

Unity Through Forgiveness

by Les Wheeldon

Les Wheeldon's sermon emphasizes the necessity of forgiveness for achieving unity within the Church through the Holy Spirit.

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Topics: "Forgiveness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that the Church is born from God's original plan and love for humanity. The love of God is not based on what he sees in the present, but on the fact that he has loved us since the beginning of time. The preacher highlights that God's love is demonstrated through his giving, such as giving his only begotten Son and the Holy Spirit. The sermon also emphasizes the importance of unity within the Church, as God's will is to make believers one with Christ and with each other.

Transcript

I'm again looking at something of the Church. As I said yesterday, the Church is born out of an original plan of God, when he so loved us, before the foundation of the world. The fact that God loves us today is all based, not on what he sees today, but on the fact that he loved us from the beginning of the world.

He loved you. And that continues, and has continued, and will continue. God loves, because he loved.

And he has given, therefore he gives. And he so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. He so loved the world that he gave the Holy Spirit.

God is a giver, because he so loved. Now, here in this chapter 1 again, let's just move down a little bit. And there we'll find in this verse 10, this is the will of God, in his love.

This is love working. Verse 10, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times in which we are living, or at least in the forecourts of it, yet to be fully manifest, but in the forecourts we are already in the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ. Both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him.

So God's will is to make you one with heaven. Did you notice that? It's written there in that verse that he might gather together in one all things in Christ. Things in heaven and on earth.

So earth, one with heaven, in Christ. It's wonderful isn't it? Very simple. And that's God's will.

He's making you one. One with Christ. One with each other.

Now, if you go over into chapter 4 for a moment, it tells you there that I therefore the prisoner of the Lord. He's talked about many things by this stage, and how God has broken down the middle barrier to make one, and all kinds of things he already said. But now in chapter 4 he said, I therefore the prisoner of the Lord beseech you that you walk worthy of the calling wherewith you are called, with all lowliness and meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is one body, put another way, there's only one church. One spirit, even as you are called in, one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all.

And in that list you have this mixture of things which we think of as divided with things which we know cannot be divided. For example, people think of one church. If I said to you the church is indivisible.

Utterly indivisible. You'd say that, come on, come off it, you're joking. You know what? You know what? There are many churches even in Latin.

You know that churches divide and all kinds of things. But here he says there is only one. There cannot be one.

Why? Because there's only one spirit. If there could be two churches there would be two spirits. That doesn't mean to say that it is wrong for there to be two churches in a town.

I've no doubt that God, through many different reasons, there are two, three, four churches in a town. Sadly that's the case. But there is still only one church in that town.

You are part of it. You are not the only part of it. But you are part of it.

That is the truth. And you must never think you are the whole sum of the church in this town. But we are, there is one church.

There is only one. There can only be one. And the church is indivisible.

Now we would have to qualify that, sadly, by explaining how believers disagree for a while. And we can find evidence of that in scripture. But that's really what we're coming to tonight.

There's one spirit, one hope of your calling, one lord. You can't have two lords. You can't have two heads.

There's only one head. One lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. All right.

Now, how are we made one? Well let's look into 1 Corinthians chapter 12 for a moment. Because you see, you are to be made one. You cannot be one with anybody unless you are willing to lose something.

Something of your independence. Something of your stubbornness. I say yours, I didn't say mine.

You know, it's possible to be one with somebody who is very stubborn. I've got a lot of patience on this. You know, if I was very stubborn and you were very meek, we could be one.

Because you were very kind. I remember once David Pawson was asked, I think his wife was asked, how they had such a good marriage. And his wife said, we're both in love with the same man.

And of course a lot of people thought it meant Jesus Christ. But she didn't. She meant him.

She said, we're in love, we're both in love with the same man. He loves himself and I love him. Therefore our marriage is very sweet.

You see, it's possible for a home to be in such things because they're both in love with the same man. Or the same woman, I suppose you could say. But the thing is that she loved him and he loved himself.

He was very reviewed by that. He said, I hope it's not true today. Here in chapter 12 of 1 Corinthians, here's verse 13.

Well, let's read verse 12. For us the body is one. It's one.

And has many members and all the members of that one body been made of one body? So also is Christ. You can't divide Christ. He asks in this very same book, he says, is Christ divided? No.

