

7 Sermons You Don't Want to Hear 1

Title: *Un-forgiveness*

Date: *15th February 2015*

Scriptures: *Psalm 103:1-13 & Matthew 18:21-35*

The Message:

This morning we begin a new series of 7 teachings. The series is going to be shared among Richard, Tim and myself AND is entitled, '**7 Sermons You Don't Want To Hear.**' *And* even though we won't want to hear them - we really do need to *if* we are going to *grow as the people of God to share the kingdom of God* and thus fulfil our mission statement.

All 7 sermons are going to require from us *honest self-examination, humility and repentance* - ALL the things the period of Lent is intended for.

3 times in the **Letter to the Hebrews** we are told **not to harden our hearts if we hear the voice of God speaking to us**; in other words should the sermon *hit a little too close to home* don't switch off, don't become distracted, *don't presume it is for the person sitting behind you*, and don't start thinking about what to have for Sunday lunch OR begin to think about the week ahead, *don't ignore God* but respond to Him, respond to the message with humility, *because* we are also told in the **Letter to the Hebrews** that God only corrects those He loves *and those He welcomes to His heart and cherishes* as His children - and as this Scripture also reminds us we have all had earthly parents who have disciplined and corrected us.

We are all loved by God - He cherishes each one of us - we are His children.

All that said, let me introduce you to the 1st **Sermon you Don't Want to Hear**, which is on the subject of '**Forgiveness.**'

The most helpful statement I ever heard made on the subject of **forgiveness** was this, please, listen carefully...

Forgiving someone does NOT make them right

It just sets us FREE!

(Repeat the statement)

I would like you to bring to mind the person/persons you cannot forgive - now repeat that statement to yourself and make it personal ... **'forgiving so-and-so does not make them right, it just sets ME free.'**

The Bible teacher and former Pastor Dr. Warren Wiersbe writes, *'The world's worst prison is the prison of an unforgiving heart.'*

This morning, because God loves us and cherishes us He wants to set each one of us free from the very worst prison, the prison of having unforgiving hearts.

*Prayer for the message: Gracious God, we thank You for this opportunity to worship You, these few moments set aside to listen, to reflect, to respond. We come to listen to Your Word, and to ponder in the silence what You would say to us. We come to hear Your voice, and in the stillness to receive Your guidance. Open our eyes to Your presence, our hearts to Your love and our minds to Your will. Direct our thoughts, enlarge our understanding, and shape our lives. Lord Jesus Christ Who being betrayed, forsaken, beaten, bruised and nailed naked to a cross said, **'Father, forgive them'** it is in Your name we pray. **'Amen'***

In the verses prior to our Scripture reading from **Matthew 18** Jesus was explaining what we should do when another Christian has offended or hurt us OR caused us to stumble and there are times when we unintentionally OR deliberately do those things to each other.

In Psalm 19:12 David prayed, *'Who can discern his lapses and errors? Clear me from hidden and unconscious faults.'*

So, briefly what should we do according to Jesus?

- ✚ We need to deal with the matter honestly and with humility
- ✚ Speaking to the person who has wronged us ALONE, thus keeping the matter private - if the matter is resolved then and there no one else in the congregation need know there ever was a problem.
- ✚ It is only if they refuse to make things right that we begin to involve anyone else and then only 1 or 2 dependable believers to start with.

Having listened to Jesus outline the steps to reconciling with a brother/sister who has offended us Peter then asks the question in **verse 21**, *'how many times may my brother sin against me and I forgive him and let it go? As many as up to 7 times?'*

Wow Peter, what generosity, what faith and what love, offering to forgive your brother 7 times - in all fairness to Peter, the rabbis taught that forgiving your brother/sisters 3 times was actually sufficient, so Peter was being generous.

Jesus answered Peter, *'I tell you, not up to 7 times, but seventy times seven.'*

490 times Jesus? We would all have to keep a little note book with us to keep a record.

Actually Jesus is saying the exact opposite, He is saying what the apostle Paul writes to the church at Corinth **chapter 13** *when we have God's love in us* we don't keep a record of the evil done to us - we *don't keep score of the sins of others.* (1Corinthians 13:5)

There should be no limit to a believer's willingness to forgive - to our willingness to forgive

None of us can ever say, *'I've forgiven enough; now it's time to hold a grudge.'*

All of us as believers in Jesus Christ ought to be willing to forgive, for each one of us has already been forgiven far beyond our comprehension as the parable Jesus then tells illustrates.

Forgiveness is **POWERFUL!**

Un-forgiveness is just the worst possible prison!

The main character in the parable *the servant who owed the king 10, 000 talents* was...

First the debtor - second, he was the creditor, and finally he became the prisoner.

As the debtor, this man had obviously embezzled funds belonging to the king, and when *the king wished to settle accounts with his attendants, court officials* the debtors crime was discovered.

Ten thousand talents was a huge sum of money. King David donated that amount of money for the building of God's temple. **I**n today's money *The Amplified Bible* suggests that would be 10 million dollars.

The debtor could not pay, and so the king ordered him to be sold, with his wife and his children and everything he possessed in order to re-coup a fraction of what was owed, *because* there was **no-way** a family could ever be worth that much money.

The debtor *fell on his knees, begging* the king to be patient with him and he would pay back all that he owed. **I**n the economy of that day, the debtor would have had to work twenty years just to earn ONE talent.

His case was in fact hopeless, *but* for one thing - the compassion of the man he owed, the king.

