

How To Forgive And Let Go

Sermon Title: **How To Forgive And Let Go**

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Thank you for joining Brothers of the Word because brother you need the Word!

We welcome all of you joining us by Television and those of you joining us at AirJesus.com. Stay tuned to today's message. I would like to invite you to open your Bibles up in the Book of Mark – and when you get there say, 'Amen'. Verses 25 and 26, let's read verses 25 and 26 together in unison, ready read. "And when you stand praying, forgive if you have owed against any that your father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."

Let me read that from the – I really like it from the Amplified Bible. The Amplified Bible says, "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him and let it drop. Leave it, let it go. In order that your father who is in heaven may also forgive you your own failings and shortcomings and let them drop. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your failings and shortcomings."

And I just want to use as a subject, "How to Forgive and Let Go." Actually, Pastor Nathaniel ministered on this Sunday and he texted me during the week and asked me if I would begin a series just teaching on how to forgive and how to let go. So we will begin today and look at this for the next – at least for the next week. Maybe the next too and just begin to – just today, I just want to lay some foundation and begin to look at what the Bible says about forgiveness and how important it is and the role that it plays in our lives.

I did have a couple of forgiveness jokes that I ran across that I'll share. There was an exasperated salesman and he abandoned his car in a No Parking Zone and left this note. 'I've circled this block 20 times. I have an appointment and must keep it or lose my job'. And he left this Scripture saying, 'Forgive us our trespasses'. He returned to find a ticket under his wiper blade with this note attached, 'I've circled this block 20 years, if I don't give your ticket, I'll lose my job – Lead us not unto temptation.' And the sign in the convenient store said, check, and policy, to air is human to forgive is \$10.00

And it just lets us know that everybody makes mistakes and it lets us know that forgiveness costs more than \$10.00. A lot of times forgiveness costs you your pride, you have to swallow your pride, you have to swallow your hurt and you've got to swallow your pain. You have to swallow anger and resentment and all of these things. So forgiveness calls you a lot more than \$10.00 but I want you to know it pays so much more. It pays so much more to forgive.

And so we see, forgiveness in these two scriptures, these two verses that we read, Jesus he lets us know pretty plainly that forgiveness is a choice. Notice, he said that, when you're praying, if you have anything against anybody, forgive him, drop

it, leave it, let it go. And so, he lets us know that that's our choice. We have the power to do that. If we didn't have the power to forgive people, we didn't have control over our own emotions to be able to forgive freely then he would have been unjust to instruct us to forgive. But Jesus is letting us know that forgiveness is something that's under our power. It's under our control.

You control your emotions. You have to take responsibility for your emotions and whether you're going to walk around with your lip poked out and your heart stalled against somebody or you are going to allow the peace and the joy and the forgiveness and the grace of God to flood your lives. So he's letting us know that it's your choice. So forgiveness is a choice.

Turn to your neighbor and say, 'Forgiveness is a choice'. When you hear someone say, I can't forgive that person. I just can't forgive them for what they have done. No, really what they are saying is 'I choose not to forgive that person for what they have done'. Forgiveness is a choice. It's a decision that you make.

And so, Jesus repeatedly shared with us that when we fail to forgive our fellowmen that we in turn block our own forgiveness from God. We block our own forgiveness from God and so, Jesus is basically saying, now, if you don't want to forgive, keep in mind you're not perfect yourself. You are not perfect. Now that might be a flash notice to some of you. You are not perfect. Sometimes we forget that. We forget that we aren't perfect and we need forgiving. And that's the point that Jesus is trying – he said – Look, don't forget you need forgiving too.

So anytime you're tempted to harbor some resentment or anger against somebody for what they have done, Jesus is saying – Don't forget you are not perfect, you mess up all the time. And if you don't want God holding up on your stuff, don't you hold up anybody else's stuff. So Jesus said – Look, let forgiveness flow freely. Let it flow freely for your own sake.

And this is what I really began to realize as I looked in to it. Forgiveness is really for our own sake. It's not necessarily for the person that offended us because in most cases the person that offend us don't even know it. They just go on happy go lucky. They are living life and we're all in the dark and we're upset and we're not enjoying life and we're frustrated and they are going on by their business. And we do not even realize, we're not affecting them, we're affecting ourselves.

So forgiveness honestly is more for us than it is for the other person. So Jesus lets us know it's for us because he said – Look, you are not going to be forgiven, you're holding up your own forgiveness if you don't forgive other people. So he let us know you're not perfect. You are not perfect yourself, you make mistakes, you make blunders, you sinned, you have short comings, you need God's grace continually in

your life and so, you also are required to live with his grace flowing freely from your life to forgive others.

