got to stand with you in this.

Otherwise, Satan will get an advantage on us because we are not ignorant of his devices. One of the devices of Satan is to take up an offense and for someone else. And when they get it right, you don't you don't forgive, you see.

And it's a welcome mat for the devil in the church. Look around and you'll see it going on in every corner. Well, another thing that unforgiveness will do, it will cause you to walk in darkness.

In fact, that's what 1 John chapter 2 says. It says it so clearly. I mean, you can't get around it.

I can't change it. It says 1 John 2 11. He that hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness and doesn't know where he's going because that darkness has blinded his eyes.

It says a little later in 1 John chapter 4, verse 20, if a man keeps on saying it's the present tense, I love God, but he hates his brother. He's lying for he that loves not his brother that he can see. How can he love God that he has not seen? This is the commandment we have from him that if we love God, we love our brother also.

This was so visually demonstrated to me about walking in darkness years ago in Fort Worth. There was this young man who had come from a Christian university that went off the deep end. He'd been a singer, a beautiful singer and in Christian music.

He'd been on the gym team, a splendid specimen of a man. But he'd come home and flipped out. He moved into his room.

He had jet black hair that hung down to here with a widow's peak and black eyes. He looked like the devil. He moved into his room.

He wouldn't come out for 19 months. The only time he ever came out was to get a meal and beat his mother. It's an amazing thing.

His father called me and said, can you help this fella? And I was reading Reese Howe's intercessor and I read in there about how it was his birthday. It was my birthday on the guy I call me on that day. And I said, Lord, I want this man.

And so I began to pray. And I went in there and visited with him to make a long story short. God just gloriously brought this man down to the end of himself and to the beginning of God.

And he was so gloriously saved that his next door neighbor called me up. A big woman, about 64 years old at that time, named Fran. And she was the kind I mean, she could have been an army drill sergeant had she wanted to if they let women in at that time.

She said, Al, I've seen the way that God has moved in the chips life. And I want you to come over here and tell me about this. Jesus, I want to know about him.

I said, praise God. I went over there and I gave her the gospel and I had the privilege of leading her to the Lord Jesus Christ. That woman took off.

She began to try to read her word. Come with Fran. She had real, real bad eyes.

She had to wear these big, thick black glasses out in the sun. And she was going blind, they said. And she began to take off and love Jesus.

But she kept trying to read the word. One day I was a deacon in this church and she called me up and she said, Al, I'm having a hard time reading the Bible. And the Bible says that if we're sick, we can call for one of the church people and come over and you can anoint me with oil and God will heal me.

Now get on over here. So I said, OK, friend, I'm on my way. And I went over there and prayed for her.

And I really believe that she was looking to the Lord. And I'd seen that kind of thing happen before. I'd just come from a situation where God had done some incredible healings like that.

And so I prayed for her and nothing happened. And as I left that scripture, 1 John 2, 11 was quickened to my heart. He that hates his brother walks in darkness and walks in darkness.

And I said to her, I said, friend, have you forgiven everyone? Is there something in your life? And she went, no, it's nothing. I've forgiven everyone. I said everyone.

And she went, you see, her brother in California had married a woman of another race. And she had broken a relationship with him years before and treated him as if he was a dead man and had never talked to him. But apparently it had eaten on her insides.

And you know what? It was costing her her vision. Well, after I left, she got on the phone with her brother and cried and they forgave each other and reconciled. And the next day, Saturday, Fran, unknown to me, went over to Dallas and went to those meetings that probably you and I would never go to.

But she was looking to Jesus. I'm telling you, she wanted her eyes to be healed. She big tent.

She went back and sat in the back in some folding chairs. Nobody ever came near her. She didn't get within 100 feet of anybody.

She was sitting there listening to what I would call weak preaching. But I'll tell you what, at that moment, the Holy Spirit came upon her and bang, she was completely healed, cataracts and all. And the next day in church on Sunday, I was walking in and she came out and I looked around and she went, look, and she had these big blue eyes, the most beautiful, deep pools of eyes.

