

# The Gift of Forgiveness

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Date: 10 May 2015

[ 0 : 00 ] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

Take your Bibles now, if you want to go with me to Matthew chapter 18 and verse 21. Mothers, we are glad you're here today. And we thank God for every one of you.

And what a privilege it is to be a mother. Now, we're going through the Bible. And the Lord has just allowed us to come upon a passage of Scripture that's about forgiveness. The Bible said, Then came Peter to him and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?

Till seven times? Jesus said unto him, I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which should take account of his servants.

And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him and owed him ten thousand talents. But for as much as he had not to pay, his Lord commanded him to be sold, his wife and children and all that he had in payment to be made.

[ 1 : 12 ] The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience of me and I will pay them all. Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion and loosed him and forgave him the debt.

But the same servant went out and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him a hundred pence. And he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

And his fellow servant fell down at his feet and besought him, saying, Have patience with me and I will pay thee all. And he would not, but went and cast him into prison till he should pay the debt.

So when his fellow servant saw what was done, they were very sorry and came and told unto their Lord all that was done. Then his Lord, after that, he had called unto him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt because thou desiredst me.

Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his Lord was wroth or angry, and he delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due unto him.

[ 2 : 14 ] So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, If you, from your hearts, forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Father in heaven, I thank you so very much for your goodness and your kindness. And I pray that you'd make this passage of scripture come alive and real in our hearts. I pray you'd help us to forgive our mothers, our dads, our brothers, our sisters, our neighbors, our family members, those who have hurt us intentionally or accidentally.

I pray today that you'd help us to leave with less hatred and bitterness in our heart, hurt gone, free, released from the pressure of all the things that have hurt us for so long.

And I will give you great honor and glory and praise for all that you do. We love you and thank you. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. I'm looking forward to sharing this wonderful passage of scripture with you.

And I promise you, at least in my life, in the lives of some of the guys that are working with me this week on it, this passage of scripture is going to make a difference. Let God speak to your heart. All right.

[ 3 : 19 ] Take your Bibles, if you would, and turn to Matthew chapter 18. What a privilege it is to open the word of God and always find exactly what we need for where we are and what's going on in our lives.

Would there be anybody here this morning that would be honest and say, man, I have headaches and stomach aches and muscle tension and joint pain and dizziness and tiredness.

I can't sleep. I got ulcers. High blood pressure. I'm no fun to be around. Did you know that forgiveness, a lack of forgiveness, causes all of those things on medical webpages?

In fact, the negative power of feeling bitter is so strong that the authors of one article called for the creation of a new diagnosis called PTED, Post Traumatic Embitterment Disorder.

They always got to come up with a name for it, don't they? To describe people who can't forgive others' transgressions against them. A lack of forgiveness, which often occurs as a result of having been hurt, humiliated, angered, having suffered fear or loss, feelings of guilt or envy can have profound effects on the way your body functions.

[ 4 : 33 ] It puts your body in a state of stress. Muscles tighten, causing imbalances or pain to the neck, back, and limbs. Blood flow to the joints is restricted, making it more difficult for the blood to remove waste from the tissues and reduces the supply of oxygen and nutrients to the cells.

Normal processes of repair and recovery from injury or arthritis are impaired. Clenching of the jaws contributes to problems with teeth and joint pains.

Headaches can become a problem. Chronic pain may get worse. Digestion is impaired. Breathing is more difficult. It impairs your immune system.

It increases the risk of infection and sickness. In this passage of Scripture, Jesus is going to talk to his disciples about forgiveness.

Matthew 18, we've been talking about the body and the family and the church and how we work together. And he comes to this last part. And he's going to teach us some major things I hope you'll write down and consider with me straight out of the Bible.

[ 5 : 40 ] I am not picking on anybody. It's straight out of the Bible. If this seems to hit home, I'm glad. If you say, man, that seems to nail me. You just described my physical symptoms.

