

# The Necessity of Forgiving One Another

by David Ravenhill

---

*Forgiveness is essential for our spiritual growth and development, and it requires us to release others from our negative emotions and attitudes.*

**Duration:** 50:44

**Scripture:** Exodus 23:4-5, Psalm 103:12, Proverbs 25:21-22, Matthew 6:14-15, Matthew 18:21-22, Luke 6:37, Ephesians 5:1-2

**Topics:** "Gods Forgiveness", "Christian Freedom"

---

## Description

This sermon emphasizes the theme of forgiveness, highlighting the vertical aspect of God's forgiveness towards us and the horizontal aspect of our forgiveness towards others. The speaker shares powerful stories and biblical teachings to illustrate the importance of extending forgiveness to others, drawing from parables and real-life examples to show the transformative power of forgiveness in releasing bitterness and experiencing freedom.

---

## Transcript

I want to talk to you tonight about one of the great themes in the Word of God, possibly the greatest theme apart from God Himself, and that is the theme of forgiveness. The theme of forgiveness. There are two aspects, if you like, two dimensions to forgiveness.

There is the vertical aspect, God's forgiveness of us, and I'm sure all of us here, at least the majority of us here, can testify to the fact that Jesus Christ came and washed our sins away. As the old hymn says, my chains fell off, my heart is free, I rose, went forth, and followed Thee. Thank God for the grace of God.

We don't have to merit it, we can't merit it. We can't earn it by our own accomplishments or our own goodness, but it's by grace and by grace alone. And so we are recipients of the grace of God and the forgiveness of God.

And then there is the horizontal forgiveness, and that is our forgiveness of one another. And that's what I want to speak about tonight. I am convinced, and I've been in the ministry now for 50 years.

My wife and I celebrated our 50th anniversary in August. We met in Bible school, got out of Bible school, and been in ministry ever since. So we have got a long track record, but I can honestly say that I think the greatest single obstacle to spiritual development, spiritual growth, certainly to spiritual revival, is the fact that we are unwilling to forgive.

We are quick to receive the forgiveness of God, but so slow to extend that forgiveness to somebody else. And so it becomes a major obstacle. I had the privilege many years ago of working with a wonderful man of God in New Zealand, and he told me the story of a missionary friend of his that was working in the island of Borneo that's over in East Malaysia.

And he was translating the Scriptures in a sort of a pretty rough area. There were two villages at either end of this particular valley where he was working, and he had solicited the help of a young man to work with him. He would bounce words off him, what's the best way to say this in your language, and so on.

And he was translating the Scriptures. He came to Mark chapter 11, and he was asking the young man, how would you put this particular phrase? And the phrase was, when you stand praying, forgive if you have ought against your brother or ought against one another in order that God may forgive you. And as he said those words, the young man stopped, and he said, why don't we do that? And he said, what do you mean, why don't we do that? He was caught up in trying to get the thing translated, and the young man had come under conviction because he was a part of one of these villages, and the other village at the other end of the valley, there had been tremendous animosity built up over many, many years, bloodshed, pillage, they'd gone in and raped the women, burned down their villages from time to time, and all sorts of atrocities had been carried out.

And this young man suddenly came under conviction. He realized, listen, I am responsible for many of these things. I've caused all sorts of pain and suffering.

And so he said to the missionary, why don't we do that? And the missionary said, well, why don't we do what? He said, well, why don't we stand and forgive one another? And the missionary realized that this young man, again, was under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and so he said, well, we need to do that. And as a result of that, this young man went and went to the neighboring village, and he apologized on behalf of his own family, himself, and then his fellow villagers for all that they had done. And as a result of that, a revival broke out in that particular part of Borneo that hundreds and hundreds of people were swept into the kingdom of God, all because one person was willing to extend that forgiveness towards another person.

All of us, again, have become recipients, I trust, of the forgiveness of God, and yet again, we are so slow to hand it out to somebody else or to forgive a brother or a sister. I worked with another wonderful man of God. Now, in fact, it was the same man, come to think of it, in New Zealand.

His name was Neville Winger. He's since gone to be with the Lord, and he had an expression. He said, we're all damaged goods.

And I remember the first time he shared that. He said, you know, you go into a supermarket, you want to buy a can of soup or something. It's got a bit of a ding in the side of it, and so you put it back, and you get a perfect can, even though the contents may be fine.

You replace it because there's something within us that loves perfection. But he says, we're all damaged goods. In the course of life, again, we get wounded.

We get hurt. We get betrayed. Somebody stabs us in the back.