For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body. That's it. Absolute.

The stitch is so absolute. By one spirit are we all baptized into one body. Whether we be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, we've all been made to drink into one spirit.

Now there's diversity in the body. It tells us that in this same chapter. But we are one body and we are made one body by one baptism in the Holy Spirit.

All right, let's turn back into Matthew chapter 18 where we were last night. Matthew chapter 18. Now, I want you to note what we just read very carefully and keep it very strongly in your mind.

Because the baptism in the Spirit is not only an adding to you, it's a taking away from you. And if it were only adding to you, you would bring all your problems in. That's why it can't be.

When you are given the Holy Spirit, your independence is taken away. That means your nationalism is taken away. All right.

No more Scottish. No more English. They were telling me lots of jokes about English in this class.

But there's none of that anyways finished. Gone. I'm talking about every graph of nationalism must be taken away.

Now I'm not saying that we're instantly free from all the heritage of everything. You can go into American churches, Pentecostal churches, all kinds of churches, and there you will find the American flag. You can go to some international rallies and you'll find there a group from Switzerland carrying the Swiss flag.

In fact, they're quite bold about their flag. They love the Swiss flag. And certain nations, I mean, the English aren't as proud of their nation.

In fact, they're quite apologetic. Often, you know, I'm British, you know, all this and all everything. But whatever the thing is, you know, but the truth is that nationalism is lost and must be lost.

It must be. We have to lose in order to gain. I must lose it.

Nationalism must be one of the worst forms of pride because it's caused so much bloodshed. People fight and kill for their nation. Fighting and killing for truth, I'm not saying I judge it as right or wrong.

I believe God has put police and armies in the earth to keep order. That's God's way. He said that in his Bible.

He beareth not the sword in vain to punish evildoers. But there is a war that is started for nationalist purposes. Pride of nation.

And I suppose it's been one of the causes of more death than any other thing. Pride of nation. Pride of man fighting for one's nation.

And we should be grieving over it. But we are made one by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Now that is speaking to me of what the baptism in the Spirit is really about.

If I am going to be made one with God's people, with Christ and his people by the baptism of the Spirit, that means that in the baptism in the Spirit something is going to be changed about my life that makes me so difficult to live with. And certainly makes it incredibly easy to live Isn't that amazing? God's people are having a miracle taking place all the time. It's their unity.

The people of God have a miracle. It's their unity. You may say well there are all kinds of things happening here.

No I know. If I had time I would show you that Jesus said there would be troubles throughout the churches in the age of the church. He said that.

He said that throughout the church age there would be reason, there would be taste, there would be difficulties and problems. And he prophesied that there would be all kinds of difficulties. But he said what he was saying is that throughout all the difficulties don't lose sight.

Don't ever lose your understanding that there is a purity. Don't forget holiness because there's sin. Don't forget unity because there's disunity somewhere.

Don't let go of the hope of your calling because someone somewhere is declaring something that's against all that Christ died for. Remember Christ died to make us one. He died to change my life so that I might be one with you.

And I want to be one with you because I understand it. I want the unity of the spirit. It's not something I can create.

It is, as we said yesterday, it is because it was in the beginning. Now in this passage of chapter 18 and 19, we've got a long passage talking about unity, there's church, all kinds of things. In chapter 19, just go there for a moment, it says this, verse 6, they are no more two but one.

So you're talking of marriage. It's true also of marriage. What we're talking of is not only true in terms of the church, it is also true in terms of marriage.

If you want a marriage which is full of harmony, you will marry someone full of the Holy Ghost like yourself. That's the basis of oneness, baptised into one spirit. Take somebody you want to marry to a meeting and get them to raise their hand in a meeting to say look they're a believer now, I can marry them can't I? Persuade them and they can't believe because they want to marry you.

Oh it's wonderful but remember Christ said that it's by one spirit are we all baptised into one body. And marriage the unity of marriage is on the basis of a unity of one spirit. If you want a home that is perfectly at one, that's the way.

And I praise God for the wonder of it. It's a great gift. It's not man-made.

It's a great great gift. I'm not saying there are no happy marriages without the baptism in the spirit. I'm not saying that.

