

Forgiven to Forgive

by K.P. Yohannan

The sermon emphasizes the necessity of forgiveness for spiritual freedom and personal peace, illustrating its importance through biblical teachings and real-life stories.

Duration: 22:52

Scripture: Matthew 6:14-15, Matthew 18:21-22, Mark 11:25, Luke 6:37, Romans 12:19-21, Ephesians 4:31-32, Colossians 3:13

Topics: "Forgiveness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of forgiveness and its impact on our lives. He uses a courtroom scenario to illustrate the concept of forgiveness, where a thief is sentenced to prison but the victim is also sent to jail. The preacher emphasizes that forgiveness is not a one-time experience but a continual act. He explains that when we hold onto anger, resentment, and bitterness, we create a prison for ourselves. The sermon concludes with a reference to a book called 'The Sunflower,' which tells the story of a Jewish writer's experience in a concentration camp and explores the theme of forgiveness.

Transcript

What is the subject today? Forgiven to forgive. It's very simple, isn't it? Forgiven to forgive. One thing we find we have to forgive others and do it continually.

It is not a one-time experience. Let me see if I can make a couple of illustrations. Would you please come up? Okay, you see these two gentlemen? Now imagine in your mind, only imagine, okay? I only ask you to imagine in your mind that he stole one lakh rupee from him, okay? He stole one lakh rupee from him.

And what is the evidence? All the notes were marked and then he saw him stealing it and now the case is filed in the court. And the judge looks at all the evidence and says, he stole one lakh rupees, right? He stole, right? Okay, he stole one lakh rupees. He is the one who stole.

And there is a witness. Then he says, your honour, not only me but my friend, we both are looking through the window and we saw him stealing that money. You are two witnesses.

All right. You are the thief. So the judge says, all right.

The judgment is now being passed. So what is the judgment? The judgment is, you will go to prison for ten years. And the lawyer says, what? Your honour, he is the charge of this.

He is the thief. I know. Shut up.

You go to prison for ten years. That's not fair. Who told you that is fair? This is only fair.

This is the right thing to do. Okay, you can go and sit down. Now you say, Metropolitan, why are you doing something that makes no sense? The man who stole should go to prison, right? Yes.

And now the judge of all says, the man who lost his money, the victim, he must go to jail. Our logic will not agree with it. We don't like it.

See, brothers and sisters, God's economy is this. When you don't forgive, when you don't let go, when you harbour anger, memory, resentment and bitterness, basically the long and hard and the time and the pain and the years it takes, you are actually creating a prison of your own. Brick by brick, you are making a fortress.

And then who is inside the fortress? Who is inside the jail? And it's you. And so, the one who did not forgive, the Bible says, is the one who is in trouble. He did this to me, he stole this from me, but I forgive, I let go.

I did not hold this against that person, so I am free. If I don't, I'm in prison. That is the spiritual reality of life.

Simon Isenthal, a famous Jewish writer, wrote a remarkable short story in 1796. And the book was entitled The Sunflower. It's a small novel.

It was an autobiographical account of his own experience in the concentration camp, 30 years prior to writing this book. Now, concentration camp in Germany, you may not understand it, this was a time of Hitler. He was one of the worst rulers in history.

He hated Jews and he killed off mercilessly over 6 million of these innocent people, old people, babies, pregnant women, and he would just put them all in a building and put poisonous gas and then just kill them. This is a kind of cruel person and have soldiers go around and shoot all the Jewish people. And Simon Isenthal was a Jew and he was in one of these German concentration camp.

And one day, a nurse came to him, said, kill, kill, hurry, hurry, please come and grab him by the hand, rushing him to a building. And he said, well, what do you want? And she said, there's a man dying and he's looking for a Jew. So Simon went with her and saw this healthy young man in a pool of blood, hardly alive, able to whisper, and that also with great difficulty.

And he said, are you Jew? He said, I am. With a life in his hand, he reached out and grabbed Simon Isenthal's hand and said, I am one of those soldiers who was assigned to go to that particular village and set that house on fire because that's Jewish house. And as the house went up in flame, all the little people, old people, little babies, they all ran out of the house and I took my machine gun and killed all of them.

And he said, I cannot forget that. I'm dying and I need forgiveness. Only a Jew can forgive me.

And Simon Isenthal says, he jerked his hand and walked out with hate. But he says the sad thing about the whole thing is, he went on to ask a lot of people, religious people, non-religious people, psychologists, different people with different professions, narrating the whole story of this incident. And the author says, what makes me sad, I am living in pain for 30 years for my not forgiving, not being kind.

But what makes it worse, he says, most all the people I talked to, majority of them said, ah, you did the right thing. I would do the same thing. You should have walked away.

You shouldn't even touch a German. He must go straight to hell. That's a real story.

And even the kindness we have done, good things we have done, they misunderstand. And they misinterpret. And there's no way, no way, now that can underline, no way you are going to live the rest of your life without somebody misunderstanding you, somebody not understanding you, somebody who interprets your intentions, which is the worst.

You are trying to be so aggressive to do God's work and this and that, and you are moving and doing everything, and all of a sudden, in your heart, you mean well. You have no malice, you have no intentions to hurt anyone. But you are seeing as he is pushing too much.

He is too aggressive. He is trying to get something for himself. And all of a sudden, what do you do? You have no way to defend yourself.

