

**“You Asked For It 25”**  
**“Unforgiveness”**  
**Matthew 18:21-35 (NIV)**

Hey Newsong!

I want to take a moment and welcome our first-time guests and those watching with us online!

I’m so glad that you’re here! Hey we’re in week four of our series “You Asked For It”

A couple of months back we asked you if you had any questions about life, or the Bible that you would like answered in a sermon.

The first week PM answered the question “What happens to us after we die?” We looked into God’s Word and discovered that the moment we die we are immediately in eternity.

As believers, we don't have to fear death...Death is as scary as falling asleep...

But sadly, that's not the case for those who have rejected God...those who are far away from God will find themselves in hell...

Week 2 PM answered the question "What is the Rapture?" Focusing on what happens to the living when Jesus comes back for His church...

We believe that the Bible teaches that God will rescue His church before the great tribulation begins...this view is called **Pre-Tribulation Rapture** And it is the view we hold to.

We don't know the time or the hour...but what we do know is that His return is imminent...it could happen at any time which is why Jesus repeatedly warns all believers should...  
"Keep watch"

“Be ready”

“Stay Awake”

And last week we did something a little different...the E.L.T sat on a panel to answer a series of questions that “You asked”.

If you missed last week or any of the other weeks...you can view it on our YouTube channel.

So today we are continuing our series “You Asked For It” with the topic that most people struggle with “Unforgiveness”.

**Pray**

Have you ever been wronged? How did you feel? How did you react?

Unforgiveness is a dangerous weight that many of us carry without realizing the full impact it has

on our lives...While it may seem justified at times...holding onto unforgiveness can affect every area of our lives...from our emotional well-being to our relationship with God.

We live in a society that knows and cares little about forgiveness...In fact, I would think that one of the major contributors to the destruction of relationships in our culture...is the absence of forgiveness.

Our culture pushes us to be unforgiving...It celebrates and exalts people who are not willing to forgive.

We make heroes out of the John Wick's...and the Equalizer's who murder people out of vengeance.

As a result of this unforgiveness...we have a society filled with bitterness, vengeance, anger and hate toward others who hurt and offend us.

I'm sure for the season Christian...we've heard a message of unforgiveness countless times...But I would dare to say each time it hits differently.

Why? Because most of us struggle with Unforgiveness throughout our lives depending on how deep the hurt or offense is.

Let me just say this...I am adding offense because offense if not dealt with breeds unforgiveness...People who live in offense struggle with unforgiveness.

A new Believer has to deal with all the past hurts and learn to forgive in their new found freedom..they are just learning...so they kind of have an excuse.

But what happens when you are a seasoned believer and you choose not to forgive those who you feel wronged you...or those who have offended you.

For a Christian, the failure to forgive is unthinkable...Whatever the issue...whatever the offense...a failure to forgive is a BLATANT act of disobedience.

We have been told as explicitly as possible that if anybody offends us, we are to forgive them.

***Matthew 18:21-22 — "Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, How many times Church? but seventy-seven times.'"***

Let's look at this issue from the negative side for a moment...If we buy into this culture...a culture that says you don't have to forgive, you have a right not to forgive...I want to show you what will happen in the life of a Christian if you choose not to forgive:

- 1. Unforgiveness Will Lead To Bitterness, Anger, And Resentment.**

**Hebrews 12:15** – “See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.”

Unforgiveness begins as a small seed, but if left unchecked, it grows into a root of bitterness...It starts to affect every area of our lives—our relationships, our view of others, and even our spiritual health.

The bitterness that comes from unforgiveness doesn't just affect us...It can spill over into our relationships, causing division and strife with friends, family, and even coworkers...What begins as a personal issue can quickly grow.

It's like weeds growing in the harvest if not removed; it will eventually choke out the fruit of the harvest destroying everything that was good.



Holding onto unforgiveness not only poisons our relationships, but it also poisons our spiritual life.

We begin to lose our peace, joy, and sense of connection with God.

Bitterness is not just a sin; it is an infection, and it will infect your whole life...And bitterness can be directly traced to the failure to forgive.