As I said it's possible for two people to be in love with the same person. It's not possible for people to have genuine love and harmony all kinds of things. But true unity, deeper than anything we can think, the guarantee of it is unity in the spirit.

Two made one. But then let's read it a bit more here because it says in verse five, this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife and they too shall be one flesh. And this is true also of the church.

You leave, you cleave and you are one. What you do not leave behind troubles what you come into. In other words it's an incomplete conversion.

Marriage is therefore like a conversion. You have to be absolutely converted from being single to being married. You have to renounce single ways and be joined in another.

But that's marriage. But we're talking now about something greater than marriage which is the church. It is that we leave behind our independence, our sinful ways and everything about us that was jarring and selfish.

Everything that makes things so unhappy. We leave it behind. They are lost from us and we are made one with each other.

One. And that's the baptism in the spirit. So when you offer your life up to Jesus and say baptise me with the Holy Spirit, you know you are to seek God for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

You are to. And you are not to believe it, simply believe it and say well I assume therefore it's happening. You are to pray and seek God till you know you are baptised with the Holy Spirit.

You will know. You don't know, I can't assure you how you will know, but the proof of it is a witness in your heart, an inward knowledge, persuasion that he has come. The Holy Spirit comes and you are a different person, you are made new.

Now let's go back into chapter 18 for a moment. And it tells us there about various things, it tells us there about procedures. You know that here, by the way, just to, I don't want to comment on this procedure when there's a problem between two brothers, but there's one thing I will never allow, I cannot guarantee that it will never happen, but I would never allow, say in a church meeting or a business meeting as they're called some places and various things, I would never allow anybody to criticise another person in a church

meeting.

It is totally forbidden. You are never allowed to do it. There is never to be public criticism of another.

The moment you've done it, you are sinning against Christ. If you have a problem with another brother, you are to take it to them alone. That's the only place you do it, and speak to them.

You certainly never do it to anybody else first, you do it with them. It's only then when they will not hear you, you take another one, and then when they will not hear that, you take it to the church eventually, and it's taken publicly. But criticism of another person is totally forbidden.

You dare not speak against anybody. And sometimes when I hear someone bring up a subject, and they explain this subject, and I think, well why my brother could you not have spoken to me privately? Not always possible, because it's not always clear-cut. But I sometimes hear someone speak a little bit constrainingly or a bit unhappily, and I think, why did you not speak, why do you trouble other people with your own grumpiness, or your own discomforts, your own doubts and fears, why? Why not meet me privately? And there are ways that the Lord has said for the church to proceed.

And it is doubtless true that there is a place to meet people. If you've got something negative in your heart Jesus says, go and meet them, talk to them, have it clear. All right, but that's there.

And then we come to this verse 19, I say to you that if two of you should realize as touching anything that lies, you know these words are beautiful, if two of you can be one, if two of you can be one, tremendous isn't it? If two can be one, if a husband and a wife can be one in Christ, not just one together, but one in Christ, then their prayers will be powerful. If they can lose their individuality to the point where they are lost in another, they will know power in prayer. It's tremendous.

A promise, and it's real. So, there's the promise. But you see, when we look at this, there are bases of unity.

One of them is, as we've said, the Holy Spirit's coming. But let's look here at a little dimension which is even more basic than the Holy Spirit's coming. And yet it's also in preparation for his coming.

It's here in verse 21. Then came Peter to him and said, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me? And I forgave him. Seven times? You know, I think Peter thought, well that's good, seven times, seven times.

You know, there are books handed down. If you were a student, you could go into the libraries. You know, I've talked about it yesterday, going into libraries.

It sounded exciting, didn't it, to me? I used to like libraries. And you could go into the old, you know, I've never been there, but I assume there's a great big library in Cairo, and a big library in Jerusalem. I've never been there.

You go in there, and you say, I want to see an old man come down from Mexico with me. Then he said, I know he's very great. And he'll bring out all the scribes' commentaries that were being written around the time of Jesus.

And you won't be able to understand the word, because it's all written old Greek and all kinds of things, terrible things. But anyway, you'll then look at them, and this is what you would find in the commentaries.

He would say this.

This is quite common in the case. He said this. The scribe used to say, if someone sins against you, forgive them the first time.