And I just fell on my knees. I said, my Lord Jesus, thank you, because he had healed her. And he showed me that the outer blindness was just a symptom of the bitterness of her heart that had been blinding her from God for years.

When God took care of that bitterness, she experienced an immense release. So it's a wonderful thing. But another thing about unforgiveness is it'll hurt my fellowship with God and really render me unable to even pray.

In fact, I'm surprised that Sammy, I told him when I was speaking on tonight and I praise the Lord for his self-control because I felt certain he would couldn't resist going to this. But he did. But he did.

He resisted. I didn't tell him time enough to change. But in Mark chapter 11, you know, that chapter that says, whatever things you desire when you pray, believe you have received them and you will receive them.

But the faith verse, man, I'm telling you, they lay hold of that. They say you move mountains with this kind of faith. Well, I'm going to tell you what, in the next breath, the Lord Jesus goes on and says, when you stand and when you stand praying, meaning like that with mountain moving faith, forgive if you have off against any so that your father also, which is in heaven, might forgive you your trespasses.

And then this troubling verse that people try to explain away. But if you do not forgive, neither will your father, which is in heaven, forgive your trespasses. And it means that you can't pray with mountain moving faith.

And it means not that you're kicked out of the kingdom of God, but that you don't experience the ongoing fruit and joy of forgiveness and the joy in your life. Of having a clear conscience with God, you come to a spiritual halt. You see, this is not initial forgiveness.

This is fellowship forgiveness. I remember being in a Bayview Glen church in Toronto. It's the church where A.W. Tozer was pastor for years.

And I was there for a week of meetings and I was so intimidated and I prayed and I said, God, what do I say to these people? And he said, preach to them like they're a den of snakes. And I said, OK, and I preached and God began to move in. And I'll tell you, the third night I saw the associate pastor, he was a godly man.

He got up and left the service. He didn't come back. I said, Lord, what I say, you have to know me to realize that I go home saying, Lord, what I said.

And last night in the middle of the meeting, God came to me and he showed me that with all my sincerity and all my seeking of God, he reminded me of my own brother in this town. Two years ago, we heard each other and I tried with inroads to make relationship, right? He cut me off and I kept trying and he cut me off. And so I just let him go.

And I haven't spoken to him in 10 years. He said last night in the middle of the meeting, God convicted me that the impetus led with me. He said, I got up and I left the meeting and I knocked on my brother's door.

And when he came to the door, I was on my knees, my hands clasped saying, please forgive me. And he says, I want you to know that your associate pastor here for the first time, my brother and I, we fell on each other's neck last night and we hugged and we embraced for the first time in 10 years. And tonight I feel like I've been saved all over again.

That's one of the most godly men I'd ever met that had that blockage down so deep in his subconscious because it was too painful to deal with. And many of us in this room probably have things that we've long ago buried, but they still feed your conscious life from that position being back in the in the end. See, forgiveness is costly.

You have to forego. But I'll tell you, unforgiveness is even more costly and you can't afford it. It's amazing that we don't forgive.

Here's some of the lies we believe, some of the ways we excuse ourselves. We say, well, it's better to blame than forgive. Well, it may be easier, brother, but it's not better.

It may be easier to blame, and that's what everybody's trying to blame somebody for something in America. And it works for a while. We blame others, but it'll catch up because it won't satisfy God.

You can't blame anybody for anything because you have no rights. You only have privileges as a Christian. So it's not better to blame than forgive.

It's better to forgive. Well, they also believe the lie that it's easier to just deny that it ever happened. Well, this is kind of like acting like it never really had to ignore it.

And you see what this does is it creates trauma on the inside. You bury it. You act like it never happened.

But the truth is, it's still in there and we drive them down deep into our subconscious and we don't want to bring them back because we feel threatened when we think about it. It's too painful to forgive. I don't want to do it.

It's going to hurt me too much. And well, it's a whole lot better to have the scar that comes after forgiveness than the open wound of unforgiveness that keeps simmering and seething. We can't deny it anymore.

