

Divine Forgiveness (2000) – Hosea
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I am going to share with you about the sin of unforgiveness. The devil will provoke you, will convince you that one of two things. Either that you don't have to forgive, or that you *have* forgiven. And my prayer is that the Holy Spirit will impress upon your heart whether, in fact, you're living under the pressure of unforgiveness – the lack of forgiveness.

Hosea 1:1-2 (NKJV)

1 The word of the LORD that came to Hosea the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

2 When the LORD began to speak by Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea: “Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry And children of harlotry, ...

The question you might ask at this point is, “Why?” And so the Holy Spirit answers it for you without even a period, just a comma.

... For the land has committed great harlotry By departing from the LORD.”

Israel had fallen into extreme spiritual and physical adultery. They had backslidden again. They had rebelled against God, again. And God decided to make one of his prophets a living example of our relationship to God and God's care and concern for us. And so, he says to Hosea, Go and marry a woman of prostitution, of harlotry. For the people are committing adultery against me. And I want your life to be a living example of what I'm experiencing with the people that I love.

Hosea 1:3 (NKJV)

3 So he went and took Gomer... (And you may think, well, there's the first problem, there) the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

The important word in this verse is “***took***” because Gomer worked at the shrine. In these days, in Jerusalem, in the land of Israel, there was a marketplace like you would imagine, where all the people were selling their items. And in the lower end of the marketplace, there would be a storefront with beads, or robes, or something hanging down in this storefront. And inside would be an altar where you would worship the gods of “whatever,” it doesn't really matter. It's kind of like an infomercial. It doesn't matter what you sell if you present it right, somebody will buy it. And that's the type of gods that Israel had at this time. They had left the One True God.

And so, the way you worshipped was to have sex with a prostitute in front of this altar to whatever god. And two things occurred. Number one, by you worshipping in this way, this god would make your potato plants grow, or whatever he happened to promise. The other thing that happened to happen by chance, is you got to make an offering to this god. So, what it was, was legalized prostitution. And not just legalized prostitution, but spiritually condoned prostitution. Incredible, for the People of God.

And so, Hosea, the Prophet of God, (I don't know what you could compare that to), possibly, we don't really have anybody in this position of prophet, but this is a very, very respected spiritual man. He says I'm going to go into the prostitution shrine and pick me a prostitute for a wife. Not exactly the normal procedure for picking a wife. So, he takes Gomer out of this situation, and he saves her (if you will), delivers her from this life of prostitution.

Now, we don't have time, but between Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, Gomer returns to the sin that she was delivered from. She goes back to it. And here's the point.

Remember that God said to Hosea, I want you to be a living example of my love for my people. Let's look at Hosea Chapter 3. Some time prior to this point Hosea and Gomer had at least two children, maybe three, and Gomer came with at least two, so they had five children. She had been delivered from this life of prostitution and had returned to this sin.

Now, before you start thinking of all the Matthew scriptures, just read Chapter 3, verse 1.

Hosea 3:1-3 (NKJV)

1 Then the LORD said to me (Hosea), "Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, ...

So, God says, not only forgive her but go and love her.

... just like the love of the LORD for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans."

2 So I bought her for myself for fifteen shekels of silver, and one and one-half homers of barley.

3 And I said to her, "You shall stay with me many days; you shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man—so, too, will I be toward you."

So, God says, "Go" to this man of God. Take this woman back who you saved once and who returned to this ghastly sin. Not only take her back but also buy her back because I want you to be an example of my love for the people. Guess who Gomer is an example of? That's us. That you, and that's me. That's my heart against God.

And God says, not only am I going to continue to love you, but I'm going to *buy you back* because I love you so much. While you're in the pit of the sin that I saved you from once, and you returned to, I am going to buy you back. That's God's love for you.

Let's look at Chapter 11 verse 1.

Hosea 11:1-4 (NLT)

1 When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.

2 As **they** (meaning the prophets) **called them** (meaning the People of God), **So they went from them** (meaning the people went from the prophets); **They sacrificed to the Baals, And burned incense to carved images.**

3 “I taught Ephraim (Which is another name for Israel, the People of God) to walk, Taking them by their arms; But they did not know that I healed them.

