

Forgiving Others

Matthew 18:21-35

Conflicts are inevitable in any close relationship, because we are imperfect. Relationship without conflicts may be very superficial.

The main issue is not how to avoid conflicts; it is how to keep this relationship after conflicts.

Satan's conspiracy is to destroy unity and break up relationship through unforgiveness.

The greatest victim of unforgiveness is not the others, but ourselves. Unforgiving would cause us to live in continuous bitterness. Forgiving is not only for the benefits of others; it is also for ourselves. Unforgiving is breaking the bridge of relationship, so that others cannot come forward, but neither can I cross over to the other side.

But forgiving is not easy. There are painful memories, and painful memories rationalize our hatred, leading us to cast the blame on others. It is difficult to forgive just by our own effort. We need the help of God's grace. We can forgive only with the power of God.

How can we unleash this divine power of forgiveness? Here are three tips.

1. Do not forget where you came from

In this parable of Jesus, the servant was totally broke. He owed the master ten million, which in Jesus' time was an astronomical figure. What you owe God is an astronomical figure, which you can never recompense.

The older I get, the more ugly I feel about myself when I think back of the things that I did. I owe God a lot. All my good deeds are just like rotten rag before the holy God.

The great Paul said he was the sinner of sinners, because he knew his own past.

Put yourself in the place of this first servant of Jesus' parable. You owe the master ten million dollars, while the other owe you just merely ten. You have offended God much more severely than the other offending you! Do not forget where you came from. You are much worse than those who offend you.

If you have difficulty forgiving others, that means you have forgotten that you are a sinner.

In this parable, the master said "Throw this unforgiving evil servant into the jail." And then Jesus

says, "So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

2. Remember the grace of God

If you have difficulty forgiving others, this reveals a fact that you have not only forget where you came from, but also the grace of God upon you. You have not cherish the grace of God, and therefore you are still calculating on the offence of others. We have received plenty, ten million. God has forgiven all your sins. Do you know that?

If you have difficulty forgiving others, you have to change your channel of thinking. Turn to meditate on how the Lord has forgiven all your offences and debts. Then you can forgive. This is a spiritual exercise. Whenever the scene of others offending you appears in your mind, do not just sit there and admire, saying, "Oh, I was so painful! He was so bad! I was so miserable! He was so wicked!" No! Turn your channel to the channel of grace, and meditate on the grace of God.

The more you remember the grace of God upon you, the deeper you can experience God's forgiving love, and the more you can forgive other. If you cannot forgive, maybe you still have not experience this forgiving love deep enough.

3. Pray for those who offend you (Matthew 5:44-48)

Even unbelievers would be good to those who are good to them. What is so special of Christians? It is loving our enemies that make us different.

Loving enemies is very difficult, and it is impossible to do in on our own. That is why whenever the Scriptures talk about loving enemies, praying for the enemies and blessing them would follow. You have no strength to love your enemies, unless you come to God and bless them and pray for them.

We like to change others. But the Scriptures never says love your enemies and change them. No. Changing others is not your responsibility, but God's. Your responsibility is to pray and bless.

You have no strength to love your enemies, unless you come to God and pray for them and bless them. Only through blessing and praying would you have the strength to love and to forgive your enemies.

Prayers must be blessing, otherwise it can turn into a curse and complaint. Blessing is to say good things, saying the good things of others before God. Maybe you say, I have emotion and I cannot

do it. But it does not matter whether you have the proper emotion to bless others. Just obey and do it. When should you obey? Whenever you are not happy. Without feeling? Obey first, and then the feeling would come.

Bless those who offend you. Only bless, not curse. If that person keeps on offending you, keep on blessing him/her. When you do this, your heart will have the freedom to forgive, and you can see miracles in your relationship with the offender. Forgiveness can bring positive changes.

Unleash the power of forgiveness with the grace of God. God hopes to see this power of forgiveness unleashed continually from you.