We've got to take our emotions to the cross and deal with it. Well, thirdly, we say this. Well, forgiveness is something on that level that all of the preacher and the spiritual elite do kind of to be more spiritual than we are.

I forgive you or we go and say, oh, I want you to know I forgive you for that terrible, terrible, terrible thing you did to me. I want you to forgive me for that horrible attitude I have about you for this gross thing you did to me. You know, and we go with this kind of chip on our shoulder and that's a lie that we've got to get rid of.

We also have got to get rid of the lie that we believe that forgiveness demands that we confront. You see, subtle blaming when we come and we say, I have hated you because of the way you hurt me. No, first you've got to settle it with God first.

Go to him and deal with God. And then it could be very well that he has you just keep it there. Most of the time he'll have you go to your brother, but it doesn't demand that we confront all the time.

We can also believe this lie. It's not very important. I know that while I was speaking, this same person keeps coming to my mind, but that's not really important.

I mean, it's way far behind. It couldn't really. No, I couldn't possibly mean that.

It's not really important. But see, even when you say it, it's half hearted because, you know, you know that you think about it from time to time and God is dealing with it tonight. Well, we say, if I forgive that thing, it'll look like I'm condoning it.

It'll look like I'm saying it's OK. No, it'll only look like that you're willing to suffer. That's what it looked like, that you're willing to suffer.

Well, if only that repent, I'd forgive them. Well, what about you? What if God said that to you? You see, he's the one that initiated all the grace. And if he waited until you cleaned up your whole act to forgive you, you'd never be forgiven.

He sends grace and gives divine enablement through grace that you might respond to that grace and respond to him. And so we've got to come to the Lord and say, Lord, I'll take the loss. I'll pray to pay the price like you did.

Well, now, why must it always be me who has to forgive? Why must it always be me who always has to be hurt? Well, I'm going to tell you something. It won't always be you or me. If we're honest, it'll always be somebody else that has to forgive you if you really see it clearly.

We've got to go to people and say, I was wrong. It takes two to make a quarrel. It only takes one person to end it, to end the quarrel and to say, I take the death.

I take the wrong. Honey, I'm sorry. Please forgive me.

See, forgiveness is I believe this. I've come to believe this just recently, that forgiveness is the most godlike thing we can do on this earth. I mean, the enemy can counterfeit miracles and it looks like God in many cases.

So just because I can do miracles in the name even of the Lord is not the most godlike. It says in the gospel that who but God can forgive sin. And forgiving as God forgave is something that you can do only through the power of God.

And it is the most godlike way to express to love the Lord your God and to love your neighbor that same way with the love that God loves you with. We also say, well, I can't forgive because I could never forget. It says God forgives and he forgets.

But it doesn't mean, of course, it doesn't mean that God can't ever recall it. That's not what it says. It's an act of will.

I mean, how can you hide anything from God? He has a sea called the Sea of Forgetfulness that he buries things in. And the Jewish people come in symbol. They bury their sins in the sea as they read the minor prophets.

Corrie ten Boom used to say that God buries our sin in the Sea of Forgetfulness and puts up a no fishing sign. But I'm gonna tell you something. It's not that God could never recall them if he didn't want to.

It is this it's God has chosen to treat it as if it never happened. That's what his forgiveness and forgetfulness means in that situation. And our forgiveness, we may be able to remember the pain that we had through this person there all our life.

We might be able to remember it, but we forget it in the sense that it has no more power to produce any motivational behavior on me at all. Well, another lie we believe is forgiveness is something that takes a long time. It takes years to come to where I forgive.

Well, how long will it take you to forgive? Only as long as it takes your pride to die. If it takes 40 years for your pride to die, that's how long it will take. I was in the Bahamas.

This is a tough place to have ministry, but I was at this little island. I won't name the island, but there was a church there that was a sweet church. They I mean, they respect the word.

But I noticed during the meetings that week there seemed to be a cap on what God could do. It seemed to be kind of a dead response to the word. And I began to pray and my daughter was with me and some others.