4 I drew them with gentle cords, With bands of love, And I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. I stooped and fed them.

Our role as the People of God in this passage is rebellion. Right in verse 2 ... ***so they went from the prophets***. God's role is to ***stoop and to feed*** us. To draw us with ***gentle bands of love***. To draw us back to himself. That's God who gently and unconditionally loved us while we were in rebellion. That's the picture of God. Wow!

So, the study tonight is about divine forgiveness. That's the foundation. That's the groundwork. The question for the night is, “*How can we make God's divine forgiveness part of our lives?*” The bigger question is, “*How can you save yourself from the damage that not having divine forgiveness is bringing into your life?*”

Guys, resentment and bitterness, and the lack of forgiveness will destroy you from the inside out, like the worst cancer ever known on the face of the earth. It is a scary, scary thing. It can control your life. It has controlled my life, for years and years. It's a very, very damaging ploy – a tool – of the devil. Especially if you think you're right. Especially if you *are* right. That's the scariest time is if you are completely right and justified. And so, you hold onto your lack of forgiveness because you deserve it. And the devil is using it to destroy you from the inside. There's a cancer growing in you if you have not forgiven totally and completely any person in your life.

My prayer is, right now, that the Holy Spirit would begin to show us in our minds a person that maybe we're still struggling with, or an issue that we're still struggling with. And when I refer to that person or that issue, my prayer is that the Holy Spirit would put a picture in your mind of the person you need to forgive, of the issue you need to wash away with the blood of Christ. Because if you will, it is freeing. It is incredibly freeing. It

has freed me so much in my own life. So, my prayer is you have a picture in your mind that the Holy Spirit put there.

Three steps. This is a very practical three-step “recipe” to releasing divine forgiveness in your life.

1). We Must Make The Comparison

We must start by making a comparison in our lives. A very easy process here. I should say simple because if you know me, my favorite cliché is, *“It’s simple, but it’s not easy.”*

How much have you been hurt by the person that the Holy Spirit is putting in your mind? How much have you been hurt, compared to how much you’ve hurt God?

If you haven’t figured it out, take a moment and decide. It doesn’t compare. So, let’s see how God’s responded. How has God responded when you’ve hurt him?

I pray you always remember these words when you consider whether forgiveness is a true part of your life or whether you are pretending to forgive. Jesus Christ hung on the cross and he said, *“Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”* (I have a hard time saying that without crying.) He said, *“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”* That’s how much you hurt Jesus. He hung on a cross. He said, *“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”* God said, “For Dave. That’s why. For Dave.”

1 John 1:9 (NKJV)

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

He is faithful to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. So, there’s nothing left of your sin in God’s eyes. It’s gone – wiped clean. Gone forever. That’s how faithful God is to you in response to how much you’ve hurt him. He’s cleansed you ***from all unrighteousness.***

2 Timothy 2:13 (NKJV)

13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.

No matter what you’ve done to God, he’s forgiven you and he’s removed it as far as the east is from the west. That’s how God responded when you hurt him. That’s how God responded. He hung on a cross and he died for you.

So, the first step to coming to divine forgiveness in your life is to compare how much you’ve been hurt by somebody with how much you’ve hurt Jesus Christ. And then you consider how Jesus Christ has responded to you. And, if you’re thinking right now,

“Yeah, but I’m not Jesus Christ” don’t say it out loud because you’ll be sorry by the time we’re done.

When you’ve been wronged, do you expect some type of repayment? The person that has wronged you, the situation that has wronged you, you’ve been wrongly accused, maybe wrongly convicted, and wrongly sentenced or punished, do you expect to extract some type of repayment from that? You deserve some type of repayment. Don’t answer with a “logical” answer.

Peter thinks he’s got the divine forgiveness thing down. You’ve probably heard it many times.

Matthew 18:21-22 (NKJV)

21 Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”

(Seven times is a lot. If your spouse sins against you, five, six times, you’re probably getting pretty tired of it. Especially if it’s one of the big sins. So, Peter says, I’m going all the way for the divine number – seven, the number of perfection.)