So, what is the only one thing you can do, that is what God told us. He wants us to live free and in peace. And how do you do that? And the scripture says in Psalm 119 verse 165, Great peace have they who love your law and nothing can make them stumble.

It says, so much peace is the inheritance of those who love your word, your promises, and nothing can hurt them. And the teaching on forgiveness, I have written several books on it, and it is going to take maybe two days to talk through this fully, but this is what we need to keep in mind. Our mind is one of the greatest mysteries and wonders of the world.

Did you know that our mind, in a second, can actually take in 800 bytes, the folds of our brain. And if somebody lives for 75 years, all the information, like a computer, is stored in there. It is never erased.

And as a matter of fact, if I will do an exercise with you. Alright, close your eyes. Think about when you were three years old.

Anything you can remember? Four years old? Five years old? You remember your first teacher? You remember the kind of food you liked the most when you were growing up? Alright, open your eyes. Now, that means I can close my eyes, within a second I can recall things that happened as early as when I was three years old. Really.

And it is so with you, that it happened to you eight years old, ten years old. So, our mind, so what happens with all the bad things that happen to us? We don't forget anything. Forgiveness is not forgetting things, that's what it is.

But, when Bible talks about forgiveness that we have received, a classic passage which we are not able to read, Zacchaeus, you saw that. Zacchaeus was a very little man, and very little man was he, and he could not see Jesus. You expect me to sing, right? The Kerala people don't like me to do that.

But, Jesus' response to Zacchaeus was this, salvation is yours. And, he was forgiven completely, before he would even ask. Jesus knew it all.

And, the only thing Zacchaeus needed to do, I did wrong, I let it go. Why? There was something greater he saw, that was Christ. He wanted Christ in his home, that no amount of riches or things of the world

would compensate for that.

He gave up the toys, the plastic toys for the real thing. There are plastic toys, it moves around, but not like a real car. And, he was willing to do that.

He was willing to give up something, because God is the author of forgiveness. He is only forgiveness, all forgiveness. John 3, 16, even while we were sinners, lost, undone, on the way to hell, God sent his son to forgive us.

Our sins are forgiven. You say, my sins are forgiven so far. No.

Baba, from the day you were born, from the time you were born, until the minute, the last second you die, God knows everything about you. And, your entire sins, already forgiven. When Jesus died on the cross, you are forgiven completely.

Even if you are going to go and kill someone, don't do that. But, all you need to do is acknowledge, and your forgiveness is yours. That's what the Bible says.

So, we are forgiven to forgive. A man, in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 18, you can study that another time. Jesus said, to make this thing clear, the man was forgiven a lot of money.

It is not a small amount, crores. Even if he lived 3,000 years, he cannot pay back his debt. It was so huge.

The debt he owed was bigger money than the great Herod had in his treasury for the whole year. And, he owed all this money. And, he said, Master, I don't know what to do.

And, the Master said, go free. And, he couldn't believe it. And, then he goes and finds some fellow who owes him 17 cents, a few rupees rather.

And, he grabs him by the throat and says, where is my money? The Roman law is that, if somebody owes you money, they don't pay you. You grab him by the throat until blood starts coming out of his nose. But, so this man who just got 30, 40 crores or more forgiven, he comes to meet a man who got a few rupees he owes him.

And, then put him in prison. Debtor's prison is known forever. He never comes out.

He is condemned forever. And, then his Master hears about it. You know the story? Yes.

And, then he sends a messenger to call him back. And, call him back and said, all your debts I had cancelled, now I un-cancel. You now owe me everything.

And, he goes to prison. And, then if you open a Bible, just for one second, Matthew's Gospel, chapter 18, verse 34. In anger, his Master turned him over to the jailers to be tormented until he should pay back all he owed, which he will never do.

This is how, verse 35, this is how my Heavenly Father will treat each of you, unless you forgive your brother from your heart. Do you take that serious? Do I take it serious? That's a question. Well, this is the end of our teaching, I told you.

But, how do I forgive others? One, I'm a worse sinner than the one who did all that to me, or took from me. He's better than me. Why I should be angry? I am forgiven of all things from going to hell.

For me to forgive everything that happens on earth, which are going to be burned up, it's nothing much. And, all that I am now belongs to Christ. And, Jesus died to forgive.

And, he forgives others now through me. And, I must be his. And then, I am very selfish also.

That is, science has proven, 85% of physical illness actually is attributed by psychosomatic illness. That is, unforgiveness, bitterness, wrong attitude, tension, worry, and all that. And, if you think that I don't have any of those problems, that is not true.

But, I am telling you, learn to forgive others. And, simply do that. And, the way to do that, it is an open life, not excusing.

Oh, take care, everybody is doing it. No. It is basically, you know, I have asked my son and daughter how many times forgiveness.

I don't think they were expecting that from me, maybe. But, I know I would ask forgiveness. When somebody tells me, I specifically tell them, yes, I forgive you.

And, that way, we learn what it means to become one. And, others' peace becomes our peace. And, our sorrows, they share and become lighter.

And, more than anything else, the nature of Christ is, I don't condemn you either. Go in peace. And, that's what he does for all of us.

So, in the name of the Holy Trinity, as someone who speaks on his behalf, I say to you all, my brothers and sisters, if you will say, even that will take a second, Lord, forgive me. You know all about me. I declare to you, your sins are forgiven.

And, you are made whole. And, this is a new day, a new beginning for you.

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