If they sin against you again, forgive them. The third time, I've nothing to do with them. Three times.

Third time, the top. So when Jesus said, how often should I forgive my brother? Seven times. I think he was thinking, Jesus would say, well, darn, he was good man, that's tremendous.

Jesus said, not until seven times, but seventy times seven. Four hundred and ninety. Four hundred and ninety times.

So here's the basis of unity is forgiveness. It's also the basis that you, for you to receive the Holy Spirit is forgiveness. For you to have a forgiving heart and to receive forgiveness for all your sin.

To have a right estimation of your own life and all the wrongs done against you. This is the basis for you to receive the Holy Spirit. And so he told them a certain story.

Let's just look at a little moment of this story. Verse 23. The kingdom of heaven is likened to a certain king who would take account of his servants.

When he began to reckon, Rome was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. Now, you're likely using ten thousand talents. What does that mean? I mean, ten thousand pounds isn't a lot of money, is it? It's a lot of money, but it's, you know, ten thousand.

What's ten thousand talents? Well, a talent was worth about the value in America of a big house. Well, I don't mean a huge house, but a big house. So we could say it was worth about a hundred thousand pounds.

The kind of measurement of money that they would use for governments. You know, we talk of governments in billions, don't we? How much does the American government have? I don't know. Their budget every year must be about 500 billion, I don't know what thousand, I don't know, trillions, I don't know.

But anyway, billions. And so when Jesus said he owed him ten thousand talents, that's ten thousand times one hundred thousand. And the mathematicians amongst us will tell us immediately, that is, where are they? Who's doing A-level mathematics? Who's doing A-level, who's doing, come on.

Anyway, it's one thousand million pounds, which is one billion. It's one billion pounds. So this man owed the king one billion pounds.

Now, have any of you ever been in debt? I once had an overdraft of fifty pounds. I was a student at the time. Praise God, that's the only amount of money I ever owed anybody.

I'm grateful to the Lord. But this man owed a billion. And Jesus chose this figure, a billion pounds.

He said ten thousand talents. I think the people are thinking it's so little. And the problem, in fact, when I read this out the other day in North London, I was preaching in London, there was somebody in the congregation there sort of gasping, how did they get that kind of debt? A billion pounds.

How could you get a debt of a billion pounds? I know some ladies go out and they can't stop running. Men are not like that either, we're handsome people. But, you know, they can't, they buy all these clothes and this clothes and this.

No, not all ladies. There are a lot of men like him too, I suppose. But the thing is that buying, buying.

How would you get a billion pounds of debt? I mean, you'd really have to go mad, wouldn't you? But anyway, he commanded him, verse 25, as much as he had not to pay. He got nothing in his bank account. He got nothing there.

He'd run his credit card up a bit too high. And the Lord commanded him to be sold, sold, and his wife and his children, they were paying for his debts with their life. A terrible thing to be in debt.

And all he had on payment to be made, I was just thinking if they sold everything he had and he came to about 50,000 pounds, that would leave 950,000 million pounds left. Approximately, I'm sure. The servant therefore fell down of saying, Lord, have patience with me and I will pay you all.

All right, now let's calculate. How much do you earn a month? My salary is 25,000 pounds a year, let's assume. I need 5,000 to live on.

I'll pay 20,000 a year and live in the gutter. Okay, 20,000 a year, how long will that take you to pay back? Come on, where are all the math petitions? You're all going to pay those useless things here, come on. All right, 50,000, 50,000 years.

20,000 pounds a year, a billion pounds, 50,000 years. What's the word? Impossible, isn't it? It's written all over it, it's impossible, you can't do it. Jesus didn't choose this figure by accident.

He knew what he was doing. Impossible written all over it, no way, finished. You are in debt.

You are in serious debt. You are in crushing debt. This man, if he could have paid 20,000 pounds a year, would have found that the interest alone would have doubled the debt in 10 years and it would have taken 50,000 years to pay it off once for you now.

What are we looking at? What we're looking at is simply the weight of a man's sin. The weight of your sin is intangible. You can never make good your sin, you cannot.

All your life spent trying to do good will not increase it. You know, the terrible thing of a lot of people is that they, what they do is their life is in a balance like this and they look at it and the lovely thing is that they say, I haven't done anybody any harm. Not true, but they say it.