Somebody wrongs us in some way. We enter into a partnership with some person to go into a business venture maybe, and things go sour, and we end up getting the short end of the stick and all of those

things. And I'm sure we could start here on the front row and it would, you know, take days and days to get over all the things that have been done to us.

Isn't that right? You know, we could listen. I'm sure some of them spring to mind readily. And yet how we respond to those things determines how God responds to us.

You see, these two aspects of forgiveness are linked together. The vertical and the horizontal, you can't have one without the other. In fact, they are totally dependent one upon the other.

And I'll show that to you as we look at some scriptures. But there is a tendency in us, isn't there, rather than forgiving that person, we fight. Rather than giving them grace, we hold a grudge against them.

We allow a root of bitterness to spring up. And, you know, it defiles not only ourselves, but every time we talk about that person or somebody else, we defile them by saying, you know, that person, I wouldn't trust them, and so on. This is what happened to me.

And, you know, we repeat the stories over and over and over again, don't we? And it's amazing how that little root of bitterness can spring up. Now, most of us don't have the problem that this young man did in this particular village in Borneo where there was bloodshed and so on. Most of us have restrained our anger at least that much.

At least I trust that's the case. But nevertheless, it's possible, isn't it, for that anger to get to the point where it boils over and all sorts of atrocities take place. I have in my Bible here a cutting out of USA Today.

It's quite old now. I've had it in my Bible, I guess, for a good 12, maybe 15 years. But it is the story of a young couple.

The young man was named Ron, and his girlfriend was named Amy. And Ron and Amy were dating and thinking of getting married. And then before they got married, before he had proposed to her, her parents had gone on a trip, vacation.

I think it was a cruise. I can't quite remember now. I'd have to read the thing again.

But she was invited to go with her parents on this vacation. And she thought, this is a good time to be away with my parents and so on. While she was away, Ron, her boyfriend's father, died suddenly.

And he went into an extreme grieving sort of time, and it was so difficult for him. And he contacted his girlfriend, Amy, and begged her to come back. He said, I need you right now.

My father's passed away, and I just need somebody to be with me. And she did not feel that it was her responsibility. After all, she was away with her parents.

They weren't engaged or anything. And so she said, listen, I don't feel I should come. Well, eventually she did return, obviously, from the vacation.

And they resumed their dating. Eventually he proposed, and they got married. About a year later, she gave birth to a little baby by the name of Tyler, a little boy.

And about nine months into his birth, when he was nine months old, she had resumed, by this time, her job as a checkout clerk at the supermarket. And she would come home. She was on the night shift.

She would come home late at night. And Ron, the husband, would make sure that Tyler was in bed. And if there was no whimper from the room where he was sleeping, she would just simply tumble into bed and not worry about him until the next morning.

And this was part of the routine. She would come home, and again the baby would be in bed, and she'd just go to bed and sleep. It was the morning of Father's Day when she went into the baby's room and discovered that the little baby was dead.

And they called in the police. The doctor certified that it was sudden death, SIDS anyway, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. And that was the end of that.

Until two days later, Ron called the police, and he begged them to come to his house and to kill him, to shoot him. He said, I am guilty of taking my baby's life. He told a story.

He said, My wife went off to work. He said, I was going to go to bed. And so he said, I went into the room.

I picked up our little son Tyler. I wrapped Saran Wrap around his head, put him in his crib, went to brush my teeth and get ready for bed. About ten minutes later, I came back.

I unwrapped his head, put him in the crib. By this time he was dead. He'd turned purple already, a blue.

And he said, I fell asleep. And then he told the reason. He said, The reason I did that, in fact he said, I planned that from the very moment that Amy refused to come back and console me.

He said, I wanted her to feel the pain that I felt. And so he said, I planned on resuming the courtship, proposing to her, marrying her, getting her pregnant, allowing for a period of time for that baby to bond with the mother, and then planned to take the baby's life. It's amazing, isn't it, how forgiveness can start off just that little root of bitterness that over a period of time can fester away until we can end up doing something of that sort of magnitude.

Let me give you some Scriptures, Matthew chapter 6. These are Scriptures that you are familiar with, I know. This is the Lord's Prayer. At least we call it the Lord's Prayer, the disciples' prayer.

Matthew chapter 6, Jesus said, Pray then in this way, verse 9, Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts or forgive us our sins as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us or forgive our debtors. Do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever.

Amen. I remember a very well-known preacher many, many years ago. He again has gone to be with the Lord now but he traveled internationally in a lot of charismatic circles.

His name was David Duplessis. Some of you may know that name. But he made this statement.

