

The Road to Forgiveness

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Nathaniel Bronner: Forgiving is hard work especially if you are not use to it and the bigger the transgression against you the more difficult it is but the great the reward.

Female: You are listening to BrothersOfTheWorld.com. This is Part VI of the series titled, "The Road to Forgiveness", subtitled, "Canceling the Debt" by Nathaniel Bronner. This message is number 5790, that's 5790. Listen to over a thousand free messages on BrothersOfTheWorld.com.

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Female: And now for 5790, The Road to Forgiveness, Part VI, Canceling the Debt.

Nathaniel Bronner: Welcome to Brothers of the Word because brother you need the word. And today I am at part VI of a series called, "The Road to Forgiveness." Jesus said in Matthew Chapter 6 Verse 14, "If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you, but if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins." And it's interestingly enough this verse is right after the Lord's Prayer. It is the only part of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew that Jesus comments on.

So, with all of those factors of the Lord's Prayer, the only thing that Jesus commented it on was that part. The part that we know, "forgive us our debt as we forgive our debtors" is the only part that Jesus commented it on when basically he said, "If you don't forgive other for their debts then God would not forgive you of yours." And these words are straight from Jesus. They are not interpreted. They are not restated. These are his words. This is being that God has set forth to guard and to judge and we have to go past and that his words, not mine, his words.

So, forgiveness is real important. Three famous theologians throughout history made some comments on that. Thomas Watson, the Puritan says, "A mankind is will go to hell for not forgiving as for not believing", and that's a deep statement. These are deep world famous theologian and we don't talk about hell much anymore. To be honest, but it's not a good feeling sermon when you're talking about hell. You don't just in, we want to talk about, the blessings coming, the breakthrough, the check is in the mail, that's just what we want. We don't want to hear I'm in no hell because hell is just the hell, exactly.

Its two things unfortunately, the modern church is often got us in the mood of number one, if you don't want to hear anything about anything negative and we don't want to hear anything the fact we may have to do some. What we want to hear is, Lord you know I'm here. I'm going to call your name and all this stuff just going pull on me. We don't want to hear about hell. We don't want to hear we may have to do something, but it's real. So, here when Thomas Watson, a mankind is will go to hell for not forgiving as for not believing and there were from Jesus his words, because if you can't forgiven for your sin, you're in trouble. And if you don't forgive your other folk who have sin against you, God will not forgive you.

Charles Spurgeon, super famous Baptist, unless you have forgiven others, you reap your own death warrant when you repeat the Lord's Prayer and that's deep because it's Lord, forgive me my debts as I forgive my debtors. So, when you read the Lord's Prayer, you basically say "God, you forgive me as I forgive others." Meaning, if I don't forgive others you don't forgive me. It's deep and we don't like to look at some of the -- what I called just the realities what Jesus spoke because Jesus spoke some more words that why they killed him.

They didn't kill him for just speaking just (00:04:23). No, they kill Jesus because he says some rough stuff and you cannot leave this world in truth not recognizing truth. So, that's why they said, truth will set you free, but when you read that it's more than just that. It set you free if you do the truth. Not just because you know it, you have to do it.

C.S Lewis, no part of Jesus' teaching was clear and there are no exceptions to it. He doesn't say that we are to forgive other people's sins providing they are not too frightful or providing they are extenuating circumstances.

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We are to forgive them all, however spiteful, however mean, however often they are repeated. If we don't we shall be forgiven none of our own. So, some of the step in scripture is kind of fussy, but he made that real clear that's why he repeated it. That's why he emphasized that one thing so that will be no question, no confusion. The only way you can twist it up is just not to mention

it. But he made it real clear, we have got to forgive other folk for us to be forgiven. “Well, pastor, what about grace?” We still have grace but that's why Jesus made that statement because to be honest about it, forgiving is not an easy thing.

In part VI is going to be entitled simply Canceling the Debt. How do we forgive other folk, when they have hurt us, when they have wronged us, when we still have the pain and the memory of all the disturb. It's easy to say it, but doing it is another level. Heaven is not easy, that's why Jesus said, why did the path that lead to hell, that's destruction. Why is the path that lead it to hell and a whole lot of folk won't be on that path, but narrow is the road that leads to heaven and very few would even find the road. That is just paraphrasing modern English. Hell is a six lane highway that has a traffic jam on it. Heaven is a narrow path that almost has weeds on the path because not many folk are going up.

