

## Prayer Ministry 3

# FORGIVENESS AND BITTER ROOTS

### INTRODUCTION

#### PREFACE

I have to start this talk with forgiveness – I forgive Pastor Rob for pinching my best lines when he spoke on forgiveness on 26<sup>th</sup> Jan. However, forgiveness is such an important topic – forgiveness is a corner stone and healing starts with forgiveness – that it's worth repeating.

#### SOME USEFUL DEFINITIONS

- **Forgiveness:**  
Surrendering to Jesus a judgement we hold against someone.
- **Judgement:**  
A decision or conclusion made as an authoritative pronouncement against self or other
- **Expectation:**  
A confident anticipation of a behaviour on the part of self or other, or of a happening, event or outcome.

#### WHAT IS UNFORGIVENESS?

##### **Definition**

Unforgiveness is:

- Holding a judgement against someone
- Holding yourself in captivity to a past offence or hurt

##### **Why is holding a judgement against someone bad?**

The Bible says:

Matthew 7:1-2 “*Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way as you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*”

but:

Isaiah 33:22 “*For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our king; it is he who will save us.*”

John 5:22 *“Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son”*

and

John 5:30 *“I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me”*

### **Symptoms of Unforgiveness**

- Resentment
- Broken Relationships
- Bitter Root Judgement
- Curses
- Sickness
- Captivity
- Torment

### WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

#### **What Forgiveness IS**

Forgiveness is a conscious, deliberate decision to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward a person or group who has harmed you.

Forgiveness is an act of your will and your heart. It is a decision that you make – you don't ask God to forgive, forgiveness comes from your heart.

Forgiveness is yielding the hurt, loss, injustice to Jesus and allowing the Holy Spirit to bring healing into that place.

Forgiving is relinquishing your judgement and allowing God to judge.

Forgiveness:

- Releases us from captivity to the past
- Heals the present
- Restores the future

#### **What Forgiveness IS NOT**

Forgiveness does not mean forgetting, nor does it mean condoning or excusing offences. Forgiveness doesn't let the offender off the hook – it moves them from your hook to God's hook – from your judgement to God's righteous, impartial judgement.

Just because you've forgiven someone for an offence or hurt, doesn't mean that you have to allow them to repeat it. For example: You lend a brother your bicycle. He sells it without consent and keeps the money. Of course, you must forgive him for this but it may be wisdom not to lend him your new bicycle.

### **Who might I need to forgive?**

- Family
- Friends
- Teachers
- Ministers/pastors
- Work Colleagues
- Organisations or Authorities
- Yourself

God does not appear in this list – God can do no wrong; He is righteous and just. If we have unforgiveness towards God, then we are wrong and we must repent of judging God and ask His forgiveness.

## FORGIVING

### WHY SHOULD I FORGIVE?

#### **God forgave you**

- Ephesians 4:32 *“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you”*
- Colossians 3:13 *“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”*
- Hebrews 9:22 *“In fact, the Law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”*

#### **So we can receive God's forgiveness**

There are many scriptures that show clearly that unforgiveness on our part separates us from the forgiveness of God:

- Matthew 18: 23-35 *“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold*

to repay the debt. At this the servant fell on his knees before him. "Be patient with me," he begged, "and I will pay back everything." The servant's master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go. But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. "Pay back what you owe me!" he demanded. His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, "Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.". But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. 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 cancelled 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. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

- Matthew 6:9-15 "This, then, is how you should pray:

*"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
Your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one."*

*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."*

### **Forgiveness may be the gateway to healing**

- Unforgiveness holds us in captivity

Quote from "Captive: Setting Free the Unknown Me" by Phyllis Mitchell:

*"Unforgiveness, because we were a victim, does not hurt the individual who violated us, it hurts us. When we don't forgive, we become bound in that unforgiveness. We must pray to be released from the bondage of unforgiveness*

*Unforgiveness holds many of us hostage. If we do not forgive we place ourselves into another area of self-imposed bondage that can keep us captive for many years, even a lifetime. When we choose to hold grudges and not forgive, we imprison ourselves in bitterness and anger”*

- Unforgiveness can be the root of illness

Even people in the world know that unforgiveness makes you sick. This quote is from a web-site (*ftoxins.com*) about avoiding the toxins in our cosmetics and food and household products. There’s no indication the author, Ariane Chui, is a Christian. The page is headed “*Unforgiveness Is More Toxic Than Anything You Could Eat Or Put On Your Face*”:

*“Withholding forgiveness is like allowing a tumour to spread aggressively through our body while ignoring the necessary treatment to eradicate it. But what if caused more than a just metaphorical tumour? According to Dr. Steven Standiford, chief of surgery at the Cancer Treatment Centres of America, refusing to forgive makes people sick and keeps them sick. This is why he has been using forgiveness therapy to help treat diseases, such as cancer.”*

### ***Forgiveness denies the devil a foothold***

- 2 Corinthians 2:10-11 “*Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven – if there was anything to forgive – I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.”*

### HOW OFTEN SHOULD I FORGIVE?

The well-known verse in Matthew’s Gospel tells us:

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, but seventy-seven times.’*”

But what does this mean in practice?

- Sometimes forgiveness is straight-forward. You make the decision to forgive and forgiveness is complete
- Sometimes there are unavoidable repeated sins. For example: A much-loved friend is very clumsy with their words. They often say things which are quite hurtful, but, in your heart, you know that’s not how they were meant. Unless the

Holy Spirit does an amazing work, the friend is not likely to change and there will be other times they say just the wrong thing. You may have to forgive the friend over and over.

- Forgiveness can be a process. You make the decision to forgive, but – especially if it's a very deep hurt – you might need to work through the forgiveness step by step. You have forgiven, you are forgiving and you are moving towards complete forgiveness.
- The devil is good at remembering! He will try to use past hurts to stir up trouble and division. The way to overcome is to stand on the forgiveness that you have already worked through.

### BUT WHAT IF I CAN'T FORGIVE?

The first step in forgiveness is acknowledging that unforgiveness is your burden and your burden alone. If someone has sinned against you, your unforgiveness towards them makes no difference to them at all. There is nothing that they hold against you that prevents you from forgiving even if you know they're likely to repeat the offence. All your unforgiveness does is hold you in captivity to the original hurt – as long as you refuse to forgive, you carry that hurt with you.

You need to come to a place where you understand that there is no such thing as "can't" in forgiveness – it is "won't".

### HOW DO I FORGIVE?

- Recognise and admit the original offence. Acknowledge the hurt arising from the offence or sin. Separate the person from the sin.
- Make the decision to forgive the one who caused the hurt (even if that was you) and release them from your judgement. The decision starts in the will and moves into the heart, which may be a quick thing or a process.
- Ask for help. If you're struggling to turn "I can't" into "I won't" and "I won't" into "I forgive", ask the Holy Spirit to help and guide you. When God asks us to do something, He always provides a way for us to do it (1 Corinthians 10:13 *"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."*)

## BITTER ROOTS

### DEFINITION

A root of bitterness comes from unforgiveness and can lead to resentment that defiles others. It comes from failing to secure God's grace to forgive.

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."*

Bitter Root Judgements and Expectations are rooted in past hurts and experiences and can influence your present and future. Because of the law of sowing and reaping (Galatians 6:7-8 *"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life"*) and the law of judgment, the one who judges at some point in his life then sentences himself to do the very thing that he judged in others:

Romans 2:1-2 *"You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth."*

### REMOVING A BITTER ROOT

- Recognise and admit the original offence. Acknowledge the hurt arising from the offence or sin.
- Forgive the person who sinned against you and release them from your judgement.
- Ask God to cut the soul tie if necessary (*soul ties are covered next time*)
- Repent of allowing the bitter root judgement to form and renounce the judgement made.
- Renounce any inner vows or pronouncements made
- Ask the Holy Spirit to remove the bitter-root from your heart and break the cycle of sowing and reaping these judgements through your life

## FORGIVENESS PRAYERS

### REPENTANCE

If you have blamed God for something, you must repent of this. This is a simple prayer guideline:

*“Father in heaven*

*You are wholly good, wholly righteous and there is no sin or wrongdoing in You.*

*I acknowledge that blaming You for [offence] was wrong. I am sorry for blaming You and I repent of this. I ask Your forgiveness*

*In Jesus’ Name”*

### GENERAL FORGIVENESS

This is a prayer for general forgiveness. There may be a need to use a more specific prayer in some circumstances, but this general prayer is a good starting point.

Where [name] and [offence] appear, be as specific as you can.