He says, The most dangerous prayer you can pray is the Lord's Prayer because you are asking God in this prayer, notice in verse 12, Forgive us our debts according to the way we forgive others. In other words, God, I want you to treat me the way I treat other people. That's a dangerous prayer unless, of course, you treat them with the love of God and the forgiveness of God the way that we have been recipients of that forgiveness ourselves.

And out of all the things that Jesus could have emphasized about that prayer, he could have come back and he could have underscored the kingdom of God, the importance of the kingdom of God. He could have underscored the importance of God being a father. He could have underscored again the will of God.

I will be done on earth as it is in heaven. But instead, he chose this area of forgiveness. Notice there in verse 14, If you forgive men their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions. That's why I say these two realms or dimensions of forgiveness are inseparable. They're tied together.

If we refuse to forgive, then the hands of God are tied. You know, we sing about the grace of God and it is an amazing grace as the songwriter said, but that grace can all of a sudden be limited if not withdrawn because we refuse to extend that same grace to somebody else and therefore we tie the hands of God, the God that created the heavens and the earth. The God of all His might and majesty and so on is rendered powerless because you and I are not willing to extend that forgiveness to somebody else.

Luke chapter 6, verse 37. Let's read verse 36. Be merciful just as your Father is merciful.

Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Pardon, and you will be pardoned.

That word pardon in the Greek, the way it's translated in the most is release, and you will be released. In other words, free people. It has the, if I remember correctly, I looked up the word once and it's like tying up a horse.

You've seen the old westerns where they come up to the saloon and they, you know, wrap the reins around the hitching post and so on. This is where you unhitch an animal. You release that animal.

It's no longer bound. It's no longer tied up. We are to release one another.

We are to be merciful just as our Father is merciful. I heard the story many years ago from a good friend of mine, a man by the name of Winky Prattney. Some of you may know him, some of you may not.

But Winky is a New Zealand evangelist, spent most of his ministry here in the United States. But he had been ministering at an Assembly of God Bible college up in Springfield, Missouri. And he was filling in, I believe, for David Wilkerson, who for some reason could not take a series of meetings.

And so they invited my friend Winky to take these meetings. This is going back now a good 40 years, I guess. And the last night of his crusade, two girls came forward.

They were students in the school training for the ministry or some aspect of ministry. And one of them began to ask for help. She said, I have a problem.

My problem is, ever since I've been attending this college, every single night I wake up at 2 o'clock in the morning with this incredible fear that grips me. She said, it's just a paralyzing fear. And she said, I just can't sleep.

I can't do anything until I wake up my roommate. We have to put on the light. We have to pray.

And after we pray for a little while, the thing seems to settle down. Then I can go back to sleep. But she said, it's been happening every single night since I came to this school.

And so Winky began to ask her a few questions, a little bit about her life and so on. She began to open up and she said, I was adopted as a child. She said, I've never met my birth mother.

But she said, the lady that adopted me, my mother that I've called my mother all these years, she said, I didn't feel treated me the way she treated the other children, her natural children. And I've always had resentment towards her. And as she began to share a little bit about her life story, Winky stopped her and he said to her, he said, hold on for a moment.

He said, God has just spoken to me. Two o'clock in the morning represents your two mothers. And until you're willing to forgive them, I believe you will continue to have this problem.

And she was adamant. Listen, I don't think I'm prepared to do that. After all, I was an innocent child.

I'm not responsible. How could a mother give me up? How could a mother turn her back on me? How could this happen and so on? After all, the woman that adopted me, it was her fault, it wasn't my fault. All the excuses that we have and we try and legitimize why we feel the way we do and so on and so forth.

And Winky said to her, he said, listen, he said, forgiveness is not a feeling. Forgiveness is bringing yourself into alignment with the will of God and it's an act of choosing to forgive. Feelings may follow.

But he said, you need to forgive your mother. She said, well, I don't even know where my birth mother is. And he said, well, that's not important right now.

He said, just settle that with the Lord. But the woman that adopted you, the woman that you've called your mother all your life, you need to either contact her, write her a letter, whatever, and so on. And he had to leave that meeting.

It was about three weeks later and I was standing outside the Youth with a Mission office in California at the time, Burbank, California. And Winky had been away for about three weeks and he was going through his mail. And he was opening a letter and he began reading the letter to me.

And it said, dear Winky, you may or may not remember me, but I'm the girl with the two mothers. The letter went on to say the hardest thing I ever had to do was contact the woman that adopted me, the woman that I've called my mother all these years, and tell her I am so sorry for the grudge that I've had, for the feelings that I've had towards her. And Winky had told her, don't make her look bad in that sense.

You have got to take your responsibility. If God wants to convict her, He can. But it's your attitude towards her that God is dealing with.