22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

Another one of the parallel Gospels says, “***seventy-seven times.***” Whether it’s seventy times seven, or seventy-seven times, you’re not going to count that high because, by the time you get to fifty or sixty, God will have taught you divine forgiveness. So, if somebody is sinning against you and you’re up to about fifty for the same sin, then be expecting to learn the miracle of divine forgiveness anytime.

Here’s a picture of God and you.

Matthew 18:23-27 (NKJV)

23 Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

24 And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. (In today’s economy – One Billion dollars.)

25 But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ (In other words, have mercy on me. Forgive me.)

Have you done that to God, fallen down at the debt that deserves hell, and asked God to forgive you? I pray that you’ve done that.

27 Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

And I promise you, that if you've fallen down before God with a debt that you can't pay, and you've begged for forgiveness, that this is exactly what the Father has done for you. He has forgiven you. He has released you from the debt.

Now, unfortunately, verse 28 is a picture of you and the person who has offended you. You and your offender.

Matthew 18:28-35 (NKJV)

28 “But that servant (that’s you) went out and found one of his fellow servants (that’s the person who has hurt you) who owed him a hundred denarii; (one thousand dollars – compared to one billion) and he laid hands on him (and I don’t mean to “pray” for him) and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’

29 So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him (sound familiar?), saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’

30 And he (that’s you) would not, but went and threw him into prison (to extract some type of repayment from him) till he should pay the debt.

Yikes! This is a big mistake. If you have not compared the debt that Christ has forgiven you with the debt that you believe somebody owes you, tonight is the night to do that. God says, compare it. And the thing that you think you are so rightly justified in holding against somebody will be found wanting in the balance compared to what Christ has forgiven you for. This is the saddest part of the story.

31 So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done.

If you would, please, imagine the angels in heaven, knowing who Jesus Christ is since they were created, seeing him hang on the cross for your sins to forgive you of a debt that cannot be repaid. And then, those same angels watching you take somebody by the throat who holds some minor offense against you, and shaking them by the throat and throwing them into prison until they repay you for some minor offense. And the angels just walk to the throne of God saying, “You know, Lord, I don’t know...I don’t think they get it. I don’t think they understand what you did. Look at how they’re acting. How can they act that way after what you’ve done for them?” And so, God has a response.

32 Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.

33 Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’

Do you see the picture? If you’ve never thought that it’s right to compare the offense against you with your offense against God, read that verse again. The master is saying, “Should you not have had pity on someone else based on the incredible compassion that I’ve had on you?” It gets a little “hairy” in verse 34.

34 And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

Now, you might think, oh well, God is a loving God. Jesus Christ speaking, verse 35:

35 So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”

Yikes! Have you been feeling tortured in your relationships with people? The sin of unforgiveness turns in you and it destroys you – you have to eat Tums all of your life. You know what? There are consequences to sin. And if you carry with you stress and distress for about thirty years, you’ll eat Tums too, believe me. There are consequences to sin, including the sin of unforgiveness.

Please, please, please, be careful with the prosperity teaching. Pure prosperity teaching is a lie of the devil, and I’m sorry to be so blunt.

Hebrews 12:6-11 (NKJV)

6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.”

7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?

8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?

10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.

(Those of you who have looked closely at my Bible, know that this verse is highlighted heavily with two dates in it. And if you ever want to know the story behind those dates, don’t ask me, because, by the time I’m done crying, you’ll be bored and leave.)

11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; ...

Remember in Matthew where we say, ***the master delivered him over to the torturers ... so my Heavenly Father will do to you*** if each one of you ***do not forgive*** each other their ***trespasses***.

... nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

We've talked about the pressure of the Holy Spirit on your life. And if the Holy Spirit is chastening you, you know it. You know it. There's a pressure on your life that you can't avoid. It's just clamping down on you. That's the Holy Spirit. Do not fight that. That is the chastening of God. And you need to address God on your face, and say, "God, what is it in my life that you're trying to clean out of my life for righteousness' sake? What is it that you're trying to clean out to yield ***the peaceable fruit of righteousness***? Be trained by the chastening of the Holy Spirit. And if you are living with bitterness and resentment and anger, then you are being tortured, and God wants to release you from that. He wants to free you from that, and he wants to pour fire from heaven down on your life!