*“Father in heaven*

*Thank you that Jesus died so that I might be forgiven.*

*I recognise that [name] has hurt or offended me by [offence] and that I have held [him/her/them] in my judgement for this.*

*In the same way that I have been forgiven by Jesus, I now choose to forgive [name] for this hurt or offence. I unconditionally forgive [him/her/them] and I release [him/her/them] from my judgement. I repent of any bitterness, wrong attitudes or resentment I have held against [him/her/them].*

*I surrender to You any hurt, bitterness or feeling of injustice arising from [offence]. I ask Your Holy Spirit to seal this forgiveness and bring healing for the hurt. Please help me stand on this forgiveness when the enemy tries to remind me of the hurt.*

*Father, I ask that You would pour out a blessing on [name].*

*In the Name of Jesus, I ask”*

## BITTER ROOTS

Healing for Bitter Roots involves forgiveness for the original hurt or offence, repentance for allowing the bitter root to form and breaking of pronouncements, curses and judgements spoken over the other party. A good approach to this is to use a series of prayers so that each point can be fully addressed before moving on. As with the general forgiveness prayer, it helps to be as specific as possible, even if this means repeating the prayer for different hurts or other people.

### **Forgiveness**

Unless there are specific circumstances, the General Forgiveness Prayer can be used

### **Repentance**

*“Father God, I recognise that I have held on to unforgiveness towards [name] because of [offence]. I know this has allowed a root of bitterness to form in me and I know this was wrong. I repent of this and ask Your forgiveness.*

*I also ask Your forgiveness for the times when I have repeated [offence] towards others. I release all my anger and bitterness to You, Lord.*

*In Jesus’ Name”*

### **Breaking of Pronouncements, Curses and Judgements**

*“Father God, I confess that, in my bitterness and unforgiveness towards [name], I have spoken pronouncements, curses and judgements over [him/her/them]. I recognise this was wrong and I now repent of it and ask Your forgiveness.*

*Father, I ask that You would break the power of every pronouncement, curse and judgement that I have spoken over [him/her/them] and release Your blessing over [him/her/them].*

*In Jesus’ Name”*

### **Healing of the Bitter Root**

*“Lord, I ask that You would remove the root of bitterness from my heart and bring Your healing into that place. I ask You to break the cycle of reaping and sowing that I have allowed to form and I ask the You would replace it with Your blessing.*

*In Jesus’ Name”*

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## MY FORGIVENESS LIST

NAME:

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## FORGIVENESS SKETCH

Robert / Mike / Sian

### BACKGROUND

Robert has to bring a large amplifier to church every Sunday and take it away again after the service. As the amplifier is heavy and bulky, it's very helpful if Robert can park by the fire exit so the equipment can be lifted from the boot of his car and carried the short distance inside.

Mike has started parking in the spot by the fire exit. This means that Robert has to carry the amplifier in and out through the main doors and across the car park, which is a real struggle.

### SCENARIO 1

*Robert arrives to find Mike's car in HIS spot again.*

Robert: "That flipping bloke has parked there again! Oh, he is a nuisance!"

*Robert feels that an offence has been committed against him. He could forgive and move on, but he compounds the problem and a bitter root is created:*

Robert: "He always does that – it's absolutely deliberate. He's totally inconsiderate and thoughtless. He's a complete nuisance!"

*A little later, Sian comes in.*

Sian (happy, noisy Welsh voice): "Morning everyone! Hi, Viv! Hello, Mike – you OK?"

Mike: "Hi, Sian! Yes, I'm great, thanks."

Sian (bit quieter and subdued): "What's wrong with Robert?"

Mike: "I really don't know. He just seems very angry lately."

*Mike doesn't know what's wrong with Robert. Robert is carrying a grudge against Mike and the obvious animosity creates a bad atmosphere in the church.*

### SCENARIO 2

*Robert arrives to find Mike's car by the fire exit again.*

Robert: "Ah - Mike's beaten me to it and I'll have to take the amp round the front again. Never mind – I forgive him, Lord, and release him from my judgement. I thank you for Mike, for his commitment that means he's often here first and often the last to leave. Bless him, Lord!"

*Indoors:*

Mike: "Hi, Robert. Here – let me give you a hand with that. You know, if I'd thought, I'd park away from the fire exit – I'm really sorry for making you struggle. I'll try to remember next week."

*Situation resolved, Mike and Robert's relationship strengthened, peace (and the Lord) reigns*