And so she apologized. And as a result of that, somehow, and I can't remember all the details, but her mother had put her in contact with her birth mother. And she had made contact with her birth mother.

And the letter went on to say, I've had contact with my birth mother for the very first time, only to find out she is a born-again Christian now. And she has been looking for me. I guess the woman that adopted her kept the records and so on.

And she said, I'm going to be meeting her for the very first time. And she was thanking Winky again for his counsel and for the prayer that they had and so on and so forth. But what I'm trying to get at is this, when we release, we release God to work on our behalf.

The moment you set somebody free, release and you will be released. The moment she released her two mothers, again, it released God to begin to work on her behalf. And it is something that every single one of us need to do.

It's so easy, isn't it, to go through life with all those hurts and all those wounds and so on. And every time we think of that person again, we build up the case. And we think of them with all sorts of animosity and evil thoughts and so on and so forth.

It's God's nature to forgive. The Bible tells us repeatedly that God is a God of forgiveness. When Moses said, show me your glory.

And the glory of God, of course, is the nature of God, it's the character of God, it's the essence of who God is. God passed by and He said, I am the God who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin. That's God's nature.

I know many people, they've got the idea, at least I think they've got the idea, that the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament were two different gods. At least the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament, those 400 years of silence between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant is when God went through anger management classes. And He came out sort of a little more seeker sensitive, a little more friendly.

Either that or He got born again. But no, the Bible says, I am the Lord and I change not. God has never changed.

He's always been compassionate, merciful and forgiving God. The psalmist put it this way, Psalm 103, who forgives all our iniquities. Not some of them, all of our iniquities.

Who heals all of our diseases. And God wants us, if we are to name Him as our Lord and Masters, our Father, we have to begin to reveal the Father heart of God to others. Just as God showed us kindness and compassion and mercy and grace and forgiveness, we've got to extend that into the lives of others.

And even under the Old Covenant with all of the laws and so on, God taught the children of Israel to forgive. Let me give you a couple of Scriptures here. Exodus 23.

I sort of like this little rule that God gave to the children of Israel. Verse 4, If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey wandering away from you. Now, let me modernize that because chances are nobody in this room has an ox.

If you do, raise your hand. But, you know, the equivalent of an ox today would be a tractor, a pickup truck and a car all rolled into one. The oxen was the way in which they plowed their fields.

The oxen was the animal that they hitched up to the car to take their produce to the market. After all, Israel was an agricultural nation. And the ox was the thing you would ride around on if you needed, you know, transport.

And so really, it's, you know, if you see your enemy's car, imagine if you like, you know, you're looking out the window and your enemy, this is not your friend, this is your enemy. This is the man that has stabbed you in the back. This is the man that has spread all sorts of malicious gossip about you and so on and so forth.

And he has just bought a brand new Corvette. You know, he's having a midlife crisis. But, and he parks it and you happen to live on a hill right opposite your enemy.

And he looks at that thing, you know, sort of takes it out and rubs it, you know, takes his handkerchief out and rubs it. There's a little smudge on it, you know, the way we do when we have a brand new car. And then he disappears into the house and you're looking at that car and you think, wow, I wonder how much that cost him.

And then all of a sudden you think, no, it can't be. But it begins to move very, very slowly. And it's parked on a hill.

Your natural response, if it's your enemy, at least if it's me, is, ha ha, can't wait. Fifty thousand dollars can be wrapped around that telephone pole any minute now. Serves him right.

And I don't have a thing to do with it. I am as innocent as can be. That crazy guy forgot to set the brake.

It's his own fault. Ha ha, oh boy, it's picking up steam. Now that would be the natural thing, isn't it? I mean, that's the way the flesh responds.

What this verse basically says is you need to go and you need to put the brake on. Look what it says. If you meet your enemy's ox wandering away, you shall surely return it to him.

I mean, the natural tendency is you recognize your enemy's ox, you're walking home late at night and the enemy's ox is going the opposite direction and you think, ha ha, can't wait till he wakes up in the morning and he doesn't have a tractor, a pickup truck or a car. And at the rate this thing is going, he'll never find it because it's already six o'clock at night and he's gone into the house for the night and if that thing keeps going at that rate, it serves him right. Then you've got the next one, verse five.

If you see the donkey, the one who hates you, it's a pretty strong language, lying helpless under its load, you shall surely refrain from leaving it to him. You shall release it with him. Again, here's your enemy, the man that hates you.

You come up to Walmart, again modernizing it, there's the donkey and he's bought, you know, a whole stack of stuff and that thing has collapsed under the weight and you stand there thinking, I recognize that donkey, you know. That's the guy that hates me. That's his donkey.

