

## SERMON OUTLINE

**SERMON TITLE:** The Freedom of Forgiveness

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Ephesians 4:31-32

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #2422

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## 1) INTRODUCTION

- a) There are two problems that do great psychological, emotional and spiritual damage:
  - i) Guilt
    - (1) Guilt imprisons us.
    - (2) Guilt is the result of something we've done wrong.
  - ii) Bitterness
    - (1) Bitterness poisons us.
    - (2) Bitterness is our reaction to someone else's wrong, or our perception that someone else has wronged us.
- b) Forgiveness sets us free from both guilt and bitterness.
  - i) God's forgiveness of us sets us free from the prison of guilt.
  - ii) Our forgiveness of others sets us free from the poison of bitterness.
- c) Ephesians 4:31-32
  - i) When we truly forgive another, we set two prisoners free:
    - (1) The person we have forgiven and ourselves.
- d) To forgive means to pay a debt.
  - i) There are no bargain pardons.
    - (1) Matthew 6:12
  - ii) Sin is a debt that we owe.
    - (1) We have sinned against Heaven and have been sued for damages.
    - (2) It is a debt we cannot pay.
    - (3) God in mercy and love has forgiven us and paid that debt.
  - iii) There are no free pardons.
    - (1) When someone is forgiven, someone else has paid.
  - iv) The word "forgive" comes from a word that means "to bear the burden."
    - (1) To forgive is to pay the debt.
- e) Ephesians 1:7
  - i) God paid the debt for us and cancelled that debt.
- f) When we ask the Lord to save us from our sins, He does and places us into His family.
  - i) We then begin to forgive others.
    - (1) We receive mercy, and we show mercy.
  - ii) If we don't practice forgiveness, we stop the flow of God's mercy.
- g) It is impossible to over-emphasize the importance of forgiveness.
  - i) When we are saved, it puts us into the family of God.
  - ii) If we fail to forgive others, then it destroys family fellowship.

## 2) THE COMPELLING REASONS FOR FORGIVENESS

- a) The grace factor
  - i) Ephesians 4:32
  - ii) We should forgive others when they sin against us because God has forgiven us when we sinned against Him.
    - (1) God has willingly, lovingly and freely forgiven us.
- b) The guilt factor
  - i) Matthew 6:14-15

- ii) An unforgiving spirit is unforgivable.
  - (1) The person who refuses to forgive destroys the bridge over which he must travel.
- iii) Forgiving and being forgiven go together.
  - (1) We are basically praying, "Father, treat me like I am treating them."
- iv) When we chose not to forgive someone, we are essentially saying, "Father, I'm not going to forgive that person, so don't forgive me."
  - (1) We are asking to be forgiven in the same manner as we forgive others.
- v) An unforgiving spirit is not merely us missing a blessing, but it is a wicked, vile sin in the same category as stealing or blasphemy.
  - (1) God's nature is to forgive.
  - (2) An unforgiving spirit is ungodliness.
    - (a) Matthew 18:23-27
      - (i) Ten thousand talents was an enormous debt; a talent was the largest measure of money known in the Roman world.
      - (ii) The word "talent" means "without number;" the Bible sometimes translates this word as "myriads."
      - (iii) The Bible tells us that when Solomon built the temple and overlaid it with gold, that it was 8,000 talents of gold; the man in Matthew 18 owed 10,000 talents.
    - (b) Matthew 18:28-30
      - (i) The man who had been forgiven myriads had someone else who owed him a hundred day's wages.
      - (ii) In this passage, Jesus speaks of the wickedness of the man who had been forgiven.
    - (c) Matthew 18:35
      - (i) It is wicked for those of us who have been forgiven so much to refuse to forgive someone else.
  - (3) James 2:13
  - (4) Matthew 5:7
  - (5) We need to forgive because we have been forgiven.
    - (a) Only the person who never sins can afford not to forgive; which is no one.
- c) The grief factor
  - i) The man who failed to forgive in Matthew 18 endured the severest discipline.
  - ii) Hebrews 12:15
    - (1) The person who does not forgive will know unusual grief and trouble.
    - (2) If we do not forgive, those around us will also be troubled.
  - iii) An unforgiving spirit does personal harm.
    - (1) It's not what your unforgiveness does to someone else, but what it does to you.
      - (a) To attempt to get even with someone who has done you harm would be to bring yourself down to their level.
      - (b) To continue to hate is to commit emotional suicide.
        - (i) Hate fills you with bitterness, which is an acid that will destroy you as much or more than it does the person on whom it is poured.