And the last night before the last meeting, I said, Lord, I cannot bear to leave this island with this heaviness over it. It seems to me that something's got to break here. We went behind the church.

We got down and we began to pound the ground and beat the devil. And in authoritative prayer, we claimed that God would break down every hardness and that he would let whatever it was be just attacked and eradicated by the word of God that night at the end of the service. When I gave the invitation, there were a lot of people that came and got on their knees and tears began to flow.

And that was exciting. But it still wasn't broken. Just I went down and was walking among the people.

And I said these words, I didn't remember how important they were. I said it could be that there's some of you here that have one against another or have something that you need to clear up. And now's the time I heard a rustling movement and two sisters.

This is you got to understand this island. These people have lived on their their families since the 1800s, the early and and they have had a lot of skeletons in their closet. And these two sisters who've been closest friends several years ago and a dozen years ago had a fallout and all had had spoken to each other in years.

But they came and said in church and worship, but they never really talked to each other. It was an amazing thing. And people had chosen sides and it nearly divided the church.

I was standing there and I heard what sounded like two pieces of meat hitting together because it just sounded like plop. I looked around and these two ladies had hit each other at a dead run. And I heard this wailing.

It sounded like two dogs. I'm serious. Just I mean, and and it was it was a holy thing.

I was standing there beside them and I had the feeling come over me as if I was watching a man and his wife on their honeymoon. It was such a holy moment as they stood there and embraced. I just had to close my eyes and just stand there and just praise God.

And they're they're wailing, fill the church. And I saw it like ripples go back. And I saw hardened fishermen over the back of pews just shake like leaves and and and tears just begin to drip down their face.

And people began to go to each other and cry together and hug each other and follow each other and just plead for forgiveness. And I'll tell you, I saw light come back to eyes. I saw the cat and come off the well.

And that night afterwards, they had a fellowship. And I promise you, it was the same church. But you'd never have convinced me of it.

It was a glorious release, all because the church took it seriously to make relationships right. Could be that you have something with your wife or even your children that you need to make right. And tonight, before you even sleep, you better go call and wake them up or even better.

Yet when you go home tomorrow, gather them around your knee. Why is there no forgiveness? I'll tell you, brothers, because we're selfish. It's because we're selfish.

We can't forgive above our own experience of forgiveness. And if we're not really willing to be forgiven, to receive it, we're still in a legalism. We're still trying to earn our way in some way.

Then we'll try to make others pay, too. But if you've realized that you don't have any hope except for grace, you can pass it on thinking only of ourselves. We've been wrong.

So we don't forgive. We hold it over somebody else and we focus on self. We lose all sense of God.

We consider only how we've been affected. And we say something like this. I won't forgive until they come to me on their knees and repent.

That's selfish pride. How dare they? I'm going to stand up for my rights. I am righteously indignant.

They deserve nothing. If I forgive, it'll compromise my convictions. I had that attitude in seminary toward a man, a fellow.

And we had a street ministry. We'd go out and God would bless it. We'd go out in the streets every Friday night for four years, Fort Worth in among the prostitutes and the pimps and all the drug people.

And we witnessed and we saw great things. But this guy and I, we didn't get along. The reason is because we both had an interest in the same girl.

It was just that simple. And I began to rationalize it and said that I've been more outgoing than he had tried to reach out to him. One day the Lord convicted me and said, you go to his house.

He lived around the corner and down. I went down there. I knocked on his door and Bill came to the door.

And I said, Bill, we've got to talk. And we went in there and we got down. You know how you do when you do kind of a surface thing? You kind of say, will you forgive me? Yes, brother, I forgive you.

Thank you, brother. Let's pray together. And we got down and started praying together.

It hadn't reached the roots yet, man. As we prayed, I had this picture come into my mind. It's a picture of me.

It's almost like television getting up from prayer and going into the kitchen and looking under a certain place in there, opening the door and pulling out a lemon yellow Tupperware, rubber Tupperware type of pot, filling it with water and coming back in and washing his feet. And you know what I said? Get behind me, Satan. You're trying to mess up our prayer time.