I can spot that thing a mile away. And it won't be long now with that weight on it and the heat of the day before that thing expires and by the time he gets out from doing the rest of his shopping, that thing will be dead, serves him right. Right? The Bible says no.

You are to release it. Lift that load off. Again, you are blessing instead of cursing.

You're extending kindness and forgiveness. There's another one there in the Book of Proverbs. It says if your enemy is hungry, you feed him.

If he's thirsty, you give him something to drink. For in so doing, you will heap burning coals of fire upon his head. Now, there's been a lot of different interpretations as to what that means.

I remember many, many years ago reading about a book on the various sort of cultural phrases in the Bible and the explanation they gave was that in that day and age, the herdsmen would be out looking after their flocks out in the fields and they would light a fire at night time, especially in the winter time. It would keep the animals, the predators at least, away, the lions and bears and whatever they faced. And it would also give you warmth.

And so a fire was important. But many times, the fire would go out and you then were subject to not only the weather, but you were subject to all sorts of wild animals and so on. And what you would do, you would look and maybe a mile away, a half a mile away, there'd be another shepherd or another herdsman.

His fire would be blazing away and you would go over and you would take your part. If you've traveled much around the world, you know that so many countries, they can balance these pots on their head and walk with incredible weight and never miss a beat. But anyway, you would go over there and you would ask them if you could have some burning coals in order to rekindle your fire.

And they would put those burning coals then in that pot. You would put that pot on your head and you would walk back and you would rekindle the fire. Again, it was an act of grace, an act of mercy, an act of blessing.

You were preserving somebody's life. It was life-giving. And that's what God has taught us to do.

That's what we need to do is extend that forgiveness. Now, many of us, again, you say, well, you don't know my situation. You don't know what I've been through and what I'm going through and so on.

You wouldn't believe if I told you my story. Well, I'm sure that there are stories here because of the amount of people and the age of many of you. You can go back many, many years.

But the one that I have appreciated over the years is the story of Corrie Ten Boone. Some of you know Corrie Ten Boone wrote the book *The Hiding Place* about her and her family how during the war they hid Jews in their home and then they were discovered they were put in a concentration camp in Ravensbrück in Germany. And it was only a few weeks in being in that concentration camp where Corrie Ten Boone's father passed away.

He passed away because of all the cruelty and so on. He was an older man and just could not stand the cold weather, I guess. I don't know all the details.

But also her sister died in that concentration camp. And she said we were daily paraded stark naked in front of these guards and so on given very, very little to eat just a crust of bread and a little bit of so-called soup. And we would shiver at night time and have to huddle together and so on.

And she saw again her father die and her sister die. She survived and years later she went back to Germany from Holland where she had been living at the time. And she was holding meetings and they advertised the meetings around town.

And at the end of one of the meetings a gentleman came up and she immediately recognized him as being one of the guards of that prison. In fact, I think she had a couple of stories. One of them was the

commandant, I believe.

And he came up and he said you're so-and-so. He said, I recognize your name. I saw you advertise.

He said, you recognize who I am. And she did recognize him. And he said, I've become a born-again Christian.

And he said, I've asked God for forgiveness for all the things that I did during the war years there, those terrible things that I don't take any pride in whatsoever. I'm ashamed of. But he said, I've come to ask a fellow Christian for forgiveness.

He said, I wanted to find somebody that was in that camp and ask them if they would forgive me. And he put out his hand and she said, it seemed like eternity. Because she said when he put out his hand, she said, he was asking for forgiveness and all I could think of was my father's death and my sister's death at the hands of this man.

And she said, but I knew I had to forgive. And she reached out and she grabbed him by the hand and she said, in that moment, she said, it felt like electricity just going through my body. And she said, the love of God was shed abroad by the Holy Ghost.

And she said, I was able to reach out and extend the love of God towards that man. Now I'm sure that most of us don't have stories quite as horrific as that. Maybe some of you do.

But it shows you that we can do it with the grace of God. That same grace that was extended to you and I, we have to give it to somebody else. Matthew chapter 18, we have the story of Peter coming to Jesus.

I'm sure he was wanting a compliment. He said, how often, Lord, shall I forgive my brother? Up to seven times. I think Peter was expecting a pat on the back where Jesus said, boy, Peter, you're doing so well.

I'm proud of you. You're one of my better disciples. Seven times? Wow.

And Jesus sort of deflated him a little bit and said, no, Peter, not seven times but 70 times seven. I think that possibly set Peter back on his heels a little bit. Now obviously, Jesus was not saying there is a numeric number, you know, keep a record.