Isaiah 59:1-2 (NKJV)

1 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear.

Does that ring true in your heart? "God, where are you? Where are you? It's like you can't reach me. It's like you can't hear me. It's like my prayers are bouncing off the ceiling." Have you ever said that? "God, where are you?" ***It's not that the Lord's arm is shortened that he cannot save. It's not that his ear is heavy that he cannot hear...***

2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God (God didn't leave); And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.

Guys, God has an incredible plan for you that you would just be so blown away if you knew it. And if you're holding on to unforgiveness, which is really – pride (I'll get to that in a little bit). Pride and self-centeredness bring unforgiveness, and if you're holding on to that sin, then expect your prayers to bounce off the ceiling. Expect to, at some point in your life to say, "God, where are you? It's like you're never around. It's like you can't even hear me crying out to you." And God's saying, "Isaiah 59:1-2. ***Your sins have separated you from your God.***"

So, let's move on. It gets light from here.

1). We've Got To Make The Comparison

2). We Must Learn Mercy

The key to forgiveness is God's gift of mercy. Mercy is not a "natural-born" trait if you haven't figured that out. It is a gift from God. The definition of "mercy" is "*not giving the offender what they deserve.*" It literally means "*to tear up the note.*" Somebody owes you something because they have wronged you. Mercy is tearing up the note. Mercy is not giving them what they fully, completely, and rightfully deserve.

Matthew 18:32-33 (NLT)

32 Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.

33 Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?'

Matthew 5:7 (NKJV)

7 Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.

You need mercy from God.

What I want to share with you tonight, more than anything else, is that **God's forgiveness of your sins is comparable to your forgiveness when someone else wrongs you.** And if you've never considered that, I pray that it is a revelation to you right now. That you can compare Jesus Christ's forgiveness of you with your forgiveness of somebody else.

Psalms 103:10-12 (NKJV)

10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities. (Fair enough)

11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;

12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

Guys, God is calling you to forgive at this level. God is calling you to forgive *at this level*. As he has forgiven you, you are called to forgive those who offend you. Even when you are *right*. Even when they're *wrong*. Even when they've caused you immense pain. Maybe destroyed a major section of your life. It doesn't compare. *It doesn't compare.*

The Word of God says you forgive **AS** you have been forgiven.

The question is – HOW? Here is the practical part. The problem with making the Bible practical is the Bible is supernatural. It's *practically supernatural* because there is a process that you go through. But the process is a supernatural one. That's why we have to be very careful with humanistic psychology and counseling because they try to take

something supernatural and make it natural. They try to take the created mind from the mind of God, made in the image of God, and they try to break it down into a system of understanding that you can't understand. You can't understand your heart and your soul because it was made by God, and you can only see him dimly in a mirror. And so, the Bible is supernatural.

So, I'm here to tell you tonight, that the three easy steps are *all supernatural*. They're spiritual. And if you make the mistake of saying, "Well, I just can't get ahold of that. It's not tangible enough," you need to pray. You need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. You need to understand that *your life changes for good or for bad in the spiritual realm*.

Romans 6:2(b)-6 (NKJV)

2 ... How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

(If that's not you right now, you need to reach out to one of us and make it you.)

4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

What type of ***newness of life***? The same type as Jesus Christ's. HOW do you do it? Because you were baptized into his death and you were raised into his life – in his life. In the newness of his life. It's a spiritual matter. It's a supernatural thing. You don't *figure it out*. You cry out to God and he delivers it supernaturally.

5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,

6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

You *can* have divine forgiveness. You CAN. Not because you can try hard enough. Because you've been buried with Christ and raised up in the newness of life. There is nothing that you cannot overcome with his forgiveness. Nothing at all. It's the supernatural power of Jesus Christ living in you that brings divine forgiveness. You cannot "figure this out." You can't "talk yourself into this." You can't put sticky notes on the mirror until you believe it. This is a *supernatural work* of Jesus Christ *living in you*.