Actually, you don't have to turn there but the book of Ephesians 4:2, in one translation, it actually says, make allowances. In other words it's saying, give people a little room to mess up because they are human. I like this definition. I have lived by this definition for quite a while but, it's a definition of love and love is an unconditional commitment to an imperfect person. Love is an unconditional commitment to an imperfect person.

And so the Bible is letting us know in Ephesians 4:2, it said, 'make allowances because people are going to mess up and have a little room for error, have a little margin for error. No one is perfect. So, people are going to make mistakes. So make allowances for that. Have some room there to be able to forgive, to get over things.

Jesus, when he went out with his disciples, one thing he taught them so that they wouldn't hold grudges and get angry and resent people. He said, 'Look, when you all go to people's houses and they reject, you know, what they are bringing, Jesus said, dust your feet off and keep moving.' He said, 'Don't waste your time getting on – being out of shape and resenting and getting angry and frustrated and getting tied to that rejection'. No, Jesus said – Dust your feet off, keep on moving. And that's the way we have to treat unforgiveness when we have any problems with people.

Learn – if you just follow that simple principle, dust your feet and keep moving. Dust it off, don't hold on to it. Dust it off and keep moving. The Apostle Paul, he was over on an island and he was building a fire, a viper came out and latched on to his hand and people were waiting for him to fall dead because they knew that that snake was poisonous. The way the Bible says, Paul just shook it off and kept right on going.

And so, that's the way you have to do when venomous people, venomous things try to attach themselves... No just like Paul, shake it off, keep right on when the poison of Satan tries to enter your life, shake it off, don't harbor it – shake it off and keep right on going. The Bible warns us explicitly – in Ephesians it says, one reason we have to forgive is so that Satan won't get an advantage – so that he won't have an advantage in your life. When you hold unforgiveness in your heart and you won't forgive other people – Oh man, Satan is – he's in the background doing like this. You're just invited him in and he is – he now has free course to operate in your life because you've now given him a foothold. You've given him opportunity, you've given him advantage, and you've given him something to work with. So anytime we have some resentment or harboring, some ill feelings towards someone, the Devil is just getting ready. He's an old goody-goody; you know he's now ready to operate because we have now given him something to work with.

So the Bible says, be very careful because you give the Devil advantage and he would desire nothing more than to destroy – see your relationships destroyed, to see you all tensed up and stressed out and to see you sick, see you not enjoying life all because of something that happens. Oh nothing will give him more joy than to see that. So the Bible warns us not to allow him to – to get an advantage or to have an opportunity or to have a foothold to operate in our lives.

I'm telling you man, you know, the more I begin to look at it, I begin to really see how powerful forgiveness is and I begin to see how deadly, unforgiveness is in our lives. Something that, it was an article in the “Healthy Living Magazine”, written by Joe London and she said holding on to anger resentment and hurt. Only gives you tense muscles, a headache and a sour jaw from clenching your teeth. But then she says, forgiveness gives you back the laughter and the likeness in your life. You know, I agree with her. You know, forgiveness, it frees you – I'm glad I said that.

Turn to your neighbor and say, I'm glad he said that. I'm glad I said that because I have forgotten to give you this earlier. Forgiveness frees you. Here's something I discovered. The Aramaic word for forgive means literally to untie, literally it means to untie. So when you're in on forgiveness, you have tied yourself, you're bound to the pain; you're bound to the anger. You're bound to whatever it was that calls to controversy. You're bound to suffering; you're bound to life without joy. You're bound to mission out on the full bounty, fullness of life and joy and peace and you're bound. So you're Imprisoned, you're imprisoned, so unforgiveness literally locks you up in prison because when you're in on forgiveness, you start setting up these walls, thinking that you're protecting yourself but you're not protecting yourself on what you have done as in closed yourself. You've imprisoned yourself.

So you've set these walls up, thinking you're putting up a defense against somebody else but when you look around you'll find out, you've imprisoned yourself. So the word forgive in Aramaic literally means to untie. You lose yourself. Louis Meeds said, he said – to forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that prisoner was you. When you forgive you're setting a prisoner free and you find out that you were the prisoner. So, forgiveness is so powerful and unforgiveness is so – I read something else, I wanted to share with you – Some of the interesting benefits I read about forgiveness and this was in several health journals but this one was taken from the journal of behavioral medicine. And it says—forgiveness is good for your heart. I'm not talking about your spiritual heart; it's talking about your literal heart. It's talking about the pump that pumps blood through your body. It says, they were speaking of one study in the particular journal. They found that forgiveness was associated with having a lower heart rate and lower blood pressure as well as stress relief – relieving stress, relieving harmful chemical activity from the body.