You don't have to pay a medical bill after it's over. But you can get right spiritually and you may go home happier today. First thing he says in the passage is, we are to forgive.

We are to forgive. Look at Matthew 18 and verse 21. Peter came and said to the Lord, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?

How about up to seven times? And the Lord said, no, how about 70 times seven? Peter felt like he was being generous and he'd forgive so many times. But Jesus took it to the nth degree.

How many of you know what the nth degree is? Hold your hand up. I was working with some young people today the other day on this. And they said, what in the world is the nth degree? That means they never took a math class.

[ 6 : 40 ] Amen? But the nth degree refers to the highest possible number. You see, we're to forgive beyond what anybody could ever understand.

Because forgiveness is a way of life for us. The Bible says in Matthew chapter 5 and verse 39 that we are to not resist evil.

Instead, we are to turn. When they hit us on our right cheek, we turn our left cheek to them also. In Matthew chapter 5 and verse 40, if they sue us, we just go ahead and give them the cloak that goes with it.

In Matthew chapter 5 and verse 41, if the Roman soldier told them to walk a mile carrying their pack, Jesus said, just go ahead and walk two miles while you're with them. In fact, as in Matthew 5, verse 44, he said, I say unto you, love your enemies.

Bless them that curse you. Do good to them that hate you. Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. In other words, Jesus taught us to forgive.

[ 7 : 43 ] If you would agree that that's what scripture teaches, say amen. The apostle Paul emphasized that in Ephesians 4, 32 when he said, And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

So you are to forgive and be tenderhearted and merciful as God, who for Jesus Christ's sake forgave you. We're following Christ's example.

The Bible says in Luke 23, 34, as they nailed him to a tree, he said, Father, forgive them. They know not what they do. So there's a lesson in the passage of scripture today.

We are to forgive as born again believers. We are to forgive. Now, no one could do that. No one could even understand that who hasn't experienced such a great salvation as we have.

Now, this salvation and forgiveness story may seem so out of proportion, you can't believe it. The problem is, if you aren't forgiven, you won't get the concept.

[ 8 : 49 ] Today's your day. You can trust Christ. Now, I'm going to walk you through the lesson Jesus taught. But let me just say, I want you to think right quickly about whoever it is you're mad at.

Is it your mother? Here, when I was getting ready to prepare the message, I said, has anybody ever preached on forgiveness on Mother's Day? So I went to Google, and I said, forgiveness, Mother's Day.

I couldn't believe it. Article after article said, it's time for you to forgive your mother. Well, I always knew everybody hated us dads. I had no idea people hated their mothers.

And it was like, you should forgive your mother. Why you should forgive your mother. How to forgive your mother. So evidently, at least across the United States of America, there is a mother-forgiving problem.

But if you forget that, there's still others. Maybe it was your uncle. Maybe it was your brother. Maybe it was your sister. Maybe it was your neighbor. Maybe it was somebody else, a Sunday school teacher. But all of us have been done wrong somewhere along the way.

[ 9 : 50 ] And we carry in our hearts this bitterness that is hindering us. And you're going to see that in the Scripture today. But the first thing I hope you write down alongside that verse is we are to forgive.

We are to forgive. So to explain his point, Jesus loves to tell stories. So he tells a story in verse 23. He's a storyteller.

And he tells a story of a king and his servants in verse 23. And he calls his servants to come give an account to him. And he calls the men. Both the servants in the story are his servants to the same king.

This king here would represent God. And he calls them in. And the first guy came in. And he owed his king 10,000 talents. 10,000 talents.

Now, we don't understand that. That doesn't work in our generation. But he didn't have any way he could pay that. So you can understand. And they may throw some slides up. Not sure.

[ 10 : 53 ] We'll let them see what they can do, when they can do it. But 10,000 talents was about 200,000 years of salary for a working man. Or 4,255 people working an entire lifetime could have paid off the 10,000 talents.

10,000 talents was worth about 750,000 pounds of gold. It would be worth about \$108 billion with a B in today's money.