Seven, seven is a 49, so 489 times and the next one, boy, I can't wait, you know, get even. What Jesus was teaching is that once you do something in a repetitive manner over and over and over again, you get in the habit of doing it. It becomes part of your makeup.

It becomes part of your nature like anything that we repeat so many times. In other words, we need to live in a state of forgiveness. Constant forgiveness.

And Jesus went on to tell this amazing story of a man who began to settle debts and it says in verse 24, and there was brought to him one that brought, sorry, there was brought to him one who owed him 10,000 talents. A talent is about 75 pounds depending on who you look up. Some people say 60 pounds.

We don't know if it was silver or gold but if it was gold, it comes into the billions of dollars at least in today's money. That's quite a debt, isn't it? I mean, when you know you, when your credit card's maxed out to one billion or two billion or three billion, I'm sure nobody's got one like that here apart from the White House but that's quite a debt. In other words, what Jesus was trying to say is there is no possible way for man to

repay that sort of a debt.

And so the master calls his slave and the slave comes in and he says, the slave therefore, verse 26, was unable to pay him, fell down, prostrated himself before him saying, have patience with me and I will repay you everything. And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him his debt. Now, keep in mind that according to verse 25, he was going to be sold along with his wife and children, all that he had and at least the master was going to try and get back something.

And I imagine this man went through months and months if not years and years wondering when that day was going to come. When he was going to be called in to the king's office, the master's office and that day of reckoning was going to come because he knew there was no possible way I could pay off that debt. And he knew that I'm going to lose my family, I'm going to lose my home, I'm going to have my wife sold into, you know, the highest bidder, my two teenage boys, whatever, going to be sold and, you know, just dreading that day.

And so he gets called in and sure enough, the day arrives and he begs for mercy. And his slave, or his master rather, it says, felt compassion, released him and forgave him the debt. But that slave, verse 28, went out and found a fellow slave who owed him a hundred denarii.

A denarii was a day's wages, so a hundred days, you know, basically a quarter of a year, a third of a year. Seized him, began to choke him, saying, pay back what you owe. The fellow slave fell down, began to entreat him, saying, have patience with me and I will repay you.

And he was unwilling, however, but went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what he owed. And when the fellow slave saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved. They came and reported to their lord all that had happened.

Then calling him or summoning him, his lord said to him, you wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you entreated me. Should you not also have mercy on your fellow slave as I had mercy on you? Now, this is a theological nightmare for those of you who enjoy studying theology because this man was forgiven, totally. He was released from his debt, millions of dollars.

It was all taken out of the ledger, if you like. He went out totally free. My chains fell off, my heart is free, so to speak.

But then, because he was not willing to forgive, his master reinstated his debt. You say, but God wouldn't do that. God can't do that.

I mean, my sin is in the sea of God's forgetfulness. You know, my sins and my iniquities, I'll remember no more. And so, this is where it becomes a theological quandary.

How do we explain this? We say, well, it's just a story. It's a parable, if you like. And after all, parables, you can't take every little jot and tittle and make it... You know, the general idea is you are to forgive.

That's really what the message is all about. Don't sort of micromanage this, so to speak. And I would agree with you, except Jesus added the last verse.

Verse 35. So shall my heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart. That's a frightening verse.

And I'm not here to argue against it. I can't argue against it. It's the Word of God.

Jesus made the statement, this is what my Father does. If you will not forgive, I will take all of your indebtedness and I will reinstate it. I'm not sure I want that.

You see, that's why it's so important, isn't it, to forgive. Because God Himself says, if you don't, I won't forgive you. Forgive us our debts according to how we forgive one another.

Let me share something with you. This is something that a number of years ago now, in my own devotional time, I felt the Lord quicken to me. Matthew chapter 5, and verse 23.

If therefore you're presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember your brother has something against you, leave your offering before the altar. Go your way. May first be reconciled to your brother.

And then come and present your offering. Now, let me say this. This is prior to the cross, and the only way you could be forgiven in the Old Covenant, or under the Old Covenant, was to bring a sacrifice.

And that sacrifice died in your place. It had to be a perfect sacrifice, a blameless, spotless sacrifice. And here you are, you are lining up, you know that you're a sinner, you need the forgiveness of God, and you have got your sacrifice.

And you remember, maybe you're just three turns away, and the priest there is slitting the throat of somebody else's sacrifice, and you think, you know, just a couple of minutes from now, and they're going to take my sacrifice, and I'm going to be free. And you remember, I have ought against my brother, or my brother has ought against me. Things are not right between another brother or sister.

And the Bible says, first of all, go and be reconciled to your brother. And then return and present your offering because God is saying, I cannot forgive you if you do not have a spirit of forgiveness towards somebody else. You're asking me for forgiveness, but you're not prepared to extend forgiveness to somebody else.