We kept on praying. Two minutes later, I heard Bill get up. You know where he went? Heard him walk around the corner.

I said, oh, no. I heard something rattling around the kitchen, pots and pans. And then I heard water running.

I said, oh, no, Lord. And I saw him walk in. And you know what color of rubber Tupperware he had in his hands? Lemon yellow.

You know what he did? He came over to me, took off my shoes and he washed my feet. You know what I did? I wet my eyes out and then I washed his feet. You know what? After that day, we were tight.

We were together in the Lord Jesus. It was the most amazing reconciliation supernaturally that I've ever had in my own heart. It was a wonderful thing.

And it's a it's a glorious thing. Another thing that will hinder forgiveness is and stop it is a low self-esteem. And by that, I'm saying I'm saying not that I believe in self-esteem.

I believe in forgetting self. But low self-esteem is simply this. It's inverted pride.

Instead of saying I'm the greatest person in the world, it's always like, oh, no, poor me. The only person you can look to for any sense of worth is the Lord Jesus. And so I cannot base worth on what someone

has or has not done to me.

I cannot. I must find my identity in him. So if I don't forgive, I will settle for a shallow substitute.

That's why Ephesians 4 says forsake falsehood. You won't have a real relationship. You'll have just togetherness in church and it'll be phony.

Passive tolerance put up with and refuse to get beneath the surface. I know you've been sitting a long time, but I've got a little bit more to stick with me because I believe we've got to apply this word. I can't forgive Lord because it's too painful.

And we don't see that because if we bring it back up, we think that it'll bring such pain. I can't even tell you about this woman that came for counseling. And after the process of counseling was over, her name was Jenny.

She told me about her father who had beat her when she was a girl with his fists and molested her. And whenever she and her brother got into argument, he would make them fight one another with their fists until blood ran down their face to settle it. That's how he settled it.

When she told me of her hatred for him, I hated him also. She hated him. But I said to myself, this is not good.

You must not hate this man. I wish we were all here to minister. He was long dead.

He had long died and she hated him. And he had gone on off earth and she hated him. It drove her.

But she was a professing Christian. She had no power in her life. Her husband was a church member who just plotted along, but he wasn't a Christian.

I said, Jenny, you've got to forgive your father. The pain is killing you, not him. And she says, I can't forgive him.

I've tried over and over. I said, not with your emotions, but with your will, with your divinely enabled will before God. You come before him and say, I release him.

I forgive him in Jesus name. The same way you forgave me, I choose to get in line with the word of God. We got on our knees together and she did that.

And her face lit up. She went home. And do you know what? Within two days, she had the privilege of leading her husband to Christ.

Because you see the pain she faced and brought back up and was willing to deal with God, then used to bring her husband to Christ. Brother, forgiveness is a choice. It is not an emotion that you have to have.

You may not want to. If you wait until you want to, you'll never do it. If I go to the heart doctor and he says to me, you need heart surgery.

I'm going to have to take your heart out of your chest. Your circulation is down to 90 percent. You don't have any.

It's all gone. 90 percent blocked. You're going to have to have a quadruple bypass.

Come in when you feel like it. I mean, I'm not excited about that. You know, I mean, somebody taking my heart out of my chest and working on it.

But he says, if you don't, you'll die. You may drop dead tomorrow. I come in.

The IRS writes you and say, you know, you owe these taxes. If you feel like paying us, just pay us. You don't pay them because you want to.

You pay them because you have to. And so forgiveness is a choice. God will not make you.

He'll lean on you. But you have the privilege with God's grace to decide to do it. I like to say it this way for every one of us.

If I don't get up off of what I'm down on, I'm never going to get in on what God's up to. You want to hear that again? If you don't get up off of what you're down on, you're never going to get in on what God's up to. You're going to have to let him do a healing and don't have to feel like it.

In fact, you'll probably feel just the opposite. Your emotions rebel. Now, how do you apply a word like this? Well, I want to say tonight I'm believing God that you will realize and I will realize that it's God like to forgive who can forgive sins.