The servant couldn't pay that amount. Even if he had been given the opportunity. The servant, in verse 26, falls down. Starts begging.

He's not singing praise songs right now. When we use that word worship here. It's like he's on his feet, on his knees, and he's groveling. And he's begging. He says, Lord, please have patience.

And I will pay you. So I can help you understand the story. Bill Gates' net worth by Forbes magazine is approximately \$79 billion.

[ 12 : 05 ] He is the richest man in the world. In the latest Forbes update. His net worth, Bill Gates' net worth, is worth more than the GDP of 140 countries.

He is worth more than 140 countries. By the way, there are only 200 countries in the world. There are only 60 countries have more money than Mr. Gates.

But if he paid all that he had towards \$108 billion, he would still be \$29 billion in debt. So he'd need another 104 countries to give him the money.

Meaning that if Gates could pay all that he had, he'd have to get that much more money. And if he got it paid, he would be out of debt, but still homeless and destitute.

Just remember, you are not Bill Gates. By a long shot. The point is, in the story, that the debt was impossible to pay.

[ 13 : 16 ] And you owed a debt you couldn't pay either. It was Jesus who paid your debt. The salvation you enjoy is not something you could have ever done on your own.

The salvation, the salvation. See, here's the real story. In the story, the story is you're going to forgive. And you need to understand that the guy who owes \$108 billion, that's me.

I owe \$108 billion. And I owe it to God. And there's absolutely no way I could ever pay. If my name was Bill Gates and I got rid of everything I had, I'd still come up nearly \$30 billion short.

There's like 140 countries. Look at my guess, like 140 countries that don't even have that much as their gross national product of the whole year. Even the \$30 billion.

The servant simply asked to be forgiven. And the king was merciful. Look at 27. Chapter 18, verse 37. The Lord of that servant was moved with compassion.

[ 14 : 24 ] What a sweet and wonderful king. And he loosed him. And he forgave him the debt. That is all that is done when you get saved.

You realize you've sinned. You realize that you're unable to please God. You ask for grace and mercy from a God who loved you before you ever loved him. And he comes to you when you couldn't and offers you salvation.

That's what happened when we got saved. Amen? Amen? You woke up one day and you realize, man, I would never ever fix this. If I started right now and for the rest of my life I lived a holy and pure life and never did another thing wrong, I still couldn't make up for all the messes I've caused up until now.

Well, the servant in the story that Jesus told who had been forgiven was still thinking only of himself. So he went looking to money.

You got to understand, he just goes in there. He owes \$108 billion and he says to the king, King, I can't pay. And the king had threatened to sell his children. The king had threatened to sell his wife.

[ 15 : 29 ] The king had threatened to put him in prison. The king had threatened all this. But the king had mercy. But when he got up and walked out of there, he was still bitter and angry. And he felt like people owed him.

And if he felt like I've been treated this way, somebody else ought to get treated this way. So in verse 28, that same servant went out and found one of his fellow servants that owed him a hundred pence.

And he laid hands on him and took him by the throat and said, You pay me what you owe me. And the servant fell down and begged him and said, Well, please, have patience.

I'll pay it all. Now, a hundred pence would be less than 17 weeks of wages for a working man. A McDonald's worker working one job could be debt-free in less than six months and still be able to eat.

And that's what he owed. But the forgiven refused to forgive. The forgiven refused to forgive.

[ 16 : 37 ] Look at verse 30. And he would not. But he went and cast him into prison until he should pay the debt. So here's the guy who got forgiven of \$108,200,000 years of payment.

Turns around to another guy who owes less than six months of payments. Will not have mercy on the guy that did six months' worth. But is sure glad he got mercy on \$200,000. Others couldn't understand how a person who had received such great grace could be so cruel to others.

You see, there were people watching the whole story. They watched a man walk into the palace, owing \$108,000,000, assuming that guy would be put in prison, assuming he would lose everything, assuming he would be ruined.