It turns you into someone you were never intended to be...Harassed by the memories of what you can't forgive, your thoughts become a cancer toward those who hurt you, and your whole view of life becomes distorted.

Anger begins to rage in you, and it can easily get out of control...Your emotions begin to run wild.

And you start to entertain thoughts of revenge...And what happens? Now you start to look like the person who hurt you.

***Ephesians 4:31-32 – “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”***

Anger Is A Byproduct of Unforgiveness..When we hold onto unforgiveness, it often leads to anger—either passive (sulking, avoiding the person) or active (yelling, complaining).

This anger can turn into resentment, which eats away at our peace.

Unforgiveness fuels anger, and unchecked anger can cause us to lash out at others, even when they have done nothing wrong. This creates more conflict and deepens the hurt.

Now you are doing the hurting and offending, you are no longer self aware of your own actions because the root of bitterness and anger has blinded you.

**Quick story about my abuser**

True forgiveness doesn't just "let go" of the offense—it allows us to release the anger that comes with it. When we forgive, we break the chain of resentment and anger that holds us captive.

## **2. Unforgiveness Gives Satan An Open Door.**

Unforgiveness throws the welcome mat out and invites satan and his minions in...Where you have unresolved bitterness and an unforgiving spirit, you are giving the devil a foot hoe:

***Ephesians 4:26-27 - Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.***

***2 Corinthians 2:10-11 - But one whom you forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the***

***presence of Christ, so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.***

An unforgiving heart is the enemies playground...Church, It is no exaggeration to say that most of the ground that Satan gains in our lives is due to unforgiveness.

We're not ignorant of the devil's scheme to move in on an unforgiving attitude and destroy relationships...Come on Church that's his job...he wants to LIE, KILL, and DESTROY your life.

But You have the power through the Holy Spirit to evict all the demonic trespassers by an act of forgiveness.

### **3. Unforgiveness Keeps You Imprison To Your Past.**

When we choose unforgiveness...it is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die...It doesn't hurt the person who wronged us; **it only poisons our own hearts and spirits.**

In the parable of the "wicked servant" found in Matthew 18, we see a servant who is forgiven an enormous debt, but he refuses to forgive a small debt owed to him (vs. 28-30). His unforgiveness puts him back in the hands of the torturers (v.34).

***Matthew 18:31-34 – "When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. Then the master called the***

*servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed."*

The unforgiving servant is handed over to the “torturers” because he couldn’t forgive the small debt owed to him, even though he had been forgiven a large debt.

This imagery of torture represents the internal torment that unforgiveness causes in our hearts and minds.

Church, you are allowing your offender to live rent free in your mind...I am just here to remind

you of what Unforgiveness can do to us as believers.

When we refuse to forgive, we put ourselves back in the very prison Jesus freed us from...Understand that unforgiveness keeps us trapped in the past, constantly reliving the offense and allowing it to control our emotions, thoughts, and even our actions.

See Church the ends don't justify the means...meaning you lashing out on someone who has hurt you doesn't make ok.

Unforgiveness locks us in a prison that Jesus has already given us the keys for...We may think that by holding onto unforgiveness, we are punishing the other person, but in reality, we are the ones who are imprisoned.



Church, hear me...Unforgiveness is a deep root that will affect every aspect of our lives if it is left unchecked.

#### **4. Unforgiveness Will Hinder Your Relationship With God.**

***Matthew 6:14-15 – “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”***

Jesus clearly links our forgiveness of others with God's forgiveness of us...When we hold onto unforgiveness, it creates a barrier between us and God...Our prayers are hindered, and our fellowship with Him is disrupted.

So if I'm not right with you, then I'm not right with Him.

If we refuse to forgive, we are effectively saying that we don't fully understand or appreciate the grace and mercy God has shown us.

This hardened heart puts us in a spiritually dry place, where we struggle to experience God's love and peace.

God forgave us while we were still sinners. His forgiveness is unconditional, abundant, and free. As His children, we are called to reflect that same love and grace to others.

So, why would I put myself in a position of not being right with God?