Another – later study found forgiveness to be positively associated with five measures of health, physical symptoms, medications used, sleep quality, fatigue and

somatic complaints. Those five areas of health, and they also found out that forgiveness has significant impact on our overall health. Forgiveness also, not only restores the relationship with the person that you have the problem with. It not only restores that relationship and gives you peace there but it says that when you forgive and have that restoration brought in to your life, forgiveness actually affects all of your other relationships.

When you have righted a wrong in your life that you have with one person, that now frees you to be more generous with everybody else. There's something about it, they said that the charitable giving is greater. They said, people volunteer more, when they have forgiven, it actually frees up their charity to all other relationships, just because you release something in one relationship, and it makes sense because you are a happier person. And because you've become a happier person, you are happy to volunteer. What time do you need me to be there, I would love to come out and help with the kids – See you are happier.

And so, it gives you a greater sense of charity to volunteer or to give. You are more generous because you're happier, because forgiveness has untied you from being locked up and chained up to these things that steal joy out of your life. So just some interesting, very powerful things I'm beginning to run across. I also ran across a story about this man. He was an older gentleman and for years his hand had just literally closed up, you know, as if it was just severe arthritis or something wrong with his joints, he couldn't even straighten his fingers out and so he was just living with his hand just literally closed in a fist.

And he said, the most amazing thing, he said, he had lived for years like this. He said the most amazing thing happened. He was in church and the Pastor was teaching exactly what I'm teaching – on forgiveness. And he said, after he heard that message he went back and began to examine his heart and he began to forgive people. And he said, as he began to forgive people, he said a month ago, one finger was straightened out. He said another month ago another finger was straightened out. He said, he saw the correlation so he said, he kept forgiving, he just went in through his mental catalogue and began to forgive everybody and he said, all of his hands straightened out when he got unforgiveness out of his heart.

I said, "My God! Wow!" You know, we never realize we never would realize the physical maladies and ailments that we might be causing in our own bodies and we don't even realize what we've done to ourselves all because we've harbored some resentment and unforgiveness and some ill feeling toward somebody. Somebody robbed us the wrong way, somebody ripped us off and we're not going to forget that. We're not going to forget that. You ripped me off, we are not going to forget that.

I had a man ripped me off, this man ripped me off for \$2000.00 over the internet. I had sent him \$2000.00 for an investment. He has started a business and he was

taking investments and I was investing in his business, \$2000.00. It seemed like the day after I sent him \$2000.00, his website vanished. And I tried to contact him and there was no response, so that was a sinking feeling that hit my stomach. I knew I had been ripped off. I knew I had been ripped off and this was years ago, \$2000.00 that's a lot of money now.

How many of you all would like a \$2000.00 you know, \$2000.00 is a lot of money. And you know, that was at a time where \$2000.00 was just precious. Well, I keep saying it, it is precious now. If you don't believe me, I'd be more than happy to receive \$2000.00 immediately following service, if there's anybody from the kindness of your heart and you feel so bad that I was ripped off of my \$2000.00, and you want to repay that, I would be more than happy to accommodate you after service. But man, that thing did something to me. It was hard to forget. That's a hard feeling to swallow. And I know all of the spiritual stuff and I know all of the scriptures, I know what Jesus said but that's \$2000.00

Man, I tried to operate in everything else but forgiveness. I started sending him all threat in emails. Look here sir, you got to answer for this. You know, I was sending him all types of emails. In fact, I think Pastor James is going through something similar. As I think about it, I think Pastor James wrote to his people, he said, if you don't send my money back I'm going to set up a website blasting you all. So Pastor James wasn't thinking about forgiveness either. He wasn't thinking about it either, so it is difficult. Forgiveness can be difficult.

Turn to your neighbor and say, Forgiveness can be very difficult. It's necessary but it can be difficult. So I want to make that distinction. Jesus lets us know it is absolutely necessary but you must understand that it can be difficult. So nobody said, it was easy, it can be difficult.

You think about certain martyrs in the Bible, Steven, he was being stoned and while he was being stoned, he's being killed and he said – Father forgive them. They don't know what they're doing. Man, that took an elevated spirit, somebody is killing you and he's forgiving them while they were killing him. Jesus said the same thing. Father don't lay this to their charge, forgive them, they don't know what they are doing. So he teaches us something about being able to forgive and even in pressing difficult situations where we can still walk in the freedom and the power that forgiveness brings.

So today, we just laid the foundation, we'll get into some steps and some other truths and principles about how to forgive and how to let go.

Those of you watching by television, I want you to go to AirJesus.com. You can listen to this message, Message #7468 "How to Forgive and Let Go". You can also email it to a friend absolutely free of charge.

Thank you so much for joining us today at Brothers of the Word because brother,
you need the Word!