But God and that you will be willing to align with him and turn over yourself to the Lord to be freed from the tormentors and realize God has commanded forgiveness. It's not just a suggestion. It is a commandment from God.

And if you say I cannot forgive, then that means you're not even saved. You got to start with. I won't forgive.

God can deal with that. He can take you to the woodshed, but can't shows lack of ability. And you're blaming God won't shows a lack of obedience.

And tonight, repent, repent, come before him. God will bring good. God will bring good out of forgiveness.

Remember, Joseph, who went into the pit and he was sold to Egypt and his brothers had laughed at him while he cried out of the pit. Please don't do this thing. And they just ignored him and had lunch while the brothers cry.

And they sent him down to Egypt to treat him just like he was no count, just shipped him out as if he was not even there. Joseph went down to down to the pit, went down to Egypt, down to the dungeon. But God was with Joseph in Genesis when he was in that dungeon.

And if up in one day after preparation, after he'd been broken and spilled out, God put him on the pinnacle of Egypt. And it was an amazing thing because he became the savior to his brothers. And they were astounded when they came in before him and he revealed himself and he forgave them.

It was so good they couldn't believe it. And he says, fear not, though you meant it for evil, God meant it for good. You might have meant it for evil, but God meant it for good so he could teach me and make me into what I am today so that I could release to you the grace of God and many people could be saved.

Well, let me just take you through this little thing here. The Bible gives word pictures of forgiveness, what it's like metaphors, pictures, listen to what they are. It's to ride across a deck with big letters paid and nothing is owed.

It's a full pardon to a condemned criminal. That's one picture of forgiveness. It's a gavel coming down and saying not guilty.

It's an open prison door. These word pictures and prisoners going out that should not be free. It's to take up garbage together and bundle it and toss it forever to be gone to forgive is to take a boat that's moored to a dock and lose it.

That's a picture of forgiveness to is to let go of a stranglehold that you've got an enemy to let it off and see color come back to his face and life into his eyes. That's what forgiveness is in the word picture in the original languages. It's to paint a wall with graffiti, with white paint.

So it's forgotten and you can't read it anymore. It's to take an arrow and shoot it so high in the air that you can never find it again. That's another picture.

It's to break apart into infinite pieces so nobody but God could ever put it back together. And this is what happens when you do it. Now, as I finish, let me just say, who do we need to forgive? Well, first of all, you might need to forgive God.

I praise God for Clark's testimony. There's not a shred of bitterness in it towards God. Rather, it's faithful God, faithful God.

I'll tell you, I was preaching at First Baptist Atlanta once. And after the service, this woman comes forward. I talked about Romans 8, 28, and she took my hand and she said, I have come down this aisle to repent of bitterness against God.

I said, what do you mean? She said, nine years ago, my husband died at an early age. And I was he and I were Christians together. And I have been angry at God ever since.

Bitter at God. And I've been a contentious woman. And I'm here to say, I just want to forgive God.

That seems presumptuous, doesn't it? But she was releasing him and asking for forgiveness for being bitter at God. Maybe you're bitter at God because of the home you were in or something that's happened to you or a defect or some sickness or something. Something you've been blaming on God.

And the devil wants you to unconsciously blame God, just like you wanted Eve to blame God back in the beginning. One of those cardinal deceptions. And tonight, God says for you to release that.

God's your best friend, not your worst enemy. And he wants to heal that. Another people you got to forgive are unknown people.

We had a burglar break in our house. It was a malicious thing while my wife came home from church and he'd come in through my study window, reached inside, he'd cut himself coming in through the window and he had taken blood and smeared it across our bed and had taken the baby's bib and put blood all over it and put it in the floor. And he'd just been malicious on things.

And I'll tell you what my first reaction was. I said, I wish we had caught this man. We would teach him something.

And my second reaction was I began to hate him and say, how could anybody do that? God, judge this man. And I began to know my prayer life began to get weak and I couldn't really hear God when I read the word like I had. And the Lord showed me that I was hating a faceless person.