And they say, I've done a lot of good. In fact, somebody said, I can't remember who it was, I heard somebody quote this quote, I can't remember who it was. They said, I believe the, oh it was Geoffrey Archer.

He said, I believe the good I've done will outweigh the ill I've done. So he said. I don't know if he was hoping God was taking note of his assessment.

He said, I believe the good I've done will outweigh the ill. But you see, if you follow that through you're going to do more good than ill. That means you want to be judged on your merits.

And at the end of that trade-off you say, there you go, I'm good, I've done well. But the truth is you haven't done well, you've done very badly. But the point is that between the balance going this way and that way you've got two choices, either shame because you've failed, or pride because you've succeeded.

Shame or pride, what are you in? I'm okay, I'm all right, I've never done anybody any harm, or I've absolutely failed. What are you in? Shame or pride? Truth is, some Christians get into that, they think, I've done so badly since I became a Christian, I've done this for the Lord, I've done that for the Lord, I've been good at the barbary, I've been good at this, I've done better than him, I've done better than her, I'm all right. Pride.

I failed. Shame. Pride or shame, what are you in? Pride or shame? God wants to forgive you everything.

He wants to cancel your debt. Now listen, just imagine that there was a rich man who was owed a billion pounds, a billion, and he could have, he looked at this situation, he comes with all his servants around, he looks at this way of crushing this poor man, it's ruined him, it's ruined his wife, it's ruined his children, and the king there has a billion pounds, he could pay him back if he could get it, and the king says, I forgive a billion pounds. I forgive it.

It's tremendous, isn't it? To forgive a billion pounds is a big thing. You know, if you owed me, I don't know how much, say a hundred thousand pounds, it would take a lot to forgive it for a man, wouldn't it? To say, all right, you know, pay a bit off slowly, keep it coming. But it is now gone.

Canceled. Finished. Never, well maybe one day you'll get a bit of it back and then give me what you can, but it's gone.

The king cancelled it in one moment. Finished. Your debt is finished.

Verse 27, the lord of that servant was moved with compassion and loosed him and forgave him the debt. You know that the greatest power in the human soul is forgiveness of all your sins. It's forgiveness.

You are utterly, totally forgiven. Reconciliation with God is on the basis of forgiveness. He forgives you.

It is not on the basis of you doing okay. Never. God never forgives you because you're doing okay.

It is grace. I forgive you. And he forgives us a crushing, crushing debt of sin.

And he forgives us by the blood of Christ. That's the price. He pays for it.

The blood of Christ. You're free. You're forgivable.

All you've ever done. And he loosed him. And I believe that from that word loosed you get the truth that everything that binds your soul can be liberated from you if you'll believe in the forgiveness.

You know that a lot of people have difficulty with deliverance. And they believe the devil's got this and the devil's got that. But the truth is this.

If a person will simply believe in the unlimited mercy and favor of God to forgive, they will be loosed from within. And the power of the devil to hold them will be gone. Some of the things that hold us, we think, oh it's the demons this and the demons that and the devil that.

It goes back to the fact that you will not believe God for the forgiveness of your sin and shame and guilt. He's forgiven you. And he loosed you.

And also when I look at souls that are bound, I notice also some souls bound because they fear the belief. Believe God. Don't fear the past.

Believe God. And that crushing word. When the servant heard the words he was there I'll pay all.

I will pay. I'll pay. I'll pay.

And the king said I loosed you from your debt. Can you tell me what that means? What do you mean by I loosed you? Can I have it in writing? You know, even if you would have been stronger. Does that mean I have to pay anything? Do I have to do anything? Do I have to serve the world for you? No, you are utterly, totally, completely free this minute.

I think the man wouldn't have been able to believe it for a while. I think the servant would have been smiling and laughing. He would have been beaming, smiling.

His wife, his children. Back together and free. And they would have, they would have, they wouldn't have known what to do.

Maybe somebody ran up and gave them a few bits of money. Go on. I don't know what happened.

But they were free and out they went. Free. Verse 28.

The same servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred pence. Walking down the road, he got his liberty. He's free.

He's rejoicing. It's wonderful. Tremendous.