## God Commands us to Forgive

**Matthew 6:14-15** — *"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."*

Let's go back the story of the wicked servant:

**Matthew 18:34-35** — *In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. 35 "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.*

- This is a clear directive from Jesus. Our forgiveness toward others is tied to our receiving forgiveness from God...**This Command is Conditional.**
- As followers of Christ, we cannot afford to harbor unforgiveness in our hearts. Jesus

places this command in the context of the Lord's Prayer—asking for forgiveness as we forgive others...**Forgiveness is Not Optional.**

- True forgiveness brings peace. It doesn't excuse the other person's behavior, but it releases you from the prison of bitterness and resentment...**There is Freedom in Forgiveness.**

### **God's Example of Forgiveness**

***Matthew 18:23 — "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants..."***

- The king in the parable forgives the servant's overwhelming debt—symbolizing God's grace toward us. We, who were once spiritually bankrupt, are forgiven by God

through Christ.

- God's forgiveness came at the cost of the blood of Jesus. It's not a trivial matter; God paid the ultimate price so we could be forgiven. Do you hear me Church, He's not asking you to do something he didn't do.
- We Are Called to Mirror His Forgiveness..Because God has forgiven us, we are called to forgive others. It's not always easy, but it's necessary. Our forgiveness should reflect God's grace and mercy in our lives.

*Hannah Collins NDE- What Jesus told her (Evil doesn't begin in the act, it begins in the heart when mercy is rejected...one small root of bitterness unchecked can poison the entire soul).*

## So How Do We Forgive

I know many of you are thinking PB you don't know what I've been through. You don't know my story and the pain I've gone through...I have my own story and many of you know...All I could say is that I have found freedom in forgiveness.

There is a process to forgiveness:

- **Acknowledge the Pain:** Forgiveness doesn't mean pretending that what happened didn't hurt. Acknowledge the wound and the pain that that caused you.
- **Decide to Forgive:** Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling. It's a decision to release the other person from the debt they owe you, just as God released you from your debt.

***Definition:*** Forgiveness is the conscious decision to let go of resentment and anger toward someone who has wronged you, not necessarily to forget the offense or condone the behavior. It is a personal process of emotional release that focuses on the forgiver's well-being, offering benefits like reduced stress and increased optimism. Forgiveness does not require reconciliation or excusing the offender's actions; instead, it empowers the individual to move past the pain without letting it define them.

- **Pray for the Person:** Praying for those who have wronged you changes your heart. It helps you see them with God's eyes and ask God to bless them. (I know I know PB now you're asking me to pray blessings over them) true blessings are that they would recognize the pain that they've

caused and that they would repent.

- **Allow Healing:** After forgiveness, give yourself space and time to heal. It may take time to move past the pain, but you've taken the first step in releasing the hold of unforgiveness. And know that your Father in Heaven wants you to heal from those pains that are so deep rooted.

### **God wants you to reap the Benefits of Forgiveness**

- **Restoration and Peace:** Forgiveness brings a sense of inner peace. It removes the weight of bitterness and anger that can cloud our minds and eat away at our hearts.
- **Freedom from Bondage:** We are no longer enslaved by the hurt that was caused. We let go of the control that the person who



wronged us once had over our emotions.

- **Reflection of Christ's Love:** When we forgive, we reflect Christ's love to the world. The world is watching, and how we forgive others speaks volumes about the transforming power of Christ.

## **Worship Team**

**Share the story of two women.**

## **Conclusion**

- **Invitation to Forgive:** Are you holding onto unforgiveness today? Is there someone who has wronged you that you are struggling to forgive? Know that you are not alone. God is with you, and He has equipped you to forgive.

- **Final Challenge:** Let's be people who forgive as we have been forgiven. Let's release others from their debts and experience the freedom and peace that comes with forgiveness.

### **Closing Prayer:**

“Father, we thank You for Your immense forgiveness toward us. Help us to forgive those who have wronged us, just as You have forgiven us. Heal our hearts from the pain of unforgiveness and set us free from bitterness. May we reflect Your love and grace to a hurting world. In Jesus' name, Amen.”