So, if it were easy, the heavenly path would be the six lane highway and there would be many on. It's not easy, it never has been. So, nobody ever said forgiving was easy but it is necessary. It is a requirement. So preacher, how do you that? How when I had been wounded, and how when I have been hurt, how when I had been knocked down and in (00:06:52), how do I cancel the debt, how do I forgive my debtors, how?

I understand from the scripture that I need to do it, but how? And now a lot of things we want to do. There are a lot of things we recognized we need to do, but the looming question comes in so many of our minds and so many areas. How do I do this thing? Even Jesus gave us clues and keys of how to do that and it's not easy. I once saw a t-shirt that said, “The last thing I want to do is hurt you, but it's still on the list.” It may be last thing on the list, but still on the list and some folk are like, they may be the last thing they want to do to hurt you but still on that list to hurt you. So, how do you that?

After the civil war, the famous southern general, Robert E. Lee, he visited the lady up in Kentucky and there in her yard where the remains of a large grand oak tree, but the tree was all blast into bits and the thing had been split in two. It was burned up. It was torn up and the lady was talking to General Lee. She was just fussing about what the north had done and how the artillery just torn up his beautiful tree and she would just complaining and

whining about the tree and cursing at the north and all this. And she was expecting General Lee since he had been defeated by the North. She was expecting him to sympathize with all of her hurt, about all of her property that had been so devastated in particular this tree, but these are the words General Lee told her, he said, "Cut it down my dear madam and forget it." It is better to forgive the injustices of the past than to let bitterness take root and poison the rest of your life.

So, there are some trees in our world that have taken the root. We just need to cut that stuff down, but I understand it, but how? How do I cut this thing now? How do I cut this thing out of my life? How do I do that? You hear the words are nice. It sounds good, but how do I do this? How do I forgive when I have been hurt and even for some of you, you're still hurting. How do I forgive this thing? Jesus gave us keys. In Luke Chapter 6 beginning at the 27 verse, he tells us a series of things to do and all of you, you've heard this, but I tell you who hear me. Love your enemies. See that's the first thing. That's not easy. Do you all know it's not easy to love your enemy? Sometimes, it's not even easy to love your friends, much less your enemies. "Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek turn to him the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not stop him from taking your tunic.

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Give to everyone who ask you and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them and if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you, even sinners do that and if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you, even sinners lend to sinners expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them and lend to them without expecting to get anything back, then your reward will be great."

Now, all of the other part, you kind of wins up in all that, but this is the good point, yours it is the good point. "Then your reward will be great and you will be sons of the most high because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful just as your Father is merciful." What Jesus is saying is be like God. You

know, you sometimes wear the bracelet with the wwd, what would Jesus do? Jesus is telling you, but in these series of verses, he gives us four basic keys to forgiving. Number one he says, "Love your enemies." See generally, anytime you have to forgive someone whether they are an enemy or not, they have moved into what I called list the enemy mode with the thing you have to forgive them for.

So, when he says love your enemies, this is emotional. It's hard to control emotions and for someone who is really hurt you that you have to forgive it's hard to control emotions. When you just see them some happening, your blood pressure goes up just looking at him. I'm telling it, I don't care even if they in church. They just walk in to been and walk at the step, your blood pressure go up just looking at him. Loving him is out of the question. You're just trying to be neutral. You're just trying to keep from hating him, loving them is just another whole level.

How do you go love him and you can't keep your blood pressure from going up just looking at him and this is real. And see, not only do you have to worry about what they've done to you. Sometimes you go to worry about what they are doing right now. So, how can you love him and you can't even just to have neutral to them. So, it's not easy. He gave you really the most difficult part first and this is kind of the ending from the beginning. God sometimes does it because he knows the ending from the beginning. So, Jesus gave you the ending from the beginning. Love your enemies.

Number two, do good to those who hate you. You would say an enemy is the one who wants to hate you and he is actually using extremes. Most of us really don't interact. And we really don't have the stuff with people who are just direct enemies and folk who just hate us. They are kind of in between because most of time the people you got real issue with, they close to you already. They really are, you got siblings with siblings. You got husband and wife fussing in each other. And they are not just enemies, mostly they are on the same team. Sometimes you're in the same house, you're sleeping in the same bed. You are not just enemies across the line just shooting each other. No, no, no you cross to the folk.