And then he sees somebody. Hello, there we are. You haven't written to me for three years, or ten years, or twenty years.

But I remember it all coming back. That's why you haven't written. That's why you've avoided me, because you owe me a hundred pence, which is two thousand pounds.

What a small sum. There's nothing I could do with it. Twenty thousand pounds a year you could pay a vacuum.

Six weeks. Two thousand pounds. But big enough to think, oh I could use that.

I want it back. His fellow servant, he grabbed him by the throat, not by the king. He grabbed him by the throat.

Pay me! He's following. His fellow servant fell down at his feet and restored him saying, have patience with me, and I will pay you all. And he would not, but went and cast him into prison, so he should pay the debt.

And when his fellow servant saw what was done, they were very sorry and came and told their lord what was done. His lord came and said, I forgave you all. I forgave you.

Why? Should not you also have had compassion on your fellow servant, as I have pity on thee? And his lord was angry, delivered him to the tawning, just that he should pay all that was due to him. So likewise shall my heavenly father do also to you, if you from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses. You know that the coming of the Holy Ghost is on a people who have seen themselves in the right light.

They know they have nothing to boast of. They have been forgiven, and they are forgiving. They have been forgiven, and they are forgiving.

You know, without that, you will never have a very right relationship with anybody, unless you are forgiven, and forgiving. It's the basis of everything that God does. You have to be forgiven, and you have to be forgiving.

You have to have a heart that's childlike enough to forgive everything. Forgive everything. Every wrong done against you.

Now, you know, at this point, people go back and they say, but did you know? I think everyone in this room can point back to something. You would take, if I would ask you to, it wouldn't take you long to think of it. You could tell me the words that was spoken to you that hurt you.

You could tell your tape recorder was on that day, and it was on hypersensitivity. The tone, the fact you've changed it since, you've added to it, you've embellished it, it's grown. The words you speak or quote to me back will probably be very different to what was actually said, but you wouldn't, you would never accept it.

I remember a man who was bullied as a child, and in his mind, he wanted, he kept on seeing the faces of the Yiddish school friends who bullied him. So all he wanted to do in his dreams, in his mind, in his imagination, he wanted to go through to them, imagined him becoming strong and powerful, meeting his friends one day, and beating them. Beating them.

Cruelly smashing their faces. Destroying them. Hurting them as much as he could, because they hurt him when he was at school.

You know, every time you could see his face flashing before these people, he wanted to hurt. Some people feel that way about their dad, about their mum, about their brother, their sister. They can't forgive their son, their daughter.

You know, these people will not forgive. They will not forgive. Part of it is because they, so all the people of David and Spells don't see they need forgiveness.

You don't see that the thing that's crushing you is your own guilt, your own shame. And it will crush you. You will not have a liberated heart to receive anything from God until you forgive.

And until you are forgiven. Now, let's go through to it, that it's a wrong done to you. It was a real wrong.

I can only tell you this, that I have talked over these things with people who have been in concentration camps with the Nazis. I remember talking to an old Jewish lady. Would you not agree she had a real wrong to forgive? You would agree.

But she had to forgive. She wasn't saying that God wouldn't judge those people, but what she was saying was she would not forgive. And she forgave.

Tremendous, isn't it? It's a big thing. We're not talking about, oh, you know, a little tiff here and there. We're talking about the thing that was done to you that was wrong.

You can prove it was wrong. We know it was wrong. We're not trying to prove you were wrong.

We're saying this, that God is offering to you mercy for your sin, utter forgiveness. And you've got to forgive in order to be liberated. You'll never be liberated.

It doesn't matter how big the thing was. The thing is that because you won't forgive, it's growing. It's increasing.

You have been wronged, all right. But what they're saying in this chapter is that there's this that God wants to do between you and every other person. But first between you and God.

God says, come and come before me. Let's have this clear first. On your back is a weight that is unpayable and cannot be compared with all the sins against you.

Just the weight on your back is the debt you owe to God. God says, I forgive you. I forgive you.

Now forgive. Forgive. Forgive.

You know, you cannot do this lightly. You can't just skate over it. It's all right.

Let's put it aside. Forgive from your heart. Utterly.

