

Disc 106 - Forgiveness & Reconciliation - Eph 4:31-32
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We have quite a bit of teaching on **DIVINE FORGIVENESS**

In fact - I've kind of "focused"
on teaching **Divine Forgiveness** for some time

we have **at least 8 or 10 messages**
on the subjects of **Forgiveness & Reconciliation**
(*PLUS the Life of Joseph series*)

& so - **if** the Holy Spirit **strikes a cord**
in your **heart** today on this subject

PLEASE - Contact **Word-By-Mail** & ask for **ALL**
the **Forgiveness & Reconciliation** Messages

Today, we're in **lesson SIX** of our discipleship series
& we've **been moving** thru the **"Foundational Truths"** of Christianity

- 1)** Who is Jesus Christ ?
- 2)** The Abundant life in Christ
- 3)** The Fatherhood of God
- 4)** The Holy Spirit
- 5)** Spiritual Growth & Maturity

These are all **"Foundational Truths"** of knowing God

& then **BAAM** - today we **narrow down**
onto a very specific topic - **Forgiveness & Reconciliation**

Now - actually - we're **going to close** this little 8-Part Series with 2 more "**specific**" topics, after this one

But Pastor **Craig Caster** & "Family Discipleship Ministries"
(whose **Discipleship Manual** we're following
download it at wordbymail.com)

Chose to Make **Forgiveness** & **Reconciliation**
the **FIRST** specific topic to **teach** to a Disciple of Jesus

& possibly - the reason he chose this specific topic
is for the **SAME REASON** that I would choose it

I believe **THIS ISSUE** is at the **ROOT**
of an incredible number of **crisis** & **tragedies** IN THE CHURCH

I know (from personal experience) - the need
for **Forgiveness** & **Reconciliation** in the church
may very well be **at THE TOP**
of the **Transformation Needs List** - for Disciples of Christ

There is so much **PAIN** - & so much **DAMAGE**,
sown into the church thru **UNFORGIVENESS**

That I believe - **AFTER Salvation** & becoming a **Disciple**,
THIS may be **the greatest need** in the church

Let's Pray

Most of us **do not** easily **admit** - the **Damage** & **Destruction** that **Unforgiveness** is causing in our lives

Damage to innocent lives *around us*
& **Damage** to our *own lives*

It's commonly known (in Counseling Circles) that:

- **Pride**
- **Self Righteousness**
- **Judgmental & Critical spirit**
- **Lack of Trust & Intimacy**
- **Relationship Dysfunctions**
- **Broken Fellowship with God**

Can ALL (***very often***) be traced back to the **HARBORING** of **Unforgiveness**

Harboring Unforgiveness Drives Deep the **ROOT of BITTERNESS**

& Heb 12:15 says - ESV

15 See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;

Guys - **Please HEAR me** - **MANY** have become defiled by the strong root of **Bitterness**

& when that **root springs up** - it causes **trouble**

& **not just** for the person Harboring Unforgiveness **but for all** the innocent lives around them

Let's Turn over to Eph 4:30

The CONTEXT of Eph 4 is

Putting off the Old Man,
Being Renewed,
& Putting on the New Man

It's about what the ***New Life in Christ*** LOOKS LIKE

& in Eph 4:30-32 - Paul talks about **FORGIVENESS**

But he begins - by listing the **By-Products,**
of the **Poison** of **UN-forgiveness**

& then he makes a **very clear statement** regarding
TO WHAT EXTENT - we are called to forgive, as Christians

Eph 4:30-32 - ESV

30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (he's leading into the forgiveness issue)

31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. (byproducts of unforgiveness)

32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (underline "AS")

Paul **leads into** the Forgiveness issue

with a **Warning** to **not GRIEVE** the Holy Spirit (*by holding onto sin*)

& then (v.31) lists the

Poisonous By-Products of Unforgiveness → →

Poisonous By-Products of Unforgiveness

- **Bitterness** - *extreme hostility*
- **Wrath** - *outburst of anger (in retaliation)*
- **Anger** - *state of mind marked by rage & pain*
- **Clamor** - *harsh & unkind words*
- **Slander** - *words that harm a person*
- **Malice** - *desire to see another suffer*

These are the Poisonous By-Products of Unforgiveness

& God will ALLOW these Poisons - to absolutely TORTURE you

in order to "Bring You" to a place of Brokenness

SO THAT you will accept HIS DIVINE FORGIVENESS

SO THAT you will be healed

These By-Products of Unforgiveness - cause PAIN in our lives

& that PAIN *should send us* Running to the Doctor for healing

My son used to work as an EMT at a motorcycle track

& he would always come home with these hilarious stories
about thick headed motorcycle riders who'd refuse to go to the Dr.

He'd say - *look man - you are hurt - Do you FEEL hurt ??*

& the guys would be wincing in pain - about to pass out
& they'd say "*no man, I'm fine, I don't need a Dr*"

& sometimes my son would say - "*fine then, get up & walk*"

& Mr tuff-guy would take 1 step, & fall down in excruciating pain

& then David would say **NOW . . . Are you ready to go to the DR ??**

But guys - Aren't we the same ??