So, he gives you the extreme so if you can learn how to handle the extreme, you're able to handle the things are not. That's what we

used to do in math. If you want to judge whether a theorem is true, you plug in an extreme number and if it is true for the extreme, it will be true for the normal. So, if you can love your enemies, somebody who just hate your guts and you know they hate your gut, you're at least being loved somebody who just don't like you.

So, you learned to handle the extreme. But number two, he says,, "Do good to those who hate you." See, love is really the emotional. It's hard to control the emotions. But doing good to them who hates you, that's an action. See, you can control actions where you cannot control emotions. But there's a psychological truth that this scientific psychology not spirituality, there is a psychological truth that when you start acting a certain way. It starts influencing your emotion. So, if you can start doing good to those folk you have an issue with eventually. I am not saying right away, but if eventually it will begin to effect your emotions. So Jesus, he starts with the end. Love your enemies, but then he says, "Do good to those that hate you, best you can do." Now, you don't want to do it but you need to do it.

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Big difference, you don't want to do it but you need to, even if something like just getting them a car or maybe said, "I want to buy you a lunch one day", or just telling a compliment, "Your hair really looks good today", even in your mind -- but see that's your emotion. That's your emotion. You can do good with an action because your action can override your emotion. But if you tell them that enough if you do good enough, it starts to change eventually your emotions. It's like love your enemies, do good to those that hate you. This is an action.

So, for those of you and you got some money and the minute I go to talking about this. Everyone in you has somebody who pops in your mind, do something good for them and do it good for them on a regular basis. You may said, "I'm going to do something good for them once a week." Do something good for them and it begins to change you and it will more than likely change them. Third thing he says is this, "Bless those who curse you." That's not easy. See, none of this stuff is easy. What would Jesus do? None of this stuff is easy. Bless those who curse you. Do you know even just driving somebody you don't even know and you may do something that may or may not be right or wrong. You may cut them off,

you may not. You just may be the delight two seconds to long and it drive back say --

When someone curses you, there is a natural physical reaction of the human nature to curse them back. You want too, that's a natural, physical reaction to react in the same spirit is put on you, but this is another one of those actions that is controllable regardless of emotion. So, you can bless someone, I bless you. I am thankful for your. I hope things really work out well for you. Well, some people say, "Pastor, that's hypocritical." I am telling what Jesus saying because he knew if you can control your actions long enough, it will eventually start changing your heart. See, out of the heart pour the issues of life. So, if you really can change what you do, sooner or later, it starts to change what' inside of you. And for the first, two, three times, you may just -- but after a while, you start getting used to it.

And you begin to train yourself how you react. I made that commitment everytime I got stop by the police. No, I don't get stop that often, but everytime I got a ticket because one of the police's fault, but you sometimes is mad when they pull you over. You're just mad. Now, you are in the wrong because that's why they pull you in the first place. But you're just mad because they pull you over and you are just looking at the officer. He was mad all frown. So, I gotten pull over three times since then and everytime I blessed the officer and I have told him to his face. Man, I blessed you. I pray God's protection over as you go and you do your job. That no harm shall happen to you or anyone close to you. I blessed him right when got my ticket.

And see, when I do that, it took the sting out of your ticket. There's something about it that just changes. See, this is what you got to understand. This forgiveness is not for the other person, this stop is for you. And when you begin to understand that it makes a difference because when you got all this fussing and all this anger with me, it messes up your world. So, when you learned just how to do this, Jesus gave you four keys and blessed those who curse you. I even got in the point where I take one day off, my day off each week is Wednesday. I got into a point where on Wednesday, not only do I make it a point to rest, I make it a point to say nothing negative about anybody on Wednesday. I just take a rest from talking negative about anybody on Wednesday.

So, I am not going to say anything negative about anybody on Wednesday. Now, Thursday morning -- but now when not Wednesday, not Wednesday. And see, the thing about it when you get Wednesday down, there is something about it if you say something negative about somebody on Thursday, it pricks your heart because it begin to change the emotion and it truly begins to change your heart. So, on Wednesday I made -- I stop saying anything negative about anybody on Wednesday and that thing begin to flow over into Thursday.