And they watched him walk out of that room forgiven. No debt. Losing nothing. Paying nothing. All by mercy. All by grace. And they watched him walk right out of the palace where he was forgiven.

Find another man who owes him about \$5,800. Grab him by the throat. Body slam him to the ground. And say, you will pay me. And the guy said, please have mercy on me.

[ 17 : 47 ] And he said, no way. You're going to jail. So in verse 31, his fellow servants saw what was done and they were sorry. And they came and told to the Lord all that was done.

Then the Lord, after he had called, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee thy debt. But because you asked me to. You desired it.

The king wanted to know how it was that the forgiven could still have such selfishness and hatred in his heart.

Verse 33, Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, just like I had pity on you? Looks to me like after I showed you pity, you could have showed him pity.

But in verse 34, he's turned over the tormentor to receive what he actually deserved. And God warns us that if we do not forgive, we will never truly enjoy the forgiveness we have been given.

[ 19 : 01 ] Verse 35, So likewise shall my heavenly father do also unto you, if you in your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses. I think we all know the story.

So we're going to move into some real application and take that story and apply it. But let's review the story real quick, just briefly. We have a king who owns everything. We have a servant who owes \$108 billion approximately.

He calls the servant in and he says, Servant, you owe me, and I want it paid right now. And the servant says, I don't have it to pay, but if you'd be patient with me, I'll pay it, which was not possible.

In his whole lifetime, Bill Gates has gotten up to \$79 billion. He's going to need another \$29 billion. And you aren't Bill Gates. You're just probably a regular guy.

You probably, in this room, there's probably some pretty wealthy people. But I doubt there's any billionaires in here. There might be some small millionaires in here, but I doubt there's any billionaires.

[ 20 : 08 ] And if you are a billionaire, I would really like you to just throw us a little bit of money and we'll go ahead and build a building. Amen? I mean, some of you billionaires come off of it. Amen? And so anyway, he comes out of the door and he finds a guy that owes \$5,800, less than \$6,000, that a guy could make payments on in 17 weeks at minimum wage.

And he grabs him by the throat and says, I have no mercy on you. In the story, Jesus said, so the king called the first guy and put him on in prison. That's not a story about you losing your salvation, but it is a story about you learning to enjoy your forgiveness.

It's not a story about you losing your salvation, but it is a story about you learning to enjoy your forgiveness. So the third thing I wish you'd write down here is, Jesus is teaching us how to forgive.

Jesus is teaching us how to forgive. Matthew chapter 6 and verse 9. We forgive as we pray. When you pray, if you're a godly Christian and you've learned anything about praying, you know that when you pray, you follow this model, somehow, some distant form, you follow this model that Jesus gave in Matthew chapter 6 and verse 9.

After this matter, therefore, pray ye, our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven.

[ 21 : 34 ] Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. In verse 14, he said, For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses.

Now, your salvation is not dependent upon forgiving each other. But the hard attitude shown makes it clear that if you're not a forgiver, you will not reap the benefits of being forgiven.

And I'll show you what the benefits are in a minute. But some of us have been forgiven, and we should be enjoying all the sweetness of being forgiven, and having a forgiving spirit, and having a different lifestyle, and bitterness out of our heart, and hatred out of our heart, and love overflowing in our heart.

That's who we should be. That's not. If you're still bitter and hateful though you are forgiven, then you're still in the prison of loneliness, and isolation, hurt, that's destroying you, and all around you.

[ 22 : 48 ] You might be forgiven. You might be on your way to heaven. But your own personal bitterness is keeping you in a prison that isolates you. You're isolated from your family.

You're lonely. You're hurting. You're destroying all those around you. This isn't a work added to your salvation, but a truth revealing what happens in our hearts as we selfishly seek for ourselves while not for others.

You may be forgiven, but you will never get the blessings of being free from the guilt till you surrender your right to hate others. And here's what happens.

He said he forgave me. I believe what he said, but I don't feel it because I know that I can't forgive and I can't get it out of my heart.