- iv) We sometimes think that forgiveness lets the other person “off the hook;” but when we chose not to forgive, we are on the hook with them.
  - v) We need to forgive because of the grief that bitterness and an unforgiving spirit will do to us.
    - (1) We forgive them for their sake.
    - (2) We forgive them for Jesus’ sake.
    - (3) We forgive them for our sake.
  - d) The gain factor
    - i) Matthew 5:24
      - (1) If we need to make things right with someone, we should go and be reconciled to our brother or sister before bringing an offering to the Lord.
    - ii) Matthew 18:15
      - (1) When we forgive, we heal a broken relationship and gain back a brother or sister.
  - e) The effects of unforgiveness:
    - i) It disgraces Almighty God.
    - ii) It discourages the saints.
    - iii) It drives away the lost.
      - (1) The greatest evangelistic outreach of any church is the love its members have for one another.
    - iv) It delights the devil.
- 3) THE COSTLY REQUIREMENTS OF FORGIVENESS (Ephesians 4:32)
- a) Jesus Christ is the model of our forgiveness, and He paid the price.
    - i) We will have to know a little personal Gethsemane and Calvary if we truly forgive someone who has hurt us deeply.
  - b) We are to forgive freely.
    - i) Jesus’ forgiveness is free, spontaneous and quick.
    - ii) Don’t wait to forgive.
    - iii) We should be so eager to forgive a person that we chase them down and catch them in order to forgive them.
      - (1) We love God because He first loved us.
        - (a) 1 John 4:19
      - (2) When Adam and Eve sinned against God in the Garden of Eden, He did not wait on them; God came to the Garden and sought Adam.
    - iv) Matthew 18:15
      - (1) We are to go to our brother privately and freely.
    - v) Matthew 18:21-22
      - (1) We are not to keep score; forgiveness has no limit.
  - c) We are to forgive fully.
    - i) When someone seeks our forgiveness, we are to forgive them totally.
      - (1) Do not respond, “Don’t worry about it.”
      - (2) Tell them that you forgive them.
    - ii) When we do wrong, we should seek the forgiveness of the person we have wronged.

- (1) We should not say, "I want to apologize if I hurt your feelings."
  - (a) The word "apologize" comes from a Greek word meaning "to make a defense."
    - (i) This means that we are actually defending ourselves.
  - (2) We should ask them to forgive us.
- d) We are to forgive finally.
  - i) Do not bring it up again.
    - (1) Do it finally, once and for all.
  - ii) Isaiah 43:25
    - (1) Our sins are buried in the grave of God's forgetfulness.
      - (a) Intellectually, God cannot forget.
        - (i) God does not lose His memory.
    - (2) God does not bring them up again; He will not use our sins against us.
      - (a) The sin is buried.
- e) We are to forgive forcefully.
  - i) It is not natural to forgive; our spirits demand justice.
  - ii) We need Jesus to be forgiven, and we need Jesus in order to forgive.
  - iii) Ephesians 4:32
    - (1) This kindness and tenderheartedness comes from Jesus.
    - (2) The one who has forgiven us is the one who puts His Spirit in us and enables us to have the power to forgive.
    - (3) The power of Jesus Christ, who forgave us, enables us to forgive somebody else.

#### 4) THE RESULTS OF FORGIVENESS

- a) Personal emancipation
  - i) When there is forgiveness, there is personal emancipation.
- b) Reconciliation
  - i) There will be reconciliation between you and someone else.
  - ii) We gain a brother or sister.
- c) Spiritual jubilation
  - i) There will be revival.
    - (1) Real revival is not only getting the roof off, but getting the walls down and getting right with God.

#### 5) CONCLUSION

- a) If we have been wronged by someone, we are to forgive that person and bury it in the grave of God's forgetfulness.
  - i) Romans 12:19
- b) How do we forgive someone who has not repented and continues to hurt or wrong us?
  - i) God does not forgive without repentance.
  - ii) If we cannot forgive them due to their continuing practice, we can have the spirit of forgiveness.
    - (1) Luke 23:34
      - (a) Jesus prayed for the forgiveness of those who were nailing Him to the cross.

- (2) Even though not everyone is saved, Jesus bought salvation for all; all we have to do is receive it.
- iii) We can put forgiveness in escrow, waiting for that individual to write the check of repentance and receive the forgiveness.
- c) We do not need to carry around the load and burden of hurt and unforgiveness.
- d) All true forgiveness begins with receiving forgiveness.
- e) You can receive forgiveness today; Jesus Christ died to forgive you.
- f) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- g) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) Acts 16:31
  - v) John 3:16