The **Byproducts of Unforgiveness** are Destroying our lives -
there's **PAIN** strewn **ALL** around us in every direction

& we say "***No man, I'm fine, I don't need a Dr***"

No man - ***You are NOT fine***

You **DO need a Dr** - & you need him **FAST**

& what is the **Dr's Prescription**

for **Healing** the **Poison of Unforgiveness** in your life

The Prescription is in the **VERY NEXT VS** (*as it usually is*)

Eph 4:32 - ESV

***32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another,
as God in Christ forgave you.***

Be **Kind** & **Tenderhearted** - **TO THE ONE** you now hold
bitterness - **wrath** - **anger** - **clamor** - **slander** & **malice** against

Be **Kind** & **Tenderhearted** to them . . .

Forgiving them - - **AS** God in Christ **forgave you**

The **ESV** here - simple says **AS** - But **most** of the
Dynamic Translations (like the **NLT**) - Say **"JUST AS"**

The phrase **"Just As"** means

To the same Degree, in the same Proportion

To the same Degree, in the same Proportion

AS God in Christ **has forgiven YOU**

Now - if Divine Forgiveness is **NEW** to you
this might be a bit of a **SHOCK**

That we are **called to Forgive** those who have wronged us
To the same Degree, & in the same Proportion
As God in Christ has **forgiven** us

THAT sounds impossible - Doesn't it ?

& With **MAN** - it **IS** impossible

But With **GOD** - **All** things are possible

That is why it's called - **DIVINE FORGIVENESS**

Let me **explain it** to you
with a **Parable** from **Jesus Christ** Himself

In Mat 18 - Jesus had just finished teaching
about **Reconciliation** in the church

& **then** the famous "foot in mouth" Disciple (**Peter**)

comes up to Jesus - **planning** to show the Master
that he fully understands **FORGIVENESS**

Mat 18:21-22 - ESV

21 Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?"

22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven. (some trans = 77 times)

Peter thought he was doing **good**

cause the **Rabbi's** taught Forgiveness **THREE times**, & no more

& so Peter raises it to SEVEN - & then Jesus Blows the Lid off it,
& says - **Forgiveness** cannot be **numbered** or **measured**

& He tells a **very CLEAR parable** - that explains
WHY the **By-Products** of Unforgiveness **feel like TORTURE**

Mat 18:23-24 - ESV

23 “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants.

24 When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.

There are **many ways** to **illustrate** a **TALENT** - *for example*;

ONE TALENT was equal to **20 YEARS** wages for a LABORER
so **10,000 Talents** = **200,000 Years Wages** for a LABORER

THAT - is an **Un-payable** Debt

Mat 18:25-27 - ESV

25 And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. (justice)

26 So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’

27 And out of pity (compassion) ***for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.***

THIS is a Picture - of **YOU** & **GOD**

You **owed God** a debt you **could not pay** - & ***by no work of your own***
God **Released you**, & **Forgave** your **UNPAYABLE** debt

Now - You **MUST make the comparison** here
because this is the **first step** to **Divine Forgiveness**

You MUST make the comparison between

The Picture of You & God - Compared to
The Picture of You & that other Person

The Picture of **You** & that **Other Person** - Begins in

Mat 18:28 - ESV

28 But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.'

That already **sounds strange**, doesn't it
after all this servant had just been **Forgiven of**

But it sounds even **more Strange** when you realize

The first Servant was forgiven
200,000 Years of a **Laborers Wage**

His Fellow Servant - whom he was now "**Choking**"
owed him a **hundred Denarii**

Which was about **THREE MONTHS** **Laborers Wage**

The Servant who had just been **forgiven**
200,000 YEARS wages

was choking a **fellow servant** who owed him
a measly **THREE MONTHS** wages

Unfortunately it gets worse

Remember - this is a picture of **you & I**
being Forgiven by God a Debt we could not pay

& then turning around & **Attacking**
a fellow servant - - **with our Unforgiveness**

We MUST make this **Comparison**

Continuing in Mat 18:29-30 - ESV

29 So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' (same thing 1st servant said to master)
30 He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt.

Man - aren't we good at putting people in prison
that we're **Harboring Unforgiveness** against !

I promise you - this **Unforgiving Servant** was saying to himself
Exactly what we Say to Ourselves

THEY DON'T DESERVE TO BE FORGIVEN !!!

THEY'VE WRONGED ME !!!

THEY DESERVE THIS !!!

Yeah, I know . . . & God knows

AND - God IS **WATCHING YOU**

Just like the Master of this Unforgiving Servant

Mat 18:31 - ESV

31 When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place.

I kinda see this like the **Angels** going to **God** & saying

"Lord, after all you've forgiven them of, do you know what they're doing down there to each another ?"

& so we read - in Mat 18:32-34 - ESV

***32 Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.
33 And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' (THAT - is making the comparison)
34 And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers (torturers), until he should pay all his debt.***

Wait a minute !!!