So I'm pretty sure since I'm still mean and bitter and hateful and wanting to hurt people, that's probably how he's feeling about me. Even though I am saved and even though he gave me his word, I can't enjoy it because the whole time I'm looking at you, I'm thinking he must be looking at me.

[ 23 : 53 ] And so I'm missing out on what God has for me. I'm missing out on what God has for me. Real forgiveness has several steps involved in it. 2 Corinthians 2 and verse 6.

The Bible says, sufficient to such a man is this punishment which was afflicted of many, so that contrary-wise, you ought rather to forgive him.

Now, I wish you'd open your Bible there. In 2 Corinthians 2, verses 6 and following, and I want you to understand, this guy is probably the guy from 1 Corinthians 5 who's been sleeping with his daddy's wife and he's been doing wrong, but he's decided to get his life right and they say, forgive him.

Forgive him. And then it says, comfort him. Look at verse 7. Forgive him. Circle that. Verse 7. Comfort him. Circle that. Comfort him.

Verse 7. Don't let him be swallowed up with over much sorrow. Let him get over it. It's amazing. Sometimes people do wrong and we say we forgive them, but we do whatever it takes to keep them feeling really down.

[ 25 : 02 ] We enjoy the power of saying, you're forgiven, but we remember everything you did. He said, so let him get over that. Verse 8, he said, confirm your love.

That means you're probably going to have to hug him and love him and say it a thousand times so they begin to think, maybe he loves me more than my failure.

In verse 9, Paul said, I'm watching to see the proof of you. I want to see if you're obedient, he says in verse 9. Verse 11, he says, because if you don't forgive, Satan wins.

I'll read you some things. I want you to think about that, but let me show you something. Man, churches are so full of hurt and bitter people. We've been forgiven by God, and I know you're saved, and praise God for grace and mercy, but we're holding on to all this junk.

And so we walk around with our guard up. We walk around ready, thinking everybody's going to hit us, and we won't forgive anybody who's done us wrong, because even though we've been forgiven, we kind of don't believe we're forgiven.

[ 26 : 08 ] We kind of can't accept forgiveness, and so it makes us wrong. The person had repented. They were to forgive him, to comfort him, to confirm their love, to make sure he didn't get swallowed up in too much sorrow.

That means don't mention it again. Don't keep bringing it up. Don't do things that put focus on the failure, but rather on the victory. Can I stop and say that's why when Paul writes a letter to Christians, not one of his letters is ever written to you sinners at such and such church.

Every letter is written to you saints at such and such a church, to you sanctified, to you called to be holy. You were like that, but you're not like that anymore.

You've been washed, and justified, and cleansed. He doesn't bring up your junk. He brings up the new life he gave you. Say amen. He's a wonderful God. If they didn't forgive correctly, Satan was going to get an advantage.

We are to forgive as we have been forgiven. Look at me, if you would, at Colossians chapter 3 and verse 13. Forbearing one another and forgiving one another.

[ 27 : 21 ] Even as, if any man have a quarrel against you, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. Now listen to this. I want you to just write down some little notes about how he forgave us.

He didn't forgive us for anything that we did. Now listen to me. Hey, he didn't forgive you because you got baptized. He didn't forgive you because you wrote your name on a church letter.

He didn't forgive you because you prayed a certain prayer. He didn't forgive you that way. He forgave you because he was good. He didn't wait for you to love him. He loved you first. I'm going to read the verses to you here in a second. So when you forgive, you forgive first.

You forgive before they ever ask. You forgive if they deserve it or not. That's how he did it with us. Our prayer didn't get us forgiveness. We were forgiven because he is good.

God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. Look with me at 2 Corinthians 5, verse 19. To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

[ 28 : 35 ] You see, God was in Christ. So there wasn't this idea that the great God of heaven was sitting up in heaven saying, I'm going to destroy them. And Jesus walks up and says, Calm down, God.