So first of all, you go be reconciled to your brother, and then come, then I'll accept your offering. Now keep that thought in mind, and turn with me to the book of Ephesians, Ephesians chapter 5, and verse 1, And therefore be imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. He gave Himself as a sacrifice.

Jesus Christ became the Lamb of God. The Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. The perfect sacrifice.

And He is presenting His sacrifice to the Father. But let's look at the day before or the hours before all the things that were done to the Lord Jesus Christ. Number one, He was stripped naked.

They put a purple robe on Him at one stage. They blindfolded Him, prophesied, you know, if you're so great, tell us who did that, and so on. They mocked Him.

They scourged Him. They put a crown of thorns on His head. The Bible says that they were beating upon it.

You know, it wasn't a nice little crown that was just delicately perched on His head. No, they were beating upon it. That thing was tearing into His skin.

It says they ripped out His beard, His visage, His image was marred more than all the sons of men. One of the things that... What's His name? Well, all of a sudden His name's gone, but the man that did the passion, Mel Gibson, one of the things He did not have in that movie was the fact that they plucked out His beard. At least I don't recall it.

Anyway, Jesus was literally a bloody mess. I mean, could you imagine having your beard literally just yanked out, and then that crown of thorns, then being stripped naked, led through the streets, then crucified, and hearing the crowd jeering and sneering and crying out away with Him, crucifying, we will not have this man rule over us, and so on. Keep in mind, He was the man Christ Jesus.

When I say the man Christ Jesus, He was Son of God and Son of Man. And He was tempted in all points, like as you and I. In other words, He can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. He had feelings.

He was despised and rejected of men. And here He was in His most vulnerable state. I believe that it was the enemy's, you know, attack against Him.

After all, there were numerous times in the life of Jesus when the enemy tried to come and deter Him from what He had come to do. Tried to push Him over the cliff at one time. Remember, tried to make Him king at another time.

Tried to make Him cast Himself down from the top of the temple and turn the stones into bread and all of those things. But I think this was the time when He was the most vulnerable. After all, the reason He said there in the garden just a few hours before, if you're willing, let this cup pass from Me.

He knew that He had to die. And He was saying, Lord, if there's some other way, because He was sweating great drops of blood. I think it was Brother Andrew that wrote the book, well, it was called God Smuggler.

And his interpretation of Jesus saying, if you are willing, Lord, let this cup pass, was not Jesus in His humanity trying to get out of the suffering. It was Jesus saying, Lord, I don't understand. If I die now, I'll miss the cross.

In other words, the pain, the agony. But Lord, if you're willing, you know, nevertheless, not Your will. In other words, if there can be some form of redemption take place here in the garden prior to the cross, I don't understand it, but I'm willing.

But here He was. Anyway, let's go back to Jesus on the cross. And all of these abuses are being hurled at Him.

And He is presenting His gift at the altar. And His brothers have something against Him. If Jesus Christ had never uttered those words, Father, forgive them.

For they know not what they do. The Father would have never been able to accept that spotless sacrifice. That's how vital it was.

That Jesus be reconciled to His brothers. Stephen did the same thing. Can you imagine the entire life of the Lord Jesus Christ, that spotless Lamb of God, where the Father said, Son, I cannot.

Because you refused in that moment of great weakness. You held bitterness. You held anger, resentment.

You would not release those people. Yes, they beat you. Yes, they mocked you.

Yes, they scourged you. Yes, they, you know. And Jesus said, Father, forgive them.

And as a result of that, thank God you and I can be forgiven. Let me read you a statement that gave me a lot of problems initially when I read it, and then I'll close. This is by Oswald Chambers.

Most of you, I'm sure, have read that wonderful devotional book, possibly the best-selling devotional book in the world, My Utmost for His Highest. And this is a statement that he makes. He says, The forgiveness of a child of God is not based on the grounds of the atonement of our Lord.

Let me say that again. This is what caused me to stumble. The forgiveness of a child of God is not based on the ground of the atonement of our Lord, but on the ground that the child of God shows the same forgiveness to His fellows that God His Father has shown Him.

Think about that. Now, we need to understand it's the forgiveness of a child of God, not a sinner. In other words, once we have been forgiven, the only way we can be forgiven over and over again is if we forgive over and over again.

Let me read you another statement. Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, in his introduction to the book on the Sermon on the Mount, I say to any man who is imagining fondly that his sins are forgiven by Christ, though he does not forgive anyone else, beware my friend, lest you wake up in eternity and find him saying to you, I never knew you. I'll close with one final illustration.