He delivered him to the **TORTURERS**
until he should pay all his debt?

The **ESV** puts the word **Torturers** in as a "Footnote"

But **NLT** & **NKJ** both put it in the text
"delivered him to the torturers"

Dave - - *what are you saying?*

Are you saying that **God** would do that to **US**,
if we **refuse to forgive** ??

Come on - SURELY God wouldn't do that to us

**Yes - SHIRLEY - He would
& He says so in the very next vs.**

Mat 18:35 - ESV

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

God will Allow you - **to be TORTURED** by your **Unforgiveness**
Until you are broken . . .

& Until you **RELEASE** that person
from the **DEBT** they **OWE YOU** !

Now - - I know **there are some** here - who have
Tremendously Painful Experiences
they are **Harboring Unforgiveness** over - & **I'm Sorry**

But ***please believe me*** - God wants to **heal you**
of the **POISON** of your **Unforgiveness**

For **YOUR** own **GOOD** !

guys - the Bible is **VERY CLEAR**

Your **REFUSAL** to Forgive - **as Christ** forgave you
is **BLOCKING** your **"Right Relationship with God"**

In The Lord's Prayer in **Mat 6:9**

Our **Forgiveness from God** is *TIED* to our **Forgiving others**

& in a **Self-Commentary** on the Lord's Prayer,

Jesus says in Mat 6:14-15 - ESV

14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you,

15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

This **isn't talking** about your Salvation

it's talking about your **"Right Relationship"** with God

& that **"Right Relationship"** is what brings **Peace** & **Joy**

& the **Fruit of the Spirit** to your life

instead of the **Poisonous By-Products**

of the **Sin of Unforgiveness**

Mark 11:25 says - ESV

25 And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

Our **"Right Relationship"** with God - is BLOCKED

by our REFUSAL to **Forgive others**,

Please - if you need the **Miracle**

of **Divine Forgiveness** in your life

Immerse yourself in this critical area of **HEALING**

Call upon the **Holy Spirit** for **Healing** in this area

& ask us for Resources to help you

if you DON'T - The TORTURE of Unforgiveness in your life
WILL continue

Now - We only have time, to say a few words
on the subject of Reconciliation

We also have messages specifically on Reconciliation (at WBM)

& we can also get you a really good workbook
on Reconciliation - called PEACEMAKING - By Rick Love

To Reconcile means to Restore HARMONY in a relationship

& just like Forgiveness - Our EXAMPLE of Reconciliation
is found in Jesus Christ

Col 1:19-22 - ESV → →

Col 1:19-22 - ESV

**19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,
20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.
21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,
22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,**

You - were **Separated** From God (alienated)

You - were **Hostile** to God

You - were in the midst of **Evil Deeds**

& WHILE you were in the Midst of **ALL THAT**

Jesus Christ did the Work to **Reconcile you** to Himself

& that person God calls you to be Reconciled to

They are **Separated** from you

They are **Hostile** toward you

They may have done some **Evil Deeds**

But while **YOU** - were **the Enemy** of God

Jesus Christ did **ALL the work** of Reconciliation

to **Restore Harmony** to your Relationship with God

& now - God is calling YOU,

to **Reconcile** your Relationship with that other person

The word **FORGIVE** - is a **VERB** - it's an *action word*
which means - **the ACT** of Forgiving requires **ACTION**

We **must FIRST** Receive God's **DIVINE FORGIVENESS**
in **our own hearts** - toward that person

But then - *where possible* - we must **attempt reconciliation**

Both - to those who have **offended us**
AND to those **we have offended**

I know - **sometimes** face-to-face **reconciliation**
is **not possible** - & maybe **not** even **safe**

But **where IT IS** - **That** is what God is **calling** us to do

In the **Sermon on the MT** - Jesus gives a very practical teaching
on the **importance** of **reconciliation**

After a **Very Strong Warning** regarding being **ANGRY**

where **He elevates** the **Commandment** to **not Murder**
to **INCLUDE** Not being **Extremely Angry** at a person

after THAT - in **V.23** - He gives a very **serious instruction**

Mat 5:23-24 - ESV → →

Mat 5:23-24 - ESV

***23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you,
24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.***

Please hear me - Jesus says - LEAVE THE ALTAR

FIRST - Go be Reconciled to your brother,
THEN, come & offer your gift

guys - **Forgiveness & Reconciliation** is more important to Jesus than your time at the Altar **worshipping Him**

WHY - How can that be ??

In **Psa 51** - in David's **prayer of Forgiveness** for his sins

Psa 51:16-17 says - NLT

***16 You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one. You do not want a burnt offering.
17 The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.***

God desires - a **Broken & Repentant** heart
THAT is what *He Wants*

He **doesn't want** us to play church
in fact - *us playing church* - **ANNOYS** Him

God Desires **Repentance**, & **Action**

Let's **Allow** God to **Search us** & know our Hearts,

& let's **allow Him** to point out any **Poison of Unforgiveness**
& any **Need for Reconciliation**

& then let's **commit** to Him - to **begin** the process

Let's Pray