

THE DECISION TO FORGIVE

Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" (Matthew 18:21 NKJV)

INTRODUCTION: In this second week of our series we will talk about the importance of making the decision to forgive. Through the parable of the unmerciful servant in Matthew 18:21-35, Jesus teaches us the importance and power of forgiveness. Forgiveness not only frees those who have wronged us, but also brings healing to our own lives, allowing us to live in peace and freedom. (Read the parable in the CG).

How does unforgiveness begin?

It all starts with an offense and if you don't forgive quickly it turns into resentment; If you retain that resentment it becomes a lack of forgiveness; and if that continues it becomes a root of bitterness; and sooner or later it turns into hatred, and hate at some point gives birth to spiritual death, and if the person does not take care of themselves, it's not only spiritual death, but it can even lead to physical death.

1. The command of forgiveness (Matthew.18:21-22)

- Jesus calls us to forgive not just seven times, but seventy times seven, symbolizing unlimited forgiveness.
- **Forgiveness is not optional** for followers of Christ; It is a clear and direct mandate.
- **Forgiving should be a lifestyle.** We must adopt a constant and willing attitude of forgiveness, reflecting the character of God.

2. The parable of the unforgiving servant. (Matthew. 18:23-34)

- **The servant.** He had a huge debt that he could never pay, this symbolizes our debt of sin to God.

By recognizing the immensity of our spiritual debt, we understand the depth of our need for forgiveness. We realize that we can't be saved by our own works and that we need God's grace.

- **The king.** He was moved with compassion and completely forgave the servant's debt, reflecting God's grace toward us.

God, in his infinite mercy, offers us unconditional forgiveness. Accepting this forgiveness frees us from guilt and condemnation, and invites us to live a life transformed by His love. This should motivate us to show the same compassion and grace to others to forgive.

- **The unforgiveness of the servant.** The forgiven servant does not show the same grace to his companion, demonstrating the incongruity and hardness of heart that we must avoid. The person who does not want to forgive has forgotten how much Jesus forgave him. By refusing to forgive others, we turn away from the grace God has shown us. Maintaining resentment and unforgiveness locks us in a cycle of bitterness and separation from others. We must learn to extend forgiveness, as God has done with us, to live in freedom.

3. Signs of unforgiveness.

- You feel joy in your heart if something bad happens to the person who offended you.

- Thoughts of revenge. You want bad things to happen to your offender.
- You feel pain in your heart when you remember the person who wronged you.
- You use every opportunity to tell everyone what was done to you.
- When you hear the person's name you get an upset stomach, heartburn, heartburn, insomnia, migraines, ulcers, bone pain, etc. because our body is not designed to withstand the power of hate.

4. Consequences of unforgiveness (Matthew. 18:35)

- **You Disobey God.** Don't wait to feel sorry, if you have something against someone, go and settle things right now.
- **The enemy take advantage of your life.** (*Ephesians 4:26-27 NIV*). you give room to the enemy in your marriage, in your finances, in your health, etc.
- **Our prayers are blocked**
- **God doesn't receive our offerings.** (*Matthew. 5:23-24 NIV*).
- **God hands us over to the executioners. (demons).** The servant who did not forgive was handed over to torture by the king. When you do not forgive, the unclean spirits say: "We have the legal right to torment him." God will do the same with any believer who does not forgive his brother.
- **God can't forgive us.** (*Matthew. 6:15*)

CONCLUSION: *What did they do to you in the past? What's the offense you've been stopping? What are the executioners that*

have been tying you up? We have all been offended and we have all offended and we need to forgive and be forgiven. Making the decision to forgive is essential to our personal healing and our relationship with God. By freeing others, we free ourselves from the burden of resentment and bitterness, allowing the peace, joy, and grace of God to flow into our lives.

INTERACTIVE QUESTIONS:

- Is there someone in your life you need to forgive today? What is stopping you from taking that step?
- How has unforgiveness affected you in the past?
- What changes have you noticed when you decided to forgive?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

1. **Forgive.** It is not a feeling, it is a commandment.
2. **Let go and bless.** Begin to bless those who harmed you, those who betrayed you or abandoned you so that the unclean spirits have no legal right to bind you. Repeat with your mouth: "(Name of person) I forgive you, I release you and I bless you." When you do those three things, the Lord says: "I am going to release all those blessings for your years to come."

SALVATION PRAYER: *Lord Jesus, I recognize that I have sinned and that you died for me. Today I repent and ask your forgiveness. I give you my life and my heart so that you may be my Lord and personal Savior, amen.*