Maybe you blame somebody. For example, the person who engineered the firing from your job. You don't know who it was, but whoever it is, you hate their guts.

Maybe some driver that you don't know hit and ran or something. You have to forgive nameless people, people you've never seen. You have to forgive God.

You have to forgive your family. I could tell you about a young man who was a godly disciple, but he couldn't seem to press beyond a certain point. When he'd grown up, his father was a drunk and he had four brothers and sisters.

And his father had left him and left his mother to raise him. She couldn't afford it. So she put him in an orphanage and then she got a job at the orphanage.

And that was the only time she saw him. And he'd grown up and gotten he'd fallen into all kinds of sin, but he'd gotten gloriously saved. And he was one of my very best friends.

And I didn't know the pain he had been through, but he couldn't seem to trust God in some vital issues. And he told me one day, he said, you know, I think it all goes back to a time when I got a wrong view of God. He told me of when his mother, when they were all together, had made some pajamas for him, handmade.

And he was so proud of him. He was probably about four or five years old. And he waited for his daddy to come home to show him these pajamas.

He was so proud. He wanted dad to see. And dad walked in the door and he said, daddy, look at my pajamas.

And his dad backhanded him, he was drunk, across the room, just slapped him across the room. And nevertheless, this little boy got up. He says, daddy, look at my pajamas.

And the man threw up on him. And went over and passed out on the sofa. That little boy was so hurt.

A scar was there for years. And, you know, it was my privilege to go back to that moment with him in prayer to the God who is just as much in history as present and future. He's always the I am.

He's there. And together we said, though your earthly father forsook you, the Lord will take you up. And he likes your pajamas.

He's proud of you. He loves you. And he was completely emotionally healed because he forgave his father.

He forgave his father. And the Lord saved this man's emotions. He forgave.

Husbands, love your wives, it says, and be not bitter against them. Why did it say that? Could it be that we resent the fact that they don't appreciate our glorious spiritual leadership? I'll tell you something. Bitterness is a trap for me and my wife and you and your wife and a man and every wife.

You have to forgive those you know about. These are the people you've got to forgive. It might be a doctor who made a mistake.

It might be somebody who prescribed something wrong for you or who owes you money or who took something from you years ago. They might be dead now, but I tell you something. You have a responsibility tonight after life has come to deal with it.

We're going to open up this altar. It's late. But it's still early.

God wants you to deal with things. He wants me to deal with things. He wants us to deal with things.

He wants us to come before him. If you've got something on your heart and you you realize after tonight you're not willing to deal with it, you'll have a hard time worshipping God from this point on until you deal with it. God says forgive in the same way that you've been forgiven.

Release the same way you've been released. You have to learn to give forgiveness. When someone comes to you and says, will you forgive me? They need to hear those good words.

I forgive you. You may need to even you may need to even call someone tonight. You may need to purpose in your heart to make relationships right when you leave this place.

But I believe this. I believe God laid this message on my heart tonight because, you see, God wants us to deal at a new depth with him in reconciliation. You may be bitter at another race tonight.

God may have you go to someone else of another race that's here and ask forgiveness for your attitude that you've had toward that and be prayed for tonight. You may need to go to the phone and call someone states away, refuse to rehearse it and don't allow yourself to nurse it, but come to the altar of God and their purpose to be reconciled to your brother. It's as simple as that.

I don't know how to make it more simple. And I believe God will do amazing things if we'll just take him in a conscious obedience. I'm asking you to yield your rights, come to the cross, take up that cross, appropriate and dedicate yourself to him, confess your sin.

I want to ask you something. Have you forgiven everyone? Have you forgiven the person that didn't thank you, the person that hurt you, family members, parents, employers, employees, whoever it is, your wife, your children? Are you a bitter person? Have you forgiven everyone? Forgive even in the same way that Christ has forgiven you in an act of will to come and release that and come out of prison? Because Jesus says, if you won't forgive from the heart, then you will be turned over to the tormentors of this world and you will have all the wrong feelings and not the right fellowship until you are willing to deal with it. Friend, deal with it.

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