

Forgiveness – The soul of interpersonal relationships

Luke 7:40-50

Let me share with you the story of a middle-aged man. This middle-aged man was educated, professionally qualified, successful in his career, and had a certain influence in the church and community. He was married, has children, a car and a house. He had everything that most people envy and was a typical successful person. But recently his father was diagnosed with terminal cancer and might not live long. He had a big struggle in his heart because the Holy Spirit moved him to face his relationship with his father – at this time in his life, he felt the need to forgive his father.

His father was the president of a listed company. He had many employees under him. He was smart and capable and was a strong man in the business world. From childhood to adulthood, his father arranged everything for him, including which school to attend, what subjects to choose, what extracurricular activities to participate in, where to go on vacation, and who to date. He felt that his father never respected his opinions and that he could not object, as his father's opinions were absolute.

His father was a perfectionist and had very high demands on him. Under his father's supervision, he got very good grades, but his father had never praised him. One year he failed to get an A grade in a subject, and his father scolded him severely.

There was no big problem when he was young, but as he grew older, he became more and more dissatisfied with his father, yet he did not dare to express it. When he reached adolescence, his repressed emotions suddenly burst out. He became very rebellious and insisted on going against his father. The father and son often had big quarrels, and they hurt each other a lot.

After graduating from college, his father wanted him to inherit his business, but he chose to go out and make his own way in the world. As a result, the relationship between father and son broke down, and from then on, the two rarely met each other.

Now that his father might leave this world at any time, he was struggling in his heart: should he see him? He realized that deep down, he still harbored a lot of anger and resentment towards his father; but if he did not reconcile now, he might not have another chance in the future. The Holy

Spirit moved him to deal with the anger and resentment in his heart, and he knew he needed to forgive his father from the bottom of his heart.

Let me tell you another story. Chun and Kuen were very close sisters in the same church and there were no secrets between them. Once, Chun shared a secret with Kuen, a secret that no one else knew. But somehow, the secret was exposed and passed back to Zhen through a third party. After hearing this, Chun was very sad and felt that Kuen had betrayed her, and the two of them became enemies.

Chun did not confront Kuen, but buried her pain in her heart. From then on, she became very cold towards Kuen and had no contact with her anymore. Kuen was also very upset because she did not understand why but felt rejected, so she became discouraged and disappointed with Chun, and their relationship broke down.

These people have been seriously hurt in relationships and need to forgive each other!

None of us are perfect. When imperfect people live together, there will definitely be friction and hurt, which is normal. So we need to forgive each other!

Without forgiveness, the relationship will break down; even if there is a reconciliation on the surface, there is a thorn in the heart, and what remains is just a hollow relationship. Only by forgiving each other can we maintain unity.

Luke 7:40-50 records Jesus' compassion for a prostitute. This prostitute was very aware of her many sins and felt deep despair, pain, and shame. Now Jesus said to her, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven." Jesus continued, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little."

1. We do not forgive because we want to control others

You may say, "It is so great to have our sins forgiven!" But the Pharisees at that time did not think so. They reasoned, saying, "Who is this, who can even forgive people's sins?" Who can forgive people's sins except God? They were angry and thought Jesus was overstepping his authority. But the Pharisees' inner motivation was not out of reverence for God, but out of

their control over the law. Only the Pharisees could decide who could be forgiven, how to be forgiven, and when to be forgiven according to the law. By making this declaration, Jesus destroyed the system of the law and challenged the expertise of the Pharisees.

When it comes to people who offend us, we often have the same mentality as the Pharisees, unwilling to give up our control over them. We want the power to decide who is forgiven, when, and how. We cannot accept that those who have sinned against us can go directly to God and be forgiven so easily without having to go through us.

There was a couple, the husband could not hold his head up in front of his wife. When the husband was young, he was addicted to gambling and neglected his family. All the expenses of the family were supported by his wife alone. Not only did the husband not bring any money home, he also stole his children's savings to gamble. He was in a lot of gambling debts, which his wife had to pay off by borrowing from relatives and friends. It can be said that his self-esteem was completely destroyed. Later, the husband realized his mistake and repented, but his wife still did not let him go. Every time the couple quarreled, the wife would count his past mistakes, even in front of their children. The wife did not forgive her husband at all.

Many times, we are like this lady. We do not want to forgive someone who has sinned against us because we do not want to lose control over him. We feel that the other party owes us, and we want him to make compensation and pay the price for the mistakes he made, so we do not forgive!

Once you forgive, everything will be wiped out. There is no more revenge! Jesus has accomplished forgiveness on the cross. God has the power and the willingness to forgive. God has abolished all hatred through the cross, and the wall of unforgiveness has been torn down. We have no right not to forgive what God has forgiven.

2. We do not forgive and cannot be forgiven

God forgives us unconditionally because Christ has paid the ransom for us. But if we cannot forgive without any conditions those who offend us, just as God does, it shows that we have not truly felt God's love, and our sins cannot be forgiven. "He who forgives much, loves much too."

In Matthew 18, Jesus told a parable about a king and his servants. The king forgave the servant's debt of ten million taels, but the servant could not forgive his companion's debt of ten taels, so he still demanded the debt from him. Jesus said, "My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if you do not forgive each of you your brother from your heart."

When someone sins against you and you do not forgive him, it is like saying: Although Christ paid the ransom for you, it is not enough, you need my approval! How can we obtain forgiveness from our Heavenly Father when we blaspheme the precious blood of Christ in this way?

Many people do not have abundant life because unforgiveness is in them. This unforgiveness affected their relationship with God and takes away the blessing God has for them.

Indeed, forgiving others is not an easy thing and requires God's grace. Those who have deeply experienced God's forgiving grace have the ability to forgive. If you are unwilling to forgive others, it is because you do not yet fully understand how deep and heavy your own sins are, and you do not quite realize how broken, deceitful, corrupt, weak, and disappointing you are to God. But God still forgives you! The person who offends you is no worse than you. The way he offends you is far less than the way you offend God! If you think about this, you will have the strength to forgive those who offend you.

3. Maintaining relationships depends on forgiveness

Forgiveness is the soul of interpersonal relationships.

Let me tell you, the durability of a relationship or a marriage has nothing to do with the depth of the feelings or the compatibility of personalities. If a relationship is maintained by emotions, it will soon disappear. Why do so many couples divorce? Because of the dissatisfaction and hurt between each other, the originally good relationship turns bad, and finally they cannot stand it anymore and have to divorce. Feelings are fickle and unreliable.

Relationships and marriages are maintained through constant forgiveness!

When you commit yourself to a relationship, whether it is a relationship between a man and a woman, a relationship between brothers and sisters, a relationship between co-workers, or a relationship between friends, it means that you have decided to forgive, and you have decided to forgive continuously. There is no unity without forgiveness, because neither you nor I are perfect people, and sooner or later we will offend each other. The closer the relationship, the more offenses there are, and the more forgiveness is needed.

Without forgiveness, there can be no love!

In fact, forgiving others is not only for the benefit of the other person, but also for your own benefit, so that your soul can be liberated. It is stupid not to forgive! How miserable it is for those who are not tolerant and whose hearts are filled with bitterness! Not forgiving others is not only punishing the person who offended you, but also punishing yourself. Stop being so stupid! Let go! Forgive!