Here's the question. Are you ready to die to your self-centered, judgmental ways? Are you holding on so tightly to the pride that keeps you from forgiving somebody because

they're wrong and you're right? And if it destroys your life, then so be it because you've got so much pride in you that you're not going to back down. It's pride. When are you ready? How much chastening does the Lord have to put into your life before you're ready to break down?

You say thank God if he's chastening you to get this out of your life. It will **yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness** when God's done with you.

Romans 12:1-2 (NKJV)

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Guys, that transformation is the evolution of a heart. It's the supernatural evolution of the heart wrought by the work that Christ has done, poured out by the Holy Spirit. It's the transforming of your mind to where one day you're dying in your sin and the next day you're living with Christ for eternity. You didn't "figure that out." You didn't just "come up with that." You didn't "try hard enough" to do that. It's a supernatural work of God. So is divine forgiveness.

As you yield to God, he'll change you. ***His hand is not shortened that cannot work. His ear is not heavy that he cannot hear you. Your iniquities have kept you from God.*** You can die a miserable, unpowerful Christian. You can. It would be a crying shame. The Bible says there are those who will be saved as if through the flames. Guys, God has a sanctification work he wants to do in your life. It has to do with taking out the things that are *of you* and replacing them with the things that are *of Christ*. If you're struggling with forgiving somebody, God wants to remove that from your life.

Ephesians 4:17-23 (NKJV)

17 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind,

18 having their understanding darkened (by humanistic thinking), being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them (I deserve to be mad, they hurt me – that's ignorance), because of the blindness of their heart;

19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

20 But you have not so learned Christ,

21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:

***22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,
23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind (it's a miracle), and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.***

According to God's forgiveness, put on the *new mind*. According to *God's forgiveness*. **You can't "try" hard enough!!!** You can't try hard enough. All the positive thinking in the world won't work. When it's deep, when it's really, really deep, you need *God to take it away*.

There's not enough "try" in you to do this. Divine forgiveness is a miracle given to you as a gift from God. Your job is to cry out for it.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NKJV)

18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image ...

What image is that? The glory of the Lord. The image of Jesus Christ that includes the divine forgiveness which allowed the God who created the universe to hang on a cross and die for you when you didn't deserve it. You were his enemy when he did that for you. You were his enemy, and now he's changing you into his image from glory to glory. HOW? By figuring it out? By reading a book? NO! *It's a miracle of the Lord*.

The Spirit of God is alive and it's powerful, and he'll pour out into your life, and he'll change you miraculously. It's by the Spirit of the Lord that you're touched, that your healed, and that your life is changed. That the gift of mercy, the mercies of God, is granted to your life by – *how?* By you walking in the Spirit. By you crying out to God. By you being changed in an instant by the all-powerful God.

That's how the mercy of God comes! It comes miraculously. So, all of a sudden, the bitterness that you've carried all of your life – you're saying, "Wow, Lord. It's all gone." Your mercies are new every morning. God fills your life with more, and more, and more mercy. And he changes you more, and more, and more into *his image*. And you haven't read one book, except the Bible. You're just spending time with God and he's evolving you.

1). We Must Make The Comparison (How has this person hurt you compared to how you've hurt God? Compare it.)

2). We Must Learn Mercy (You must be given the gift of mercy supernaturally.)

3). We Must Practice Grace

When true mercy is poured out into your life, it produces *grace*. The grace of God. The definition of “grace” is *giving the offender what they don’t deserve*. That is slightly foreign to the human mind.

At the risk of being redundant, let me say to you, that if you have never compared the offense that person has done to you with the offense that you have done to Jesus Christ, now is the time to do that. Jesus Christ gave you what you don’t deserve, and he called you to do the same.

Titus 3:3-7 (NKJV)

3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. (That was you, and that was me. That’s the definition)

4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,

5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us (that’s grace), ***through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,***

6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

So let me paint the picture for you. You were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice, and envy, hateful and hating one another. The way God responded to you for those works: is he made you a joint heir with Jesus Christ to rule and reign in the heavens for eternity. Equal to his own Son. Wow! ***Not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to his mercy he saved us*** by his grace.

While we were serving our flesh, God offered us a joint inheritance with Christ.