Verse 27, 'And his master's heart was moved with compassion, and he released him and forgave him cancelling the debt.' Those listening to Jesus would have been *stunned* at the king's mercy - no king would forgive such a *huge* debt - the king had just taken a massive burden from the debtors shoulder's - what incredible relief the debtor must have felt...

But unfortunately the parable doesn't end there!

I would like us to think back to the day we prayed '*The Sinners Prayer*' -

- The day we confessed to God that we were sinners powerless to save ourselves
- The day we asked God to forgive all our sins, sins of the past, sins committed today and the sins we will commit in the future.
- The day we confessed with our lips declaring openly that Jesus is Lord and in our hearts believed that God raised Him from the dead (**Romans 10:9-10**)
- The day we welcomed Jesus into our hearts and lives as both Lord and Saviour
- The day, we believed by faith that our sins were forgiven, Jesus now reigned in our lives and we were now children of the Most High God.

- The day we knew that we knew, that we would spend eternity with God.

Can we all recollect that day, that awesome day, the joy, the relief that we were forgiven, reconciled to God through Jesus Christ.

Now can we imagine leaving God's presence on that day, walking through the glass doors - into the foyer, through the front door, onto the porch and there - walking down the path from Spar we bump into the person/the people we cannot forgive... **what do we do?**

We have just been forgiven ALL our sins - forgiven a HUGE debt by the King of kings, **what do we do? What have we done???**

Forgive them *as we have just been forgiven* OR do we do what the **debtor** did and refuse to forgive them??

The debtor, now the **creditor**, left the king's presence - found one of his fellow attendants who owed him a hundred denarii, *about \$20.00*. The creditor caught his fellow attendant by the throat and said, '**Pay me what you owe!**'

His fellow attendant fell down on his knees, just as the creditor had done before the king, *but* the difference is, the king showed the creditor mercy, the creditor did not show his fellow attendant mercy and had him thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.

The debtor, now creditor was unwilling to grant to others what he wanted others to grant him!

Is that really what we are like?

We want God to forgive us, *but* we are unwilling to grant forgiveness to others?

So, what happened? The **creditor** now became the **prisoner**.

Verse 31-34 the king on hearing what had taken place called the unforgiving attendant and said to him, '***I forgave and cancelled all that great debt of yours because you begged me to. Should you not have had pity and mercy on your fellow attendant as I had pity and mercy on you?***'

Can we hear God saying that to us? '*Gill, I forgave and cancelled all that great debt of yours, I forgave every one of all your iniquities, I have not dealt with*

you as your sins deserve, I have shown you mercy and loving-kindness, as far as the east is from the west so far have I removed your transgression from you - should you not have the same pity, the same mercy and loving-kindness towards others?'

Can we hear His voice? Will we ignore what God is saying to us OR will we respond with humility and repentance?

The unforgiving servant was thrown into prison - he wanted justice, he got justice!

Dr. Warren Wiersbe writes, *'The world's worst prison is the prison of an unforgiving heart. If we refuse to forgive others, then we are only imprisoning ourselves and causing our own torment.'*

Our Lord's warning in **verse 35** is very serious - God cannot forgive us if we do not forgive others. **And** He knows our hearts, He knows if when we say, *'Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us'* we actually haven't forgiven anyone! ☹️

Ephesians 4 verse 32 says this, *'And become useful and helpful and kind to one another, tender-hearted, understanding, forgiving one another readily and freely, as God in Christ forgave you.'*

And Colossians 3 verse 13 says, *'Be gentle and forbearing with one another and, if one has a difference, a grievance or complaint against another, readily pardoning each other; even as the Lord has freely forgiven you, so must you also forgive.'*

If we share with others what God has shared with us, I can assure you we will enjoy freedom and **joy**. **I** have sat with many people as they have gone through the steps to forgiveness *and* the joy and the freedom they experience is noticeable. **I**t truly is like a huge weight has been lifted from their shoulders, and most of them report back saying, *'they went home and slept.'* Exhausted, and relieved. **W**e do not understand the prison we put ourselves in through having an unforgiving heart, *until* we are released from it by forgiving others as have been forgiven.

Since God requires us to forgive, it is something we can do!

Naturally we want revenge, the unforgiving attendant did, but God tells us in **Romans 12:19** to never to take our own revenge, but to allow God to deal with the person.

Let us, let those we cannot forgive off our hook, because as long as we refuse to forgive someone, we are hooked to that person, the parable we just studied taught us that, the unforgiving servant and his fellow servant both ended up in prison.

By forgiving, a choice we make, NOT a feeling we feel, we will never *feel like* forgiving someone, we let the other person off our hook, but they are still on God's hook and we must trust that God will deal with them justly and fairly, something we can't do.

There really needs to be unlimited forgiveness within the body of Christ, the question is will we exercise it?

We have 2 choruses to sing...

We have to practice forgiveness if we are serious about fulfilling our mission statement *growing the people of God to share the kingdom of God.*

The Offering & Prayer: 'Heavenly Father, Faithful and True, Your Word says in Proverbs 3 that if we honour You our Lord with the Firstfruits of all our income our storage places shall be filled with plenty and our vats overflowing - as we honour You according to Your Word may Your Word be fulfilled in our lives. We also pray for those who administer our tithes and offerings and pray for wisdom, and great faith. Jesus in Your name we pray. **Amen.**

Blessing:

Lord Jesus, You did not wait for those crucifying You to ask for Your forgiveness

May we be so ready to forgive as we go to love and serve You in the world

Amen.