So, Jesus gave you these keys for a reason. It is spiritual but it is sound psychology. It makes a difference when you're able to change how you react and how you react to people and circumstance. Then the fourth one he says, this, he says, "You are to pray for those who mistreat you." That's the way NIB version put it. The King James says, "Pray for those that despitefully used you, mistreat us, kind of (00:19:50). And that is what it means but King James said, "Those who despitefully used you", and that's another level, but Jesus said, "Pray for them."

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So, three out of the four are actually actions not emotions. They're actions not emotion. The first one was an emotion. So, if you do the other three long enough and enough circumstances, it began to change the emotion. So, when somebody mistreats you or someone despitefully used you, most folks just praying, "Lord, bring justice on them. Get them Lord, you said vengeance is yours. Get them."

So, instead of praying that, pray for those who despitefully used you. Pray for those who despitefully used you. Bless those who cursed you. Do good to those who hate you. Those are three things that you can do. Their actions regardless of what's going on the inside of your heart. Their actions that are physical that you can do regardless of what happens and when you begin to do those three, long enough, it begins to change number one.

And love begins to enter your heart because it is not easy and anything that you have find is usually not easy, most folk don't do it. That is the other thing about it, use it. When you travel a path, it's not -- you're not only with whole other a lot folk. Folk, you want to understand what you're doing. You did what? You gave them what? You complimented who? They won't even

understand it because they are on the six lane highway. So, if you're going to be on the narrow path, you're not going to be look around to see a whole lot of folks standing in line with you. Now, a lot of times that narrow path, you are all by yourself, but it is the path to the higher levels. It is the path to peace and to joy and to contentment. You know, it is on the words for healing CD. It is a true story every word of it is true.

Young lady who is a member of the Arc was dying with cancer and I remember when I went so see her there at their apartment, and I remember God speaking. He said, "Look, if you just tell her, if she would write to everybody that she has are against who has done her wrong, write it down on a leaf, write out every name and call out that list seven times a day and tell them I forgive you." He said, "If she will do that, I will heal her of her terminal cancer." And I told her and I call her back three or four days later. How you are doing on your forgiving at the list? She just tell, she said, "Pastor, it's too hard." And she told him, she didn't try to lie about it. She said, it's too hard, I can't do it.

And I was saying to myself, look, our God says write down the names of the folk, call out their names and say that you forgive. You don't need to tell them just say it to yourself. You forgive them, it just too hard. I just can't do it and I knew when she told me that she's going to die. So, there is healing part that comes in it. And I've told you before about the book called the Healing Tone written by an oncologist, the cancer doctor and he says he has never encountered the case of cancer where there was not significance unforgiveness involve with that. So, this unforgiveness makes you sick, it kills you and it doesn't just kill your body, it kills your joy, it kills your peace. He who angers you controls you and you let this anger and these hurt, color and defines you and your life.

So, Jesus is trying to tell you folk, forgive and he told you just no answer and turns, if you don't forgive my Father in heaven, he is not going to forgive you. Now, there is a grace involved, but that's another whole sermon and I got to bring you some stuff all day what he just said right goes. He actually used the word "us" meaning if you forgive a whole lot, you'll be forgiven a whole lot. If you forgive a little bit, then you are forgiven a little bit. I want a whole lot of everything good. So, I need to forgive and I need to have all of the stuff out of my heart with anybody who I think has

not done me right. I don't care who you are. There's always going to be that.

It is just no way around it in this human existence. I don't care how good you are, how nice you are. Folk don't do you wrong. They mistreat you, they abuse you, they just will. They just know two ways about it, folk will do you wrong and it's up to you how you take that and how you let that color your life.

I believe God has for us a great reward, but don't be lazy. Forgiving is hard work especially if you are not use to it and the bigger the transgression against you, the more difficult it is but the great of the reward and just us we have been forgiven much, so do we need to forgive. Jesus said, "Don't you know Ye are Gods, don't you know Ye are Gods?" So, just as God has forgiven you, you got the divine power to forgive other folks. A bare sins against you and when you do, it changes your world.

If you are watching this by television, you can go and really listen to the entire series called The Road to Forgiveness. Forgiveness is one the principles of Christianity.

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You need this in your world for you to be joyous, happy, free and for you to get yours sins forgiven. You can go to BrothersoftheWord.com. Listen to the entire series absolutely free. We thank you for joining us today at Brothers of the World, because brother you need the word.

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