My wife and I were in London possibly 10, 12 years ago now, ministering in a city of Horsham, which is south of London, a large church there. I was speaking at a conference and I mentioned something about forgiveness and the need to forgive. And a lady came up to me at the beginning of the next session.

The pastor brought her up, one of the pastors, and he said, this lady would like to meet you. I shook her by the hand and he said, this is so-and-so. And she said, I just wanted to meet you and thank you for the message this morning.

Afterwards he said, let me give you a little bit more detail. Or he said, I'll tell you later sort of the back story. He said, this is a lady that came to our Bible school and he said, for some reason, you know, we have a screening process and we still don't know how she got through the screening process.

Number one, she had a lot of physical problems. She had arthritis that was crippling her body. She'd had her children taken away from her for some reason.

I can't remember the details now. Age-wise, she was older than most of the students and there was a whole litany of things that they said, you know, she normally would not qualify, but nevertheless, she ended up being one of our students. And the pastor said to me, he said, at the end of the message this morning, she came up to me and she said, you know, I've got bitterness towards my mother.

And I don't remember all the details now, but he said, well, you need to contact your mother. And as a result of that, she went home and she wrote a letter to her mother asking her mother for forgiveness. And she said within an hour's time, the arthritis had totally gone out of her body.

Her hands straightened out again. She was free from any pain and so on. And that's why she wanted to say thank you to me and that was the back story he told me afterwards.

But it's amazing, isn't it? You know, we're fearfully and wonderfully made and we're body, soul and spirit. And many times what happens in the natural can affect us spiritually and vice versa and so on. And here was this woman with all of that bitterness, you know, inside her that was eating her up.

And the moment she released, she was released. And I don't know you tonight. I just know this, that we're all capable of holding resentment, holding bitterness, anger, wrath, clamor, as the Bible says.

And the Bible says we are to be tenderhearted, forgiving. Before I ask Pastor to come up, let's just bow our heads for a moment. I want you to, just where you are, whatever name comes to mind, whatever situation comes to mind, I want you just to release that person.

As you're doing that, let me give you just one final illustration. Imagine a helium balloon. And on that helium balloon, you know, it's written your birthday or happy anniversary or whatever.

And as long as you're holding it, you have control over it. But the moment you let go, all of a sudden that thing floats away and you cannot retrieve it again. That's what forgiveness is.

It's releasing that person, never to retrieve that thing again, never to put it back in the file cabinet and use it over and over. Husbands and wives do that so many times. You know, we have a file cabinet full of offenses and every time we get into an argument, you know, we reach into the file cabinet and we use all the same old arguments.

Well, you did this to me and you did that to me and we'll remember when you did this. No, forgiveness is releasing. Never to go back to that thing when it comes to mind, reminding yourself and reminding the enemy it's under the blood.

That person has been forgiven just as God forgave me. I didn't deserve it. The Bible says if I should mark an equity, if God says, who would stand? Not one of us here can merit our salvation.

But just release that person. Let him go. Let her go.

Let that situation go. Make tonight a night where you can look back and say it was that particular night that I released that person and by the grace of God, I'm never going to revisit that pain, never going to revisit that thing again. I'm not going to mull it over in my mind.

I'm not going to share it with anybody else. I'm not going to talk about it to my spouse. It's done.

It's over. It's forgiven. Father, I thank You tonight.

Thank You, Lord, for that amazing grace. Lord, even while we're yet sinners, rebels against You, Lord, Your extended forgiveness washed us in Your blood, brought us into Your family, delivered us from the kingdom of darkness, brought us into the kingdom of Your dear Son. And Father, we ask tonight that Lord, we would extend that same love and compassion and mercy towards those that have wronged us.

We pray right now, Lord, for that one that's struggling. That one that is remembering all the things. That Lord, You would let the love of God be shed abroad through that person's life towards that other person.

Again, while your heads are bowed, let me just say this. If it's something that the other person does not know about, in other words, if it's a feeling you've had, you've never shared it with a person, it's just a personal thing, don't go to that person. If it's something that they do know about, you need to contact them

and say, listen, forgive me for the part I played.

I'm asking you for forgiveness. Again, you need to go and be reconciled to your brother. It's humbling, but it's necessary.

Not to accuse them of their portion, but to say, listen, I was wrong. My attitude towards you has been wrong. You know that.

I haven't been talking to you. In fact, we're going to another church now because of this, but I'm here to ask your forgiveness. Father, give us that grace, we pray.

In Jesus' name, amen.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/26/SID26021.mp3>

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/9K7vdfLIZAI.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-ravenhill/the-necessity-of-forgiving-one-another/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**