Calm down, God. I'll go die for them. That's not the story. That's not the story. The story was that God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, they're all one. And when Jesus came down to die, God was in Christ dying on the cross.

God loved you. When you didn't deserve to be loved, when there was nothing lovely about you, when you weren't even saved, when you weren't even born, when you hadn't even sinned, he already loved you.

That's what it says. God was in Christ. He loved us when we totally did not deserve it. We deserve the very opposite. Look at Romans chapter 5 and verse 6.

Mark it in your Bible. But when we were yet without strength, underline that, when did he love me? When I couldn't. When I just didn't have the muscles to do it.

[ 29 : 39 ] When I just couldn't breathe anymore. When I couldn't try anymore. When there was nothing left that I could do. When I was without strength. In due time, Christ died for the what?

Help me. What's it say? He died for the what? He didn't die for the godly. It ain't like God was up in heaven saying, I'm going to die for all you good people. God looked down and said, you're a bunch of scumbags. You all deserve to go to hell.

And there ain't nothing you can do to save yourself. So I'm just going to die for you while you're without strength. And while you're ungodly, I'll die for you. How am I supposed to forgive? I'm supposed to forgive like God did.

For Christ's sake. Can you say amen right there? Let's read another verse. Romans chapter 5 and verse 8 right there also. But God commended his love toward us. And that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

I think, in my opinion, the sweetest word in Romans 5, 8 is yet. I wish you put a circle around that word yet. When did he die for you? After you quit smoking, cussing, drinking, dancing, and going with him to do.

[ 30 : 42 ] After you got saved, baptized, took the Lord's Supper, fasted for 40 days, and gave a million dollars in the offering. He died for you while you were still a sinner. Yet a sinner.

Amen? You were forgiven because Jesus took our consequences. The benefits of forgiving. When you learn to forgive, it releases you.

It gets the focus off of you. Don't you know what they did to me? Don't you know how I feel? Don't you realize what my first husband did to me?

Don't you know what my first wife did to me? Don't you know what my dad did to me? I mean me, and me, and me, and me, and me, and me, and me, and me, and me, and me, and me, and me.



But if you forgive, you can quit talking about you so much. It'll release you. You'll get the focus off of you. Forgiving others, or maybe even your mom of their deficiency and hurts against you will bring healing to them and to you.

[ 31 : 52 ] We walk around so bitter, everybody's hurting. This frees them as well as us. Before I go on, can I remind you, you're teaching your children how to treat you?

I'll give you a hint. Your parents probably messed up. There's some things they said and did that weren't quite right, and they could have done a better job. But now you're a parent.

And your children have watched you hate your parents, and now your children learn how to hate you when it's their turn. Forgiveness might help you too.

Say amen. Happy Mother's Day. Put yourself in their shoes.

Consider what you say and think about when you mess up. It's amazing, isn't it? When I mess up, I know why I messed up. I mean, I didn't mean to.

[ 33 : 03 ] And I can look back at all the messes I've made over the years. Man, I've made so many. The biggest sinner you'll ever know. But when I look back, I can say, man, I had good intentions.

When I was too rough on my children, I didn't mean to be too rough. I thought I was doing the right thing. So put yourself in the shoes of that person.

Say, well, they were wrong. Well, maybe they were just stupid. Maybe they're blind. Maybe they didn't know any better. Maybe the devil's messing with them. Whatever it was, because when you mess up, you're going to figure out why you did it. We're quick to let ourselves off the hook.

Aren't we? I mean, you might have done something wrong yourself. Put yourself in your shoes. Realize you owed a debt you couldn't pay.

You remember, in the story, you're not the poor little victim that owed \$5,800. The story's not about that. In the story Jesus told, you owe \$108 billion.

[ 34 : 07 ] And it's your great salary that you're making right now. You ain't never going to get up to Bill Gates. I doubt he's got your personal phone number. I doubt you had supper with him this past week.

I doubt you're even in his friends list. I bet on LinkedIn, he ain't linked to you. I bet on Facebook, he hadn't made a friend out of you. Because Bill Gates is like another stratosphere from us.