Totally. You have to go back to that person in your mind. Look them in the face.

You don't have to go to them. But in your mind you have to go back to them and say, I forgive you. I forgive you from my heart.

You'll know, I don't know if I've ever, I'm sure some of you will know the story of Fred Lemon. This criminal who's been, I don't know, 20 years or something or 15 years in Dartmouth for attempted murder. He was a wicked, cruel, violent man.

And he only received new birth. God only changed his heart when he prayed for the warders in the prison. He had a visitation from Christ one night.

He saw Jesus Christ. Came to his toes in solitary confinement, attacking a policeman. Or one of the warders.

One of the warders he absolutely hated and that warder hated him. Christ appeared to him one night in solitary confinement and told him all through his life how he understood why he'd done this and how he'd done that. And Christ spoke to him these words.

He said, you must drive the hatred from your heart if you want to be a real Christian. And the vision departed. And Fred Lemon did not forgive the warder that night.

He hated the warders and continued to hate the warders. He did not forgive. He was blessed that night.

He was high. He was blessed. He was wonderfully blessed.

But the next time he saw the warders it was all there again. He hadn't forgiven. And on one occasion he tried to kill one of them.

He felt this power restraining him. Even after he had received that vision of Christ. And then one day he was praying in himself and he got the words out.

I pray you bless that warder in the name of the one he hated. Bless him. And he felt this great lump of ice bound inside.

He was made one. He was made one with God. He forgave and he was made one with God.

And he uttered the words that broke his whole soul. Broke the mould of his mind and broke the patterns and habits of a lifetime. He stopped hating and resenting and going against every person around him.

And he prayed for someone for the first time in his life. He prayed for someone. This cold block of ice in his mouth.

He was making it. He was making it. And he went that day to the chapel.

And one of the warders looked at him twice and went to the governor of the prison and said the wild look has gone out of Ted Lemon's eye. He was delivered from a demon. I have no doubt Ted Lemon was delivered from a demon that morning.

The wildness went out of him. The warder said he was just. Nobody prayed for him.

People said go and pray for me. I want to get rid of this demon and that demon and this bad one and that bad one. If you will forgive from your heart the wrongs done against you you will be delivered.

Christ will come into you. As I understand and I talk to people as I minister to people I see this there is a difference between people. Some will not let go and they don't get through.

But the hurdle is not where they think it is. They accuse the devil. I know people accuse all kinds of things.

They blame the devil. They blame demons and they go to the deliverance ministry and sometimes the deliverance ministry I believe that sometimes they really help. I'm sure that they go through things like I'll tell you about tonight.

Sometimes people get to believe that it isn't their fault. All they've got to do is go and have you prayed for. You've got to forgive from your heart and if you will Christ will meet you.

He will meet you in power. He will make you one with the person you hated. He will.

This is the marvel of the gospel that in Northern Ireland IRA terrorists all at once and former protestant terrorists are sitting down together and praising God. Well I don't think there's former terrorists in this meeting but the thing is this that the murderous power of unforgiveness is the same in whoever it lies. It will kill when it has the opportunity.

It's the same wherever there is forgiveness wherever Christ moves in mercy. This is the miracle of South Africa that Nelson Mandela could forgive. A president who spent 27 years in prison how could it be? But he did.

You know that it takes God to help a man forgive. You cannot forgive without the help of God. You can't say I'll do it.

You can't. You haven't got the power. You might be stronger than an ox.

You might be rich as a king but you can't forgive. But without the help of God. To forgive from your heart you need mercy from God.

You've got to become like a little child as they help me to forgive Lord. Help me to get right. You know that when somebody says I don't want to receive the Holy Spirit.

I'm not really getting very far. I think you are serious and you're not really wanting it. You're skating along trying things out of it or in your heart you don't want to be made wrong with people.

You want God to give something to you but not take something away. God has to take away from you that he may give you. He has to take away from you associations and wrong relationships and wrong wrong groups you're in and wrong things you're attached to.

The thing is that you cannot be attached to the church and bonded spiritually with others. You can't be. It's like this when a person is baptized in the spirit their family becomes the people of God more than their blood family.

They love their blood family more than they ever did. But they're not bonded to them. Forgiveness.

And this is it. One. One.

