

THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

(Handout at "The Gathering", October, 2013)

INTRO: This is a powerful way to find freedom and healing. What follows is a summary:

Peter Horrobin in his book "The Most Powerful Prayer on Earth" says, our lives are like a house with many rooms. Some rooms have:

- doors open all the time and we go in and out;
 - doors closed but we're free to go in when we want;
 - doors shut tight, locked, and the keys thrown away.
- a) These locked up rooms house *memories* of events such as: trauma; rejection; abuse, divorce, accusations, disloyalty, accidents etc.
 - b) They are *painful events* in our life and the pain is unresolved.
 - c) The events affect our life and take on other names such as: resentment; anger; bitterness; hatred; grief; shame; guilt and rejection etc.
 - d) Sometimes *stuff seeps out* and we try to mop it up but others see it and we're worn out from pretending.

JESUS has given us the key to unlock those doors and that key is FORGIVENESS

1. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO FORGIVE?

- a) Its God's heart to forgive. God wants to pour out his love on us and we all need forgiveness. (Romans 3:23)
- b) Greek for forgiveness means TO CUT OFF, LET GO, TO RELEASE. We need to let go and release whoever has hurt us (e.g. I'm stuck to whoever I've not forgiven. They go on their merry way but I'm bound to them.)
- c) By forgiving, I'm handing over my right to judge and handing over that responsibility to God. God says, "I will take vengeance, I will repay those who deserve it." (Romans 12:19). When Jesus had insults hurled at him he suffered without retaliation and entrusted himself to him who judges justly (His Heavenly Father). (1 Peter 2:23)
- d) THINK OF ANY JUDGEMENT OF OTHERS BEING LIKE A BALL THAT WE THROW AT SOMEONE BUT IT HITS A BRICK WALL AND RETURNS TO BELT US. This is a rock solid principle of God:
(Luke 6:37-38) "Judge not and you will not be judged. Do not condemn and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven...For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."
- e) Forgiveness is a command, NOT AN OPTION!
(Mathew 6:14-15) "If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

2. WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

FORGIVENESS...

IS NOT:

- ...based on feelings
- ...pretending you weren't hurt
- ...saying it was OK
- ...trusting again
- ...forgetting
- ...taking away consequences

IS:

- ...a command
- ...a decision of the will
- ...a lifestyle
- ...transferring judgement from us to God

"FORGIVENESS is giving up my right to want to hurt you for hurting me."

3. WHO DO WE FORGIVE?

- a) OTHERS WHO HAVE HURT US: e.g. flashbacks when name mentioned; parents; teachers or bullies; girlfriend; wife; work colleagues or bosses; doctors; pastors; church members.
- b) GOD: We might blame God for what's happened; e.g. "Where were you God?" OR "If you really loved me you'd have prevented this!"
- c) SELF: May be the hardest of all to forgive because we have failed to live up to and meet our own standards, BUT, THAT'S PRIDE! Who am I to stand in judgement of me when God has done it all and forgiven me? It's really saying that God got it wrong!

4. HOW DO WE FORGIVE?

- a) Acknowledge the hurt/pain etc.
- b) Recognise it starts with the WILL TO FORGIVE
- c) Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind:
- who you need to forgive
 - the emotions tied to unforgiveness
- d) Pray:
- "Father, I feel (*e.g.hurt,angry*) about (*e.g. What Bill did to me*)". (Give the details)
 - "Father, I give these feelings of ____ to you. I release them to you now.
- e) Pray:
- "Father, I forgive ____ for _____. And I release him/her/them to you now.
- f) Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you need to forgive:
- Others
 - God (e.g. for blaming Him)
 - Yourself
- g) Thank God for freedom for yourself and those you've forgiven.

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