Romans 5:8 (NKJV)

8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

While we were offending him, he *died for us*. While we were wrongly offending Christ, he died for us. What are you doing when this person is wrongly offending you? Are you laying your life down for them? Because that is what Jesus Christ did for you, and Jesus Christ desires to change you into his image. When will his image change you in this matter? Is it when somebody is offending you, you lay your life down for them? That’s pretty big.

Romans 5:10 (NKJV)

10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

God reconciled you while you were offending him. What are you doing while this person is offending you?

This is not a “religion” that we’re in, guys. This is a relationship with the Almighty God who wants to *change you into his image*. He laid his life down for you while you were offending him. He wants you to do the same.

Ephesians 5:1-2 (NKJV)

1 Therefore be imitators of God...

I guess we could stop there, couldn’t we? Imitate God. Be like God. You read Hosea with me. Go and love that person who is unlovable. In fact, buy them back after they have offended you. *That is imitating God.*

... as dear children.

2 And walk in love (How? To what level do we walk in love?), as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

You see the hammer coming, don’t you? You’re to love the person who is offending you as Christ loved you when you were offending him. It’s not a *goal*. It’s not a *high place to attain*. It’s a call. It’s a call from God. He will equip you supernaturally to love as he loved you. He will equip you supernaturally to forgive as he forgave you. I promise you that he will because he calls you to love as *he loved*. He *calls you* to be conformed into his image. He *calls you* to imitate him. He will equip you by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This next verse in Colossians is a new level of godliness for your relationship with the person who has offended you. And I hope you’re not “copping out” by having a picture in your mind of some little old lady who cut you off in traffic. You need to forgive somebody in your life, and you need to forgive them at the level that Jesus Christ has forgiven you. Don’t “cop-out” because Jesus Christ wants to pour out his power in your life and change you for *eternity* with fire from heaven.

And if you leave this place, and say, “Well, whoo! I’m glad that wasn’t for me!” and it was, then you missed an opportunity for God to change you.

Colossians 3:12-16 (NKJV)

12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, (Do not give

the person what they deserve) ***kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another*** (How do we forgive? To what level do we forgive?); ***even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.***

Remember when I said don't raise your hand? ***As Christ has forgiven you, even also you must do.*** If you are a child of God, you cannot evade this. You must forgive as Christ has forgiven you. And the power comes from God himself.

14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

And I'm telling you the truth from experience, this will happen.

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

You want to *let this go*. Believe me, you want to let this go because it's more fun to sing with grace in your heart to the Lord. It's more fun to be walking, and leaping, and praising God. You'll live longer, and you'll eat less Tums! God will use you more. He'll pour his life into you and out of you. And it is based on the level of you forgiving as Jesus Christ has forgiven you.

It is freeing. *It's freeing.*

... as Christ forgave you, so also you must do. Colossians 3:13 (NKJV)

Compare it. By the way, anger is an indicator of a lack of forgiveness. Anger, bitterness, resentment, jealousy, envy, I could probably think of a few more, are indicators of the lack of forgiveness.

How do I do this, Dave? You know there are not too many messages that I could teach that I couldn't end with Psalm 51. If you don't know it very, very well, please get to know it because God can't deal with you while you're in control. God needs you broken.

Psalm 51:7-12 (NKJV)

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Make me hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have broken may rejoice.

9 Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities.

***10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.
11 Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.
12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.***

Psalm 51:16-17 (NKJV)

16 For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering.

Do you want to know what God wants from you to begin to change your life forever? Are you struggling with God saying, “I really want to change, God, but I don’t know how”?

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart—These, O God, You will not despise.

The sin of unforgiveness comes from the most basic sin in the universe – that is pride. Self-centeredness. You need to be broken. You need to have a broken and a contrite spirit before God. And when you do, and when you cry out to him to pour out his power in you, he will. *He will.*

His arm is not shortened that it cannot heal. His ear is not heavy that it cannot hear. Your iniquities have separated you from your God.

You need to cry out to God, ***purge me with hyssop and I will be clean!... Create in me a clean heart, O God.*** You need to have a broken and a contrite spirit before God. It is prostrate in worship in your heart in full surrender. *God will heal you.* And when he does, it will be worth it.