Therefore God is joined together. Where two or three are gathered together in one in their mind. Go back to our original text there in 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and we'll finish there.

1 Corinthians chapter 12. God wants to make you one with another person. What's the alternative? That you'll be separated from everybody forever.

You know this when we look at these things that we think of we think of oh that that's a degree of unity. You talk about degrees. No.

These are absolutes. You cannot choose between unity and a little bit of unity. You are either one or you're cut off.

You're alone. You're lonely in your ways in your spirit. But the truth is when you lay your life down you are made one.

Here it is. It's there in chapter 12 of 1 Corinthians. By one spirit are we all baptized into one body whether we be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free and have all been made to drink into one spirit.

So there's a baptism in the spirit that makes you one. There's something that comes. There's something from God in this work of the Holy Ghost that makes you one with each other.

You know that the church did not exist until the baptism in the spirit. That is true. It's true.

In any locality there is no church until there's a baptism in the Holy Spirit. It's true. The simple fact of spirituality is there that the church began when the Holy Ghost came and they were baptized into the Holy

Ghost.

You know when you look at this you could say is this a deeper work or what? Well God knows not and it's sadly it is to be described as a deeper work because people seem not to be able to go into this. They seem to wobble around in the shallows. They do.

Call it Christianity. But it isn't. It's an aspiration of Christianity.

But this is it when you give your life. Say Lord absorb me into the Godhead. Absorb me into one with God.

I want to be one with God and God one with me and I one with my brethren. I want to be one with just all absorbed into every middle barrier broken down. Let it all go and I pray.

You know the prayer for unity is a prayer for you to be absorbed in the spirit of God. It's a tremendous power here. It's the power of God's people.

You know that God's people is one. Power of God is one. It's oneness.

Unity. There is one Lord. There is one faith.

There's one baptism into this body. It's all of one and God's determination is that he will gather all things into one. Put the activity of the enemy alongside it.

What is his activity? To scatter and divide. To bring rivers under. To cause factions.

All manner of things. Everything he did in the middle of the sand needs to last a day, a month, a year. Oh he delighted.

Simple things that would take minutes to clear up can become deep-rooted. You know that in the foundation of God's working he will so move so that there's honesty of the people that get right. And I believe this that you ought to be right with one another quickly.

Easily. Simply. Forgiving one another.

Putting right things. Old things. New things.

Whatever it is. Keep very short accounts together. You know we looked at the man who owed the money.

Two thousand pounds. A lot of money isn't it? When you talk about money people sort of get a bit old in money terms. But I'll tell you this.

If anybody owes you money. Anybody. And because of that debt you are in difficulty with them.

There's only one thing to do. The person who's more valuable than the money. Forgive them for that.

If you owe someone money and the debt is coming between you and that person there's only one thing to do. Pay it no matter what it costs you. Spread out your debts.

Pay off everything you can. Forgive every debt owed to you. Let there be nothing between you.

Don't lend to anybody unless you have that heart. If you lend to somebody I know. A man who was divided from another.

There's two men who were going to a church. They could not bear to see each other for 10, 15 years. I can't remember exactly how long it was.

Because of 100 pounds. Destroyed their relationship. Until it was paid.

Forget it. Forgive the money. Let it go.

It's a lot of money. I couldn't do it. What is more valuable to you? The relationship or the money? But if I have to pay that back, I have to sell this and now all I sell it and get right.

Unity is far more important. But if he paid the price for you and the profits for you. What will you pay? Settle everything.

You know the freshness of the Holy Ghost comes where people put things right. The Spirit is moving where people put things right. Where there's brokenness, humility, and washing and cleansing and people putting things right.

There's a sweeping through the Holy Ghost. There's faith. There's life.

Amen. There's unity. Let's pray shall we.

Two on three are agreed. Agree with your brother quickly whilst thou art in the way. I love the word there.

Quickly. You bring your sacrifice first. There's other words.

First agree with your brother. First be reconciled with your brother. Agree with your brother quickly.

Don't wait for the sun to go down. I know it's gone down tonight. It goes down so early in suffering doesn't it.

But it doesn't matter. Now you've got your chance. It means now.

That's what the word means. Now do it. This day.

Not tomorrow. Let's pray.

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