And I'm the guy who owed \$108 billion. It's pretty hard when you're raised in a good home like I was and your mom and dad took you to church and you never did all those big, bad, bully, worldly things that people talk about.

You could easily think you're pretty good until you think about how God sees you. He writes stories in the Bible about who he hates and you know, he hates that proud look that us Baptists have more than he hates a lot of other things.

And we're kind of like, well, I never committed adultery. And I never murdered anybody. And I, one of the first things he hates in the book of Proverbs is that proud look. Well, we're good at that one, aren't we?

[ 35 : 19 ] But it's an abomination to our God. We're the one. I need to look at myself and realize I owed a debt I couldn't pay. Realize that holding on to the grudge is hurting you worse than it is the other person.

You're setting an example for your children and others to follow. Bitter mamas have bitter babies. Unforgiving mamas have unforgiving babies.

In fact, it's usually unforgiveness gets in between them and before it's over. It is your choice. You can choose to be a victim or you can choose to be a victor and forgive.

Let me give you some steps real quick. I'm through. Believe with all your heart that it's God's will that you forgive like he has forgiven you. Here's the wonderful thing.

Did you know that I know more about your sin than God knows about your sin? If we went to the God of heaven right now and said, do you remember when so-and-so did so-and-so, God would say, no, I don't.

[ 36 : 32 ] You say, well, God, you know everything. He'd say, well, you know, I buried that in a sea of forgetfulness. I put that behind my back. I separated that as far from you as the east is from the west. I blotted it out.

I nailed it to a cross. Sorry. Don't remember. But we remember. Forgiveness means to release them from what they owe you.

Forgiveness means to give the gift of mercy. Forgiveness means to choose to move forward and not get lost in your past. The person you're holding a grudge against likely tried their best.

They might not have handled things correctly. They were trying and doing what they knew to do. Can I just stop here and say this for some of us? You're saying, no, no, they were wicked. And they mistreated me, and that's why I'm like I am.

And if I went to them, you know what they'd say? I didn't mean to be like I was, but they were mean to me. And that's why I am like I am. And they just keep passing that bitterness on down. Don't they?

[ 37 : 38 ] Come on, tell the truth. Isn't it time to stop it? Isn't it time to just say it's over? We're not going to be like that anymore. They were unable to pay their wrong.

They couldn't pay you back for what they did wrong. They're too much. The bitterness you're holding is hurting you and your children more than it hurts your mother or dad or cousin or uncle or the other person you hate.

You choose. We choose to forgive or not. We can choose peace. We do not have to continue feeling like a victim. You listen to what I'm going to tell you.

Jesus, they've done me wrong. Well, forgive them. Okay. I'll give up seven times I'll forgive them. And he looks and goes, seven?

How about 70 times seven? You say, well, I don't quite get that. He said, well, let me tell you a story about how much you owed me and I forgave you for. I forgave you \$108 billion.

[ 38 : 41 ] Everybody, you're beating up. I owed you \$5,800. If you found \$108 billion debt forgiven, would you be going around grabbing everybody you could that owed you \$5,800 saying, you owe me?

Yeah, you would. Because that's what we're doing. Because we're still bitter. I want you to think about that person we started with in the beginning of the message. I want you to realize what that person did to you, that ex-husband, that ex-wife, that parent, that cousin, whoever it was, I want you to think about whatever they did.

How does it compare to your \$108 billion? Shouldn't you come say, man, I didn't deserve to be forgiven for the \$108 billion, and I want to enjoy my forgiveness, so I'm going to get this off my chest.

I'm going to release it. I'm going to let it go. I'm going to quit focusing on me. I'm going to start focusing on Jesus. I'm going to start being grateful, not hateful.

Father in heaven, would you bless today? Would you help your people? Lord, I know that the message today may not have been the most pleasant, but I do think it was the most needful.

[ 39 : 53 ] And I'm praying you'd help us as dads and moms and husbands and wives and children and cousins and neighbors and employees and bosses. God, I have failed you so many times.

I've done more wrong to others than has ever been done to me. I've had such a smart-aleck, haughty spirit, and yet you have forgiven me. I want to be a forgiver.

No matter what people do to me, I want to be a forgiver because I know that what they've done is so much less than what I did. God, help your people today. With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, I'm really going to ask for it pretty straight.

You know you should come to this altar and just lay it on this altar and say, here's the bitterness I've been feeling. Here's the hatred I've been holding on to. Here's the bad attitudes I've been having.

Here's what's been causing me to have these physical ailments. Here's what's been causing me to have marriage problems. I have been this person. I have been the guy that the scriptures talked about.

[ 40 : 56 ] I'm holding on to stuff, but today I'm not going to. Come on, get out of your seat. Get up here and talk to him. He spoke to you, and it's time to get rid of that junk. He spoke to you, and it's time to get rid of that junk.

It's time to be able to go home today knowing, I'm not going to be like that anymore. I ain't going to lay it on the altar. I know they hurt you. Come up here and say, God, by your grace, I forgive, uncle.

God, by your grace, I forgive, brother. By your grace, I forgive this other person. By your grace, Lord, I'm going to walk away from here enjoying the freedom I have in you. Come on, who else?

Come on, say, I'm not going home the same way I came. Now, if you're in the room and you've never been saved, not sure you'd go to heaven if you died, maybe the Holy Spirit of God's dealing with your heart. You say, I don't understand this forgiveness, but you can today because he loves you, and he died for you, and he paid your sin debt, and you can be forgiven.

If you're here and you're not saved, and you wouldn't go to heaven if you died, but you would let somebody show you how, we'll show you today how to know that forgiveness, and you can trust Christ for what he did on the cross for you. Would there be anybody to hold their hand up and say, pray for me, pastor, that I'd be saved.

[ 42 : 04 ] Pray for me, pastor, that I'd get forgiveness. Anybody? Let's hold your hand up real quickly. Okay, thank you. I see your hand. Anybody else? Now, let me ask this one more time.

I really would ask you to come forgive. What'd your husband do? What'd your wife do? What'd your neighbor do? What'd your family member do?

Come talk to the Lord. Let's get victory today. You can leave here the victor, not the victim. You can leave here knowing Jesus is doing a work. Is there anybody else?

Father, magnify yourself in your people's lives. Bring honor to your name. Glorify yourself, and I'll give you praise. I love you for the sweet and wonderful God you are.

Thank you for forgiving me, and I am so unworthy. God, help me to live in that forgiveness. Thank you for being here. Happy Mother's Day.

[ 43 : 01 ] Wouldn't it make it a happier Mother's Day if we got that bitterness out? Wouldn't it change our relationships, that family reunion? It's amazing.

Sometimes that junk you're holding on to and how it's hurting you. I read a book not long ago about the boys of 1967. It was the boys of 67, the Vietnam guys, and this one guy came and showed up at the battlefield, and on the first day, he was in an accident, and his legs got blown off, and one of his friends pulled him off the battlefield.

And for the next 30 years, he lived in mortal fear that that guy hated him. They had a reunion, and when they had the reunion, he'd felt guilt for all those years because he said, I should have been more careful.

I should have helped him. I should have not let him step on that mind. I wasn't watching like I should have. And so when they were at the reunion and everybody was all gathered around, finally the guy came over to him and said, hey, aren't you so-and-so?

And he said, yes, I am. He said, I'm so sorry. I know you're mad at me. I know you hate me. He said, I hate you? If you hadn't drug me off that field, I'd be dead. I might not have legs, but I'm alive thanks to you.

[ 44 : 06 ] He lived in 30 years of a prison when he could have been free. And that's where you live. And you don't have to. You have a good God.

Let's enjoy that forgiveness. I get an amen right there. Amen. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia.

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Thanks.