

Forgive Like Jesus Did

by Sandeep Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the critical importance of forgiving others as Jesus forgave us, warning against the dangers of harboring unforgiveness in our hearts.

Duration: 32:46

Scripture: Matthew 6:14-15, Matthew 18:21, Matthew 26:55-56, Luke 23:34, John 19:25

Topics: "Radical Forgiveness", "Christian Living"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the critical importance of forgiveness in the Christian walk, highlighting how unforgiveness can lead to dismissal from the kingdom of God. It delves into key Bible verses such as Matthew 6:14-15 and Matthew 18, illustrating the severe consequences of harboring unforgiveness. The sermon challenges listeners to examine their hearts for any signs of unforgiveness, even in subtle behaviors like coldness or silent treatment, stressing the need for radical forgiveness as demonstrated by Jesus on the cross.

Transcript

I want to speak today on forgiveness. If you don't know, forgiveness is a big deal in the Christian walk. The beginning of our journey with Christ starts with God saying that he's going to forgive us, forgive us of our sins.

But this is also one sin that God says can cause our dismissal. From the kingdom of God, when we don't forgive. Let me start with that verse in Matthew chapter 5, I'm sorry Matthew chapter 6. Matthew chapter 6 verse 14.

You may not know these verses 14 and 15 but this is the sermon on the mount. Plenty of other verses here that you will readily accept. It comes right after the Lord's Prayer in verses 9 through 13.

And right after that he says, look you're talking about prayer. Let me tell you this in verse 14 and 15. If you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly father will also forgive you.

You see that word if? The beginning of verse 14. If you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly father will also forgive you. Verse 15.

If you do not forgive others, your father will not forgive your transgressions. It is possible for us to be dismissed, to be expelled from the kingdom of God, after we have been forgiven all our sins. There's a

parable on that story in Matthew chapter 18.

It's a story of somebody who had been forgiven billions of dollars and then somebody owed him a few dollars and he wouldn't forgive that person. And the king said, throw him back in jail even though I've forgiven that debt until he pays everything. And Jesus was talking about forgiveness there.

Matthew chapter 18. Read it. Matthew 18 from verse 21 onwards.

It confirms what Jesus is saying in this. It's a big deal to God. We can comfort ourselves that we have not committed adultery and that we've not told lies and we're fighting unrighteousness, but the Holy Spirit is telling us watch out for unforgiveness most of all.

We can be expelled from the kingdom of God after we have experienced the forgiveness of our own sins. We can be expelled from the kingdom of God after we've been walking in freedom because of the forgiveness of our sins. We will be expelled for only one reason, if we do not forgive others.

And forgiveness is very simple to understand and very simple to embrace when we don't have anybody to forgive. It's a very simple concept, but the moment somebody wrongs us or somebody does something that's not our way, then we find it very, very difficult to forgive. And the spirit of unforgiveness can lie way beneath the surface.

And we have to be diligent. I was reminded of that verse in Matthew chapter 3 where John the Baptist says, he is coming to lay an axe to the root. And what I want to do today is try to lay an axe to the root of unforgiveness that can be in our hearts.

Just think, just don't think just because you've accepted the forgiveness of God and that you generally are not fighting with somebody right now that there's not a spirit of unforgiveness. We can smile and be nice, but the spirit of unforgiveness can be there in our hearts. And let me tell you some of the ways in which I find the spirit of unforgiveness in my heart.

I find that the spirit of unforgiveness can be coming through in my life where I brush somebody off and I'm curt and abrupt. I don't say anything mean, I don't say anything verbally offensive, but I'm just short with them. Nothing wrong with only saying a few words, nothing wrong in a time, but it's the motive.

And if I search my heart and if I'm abrupt with somebody because of something they've done to me, it's a spirit of unforgiveness. I can give them a cold shoulder. Now that's an expression, a cold shoulder, a lack of warmth.

You know what was the one commandment Jesus gave us, a new commandment I give you? You love one another as I have loved you. What an incredible warmth Jesus had towards us. I'm also talking about in the context of the church we're brothers and sisters here and the command is love one another, not love the world, love one another which is the disciples.

So those of us who are members of this church, no place for cold shoulders. How about the silent treatment? My dad has told me if you want to know how selfish you are just get married. I find out how selfish I can be and how much unforgiveness there can be towards your family members.

You can give them the silent treatment. I gave the person, my wife, a silent treatment for three hours. Is that the spirit of Christ? A pouting spirit, a critical spirit.

How about a dirty look? Have you felt people throwing daggers at you with their eyes? Have you ever thrown daggers with your eyes?

We find that as we search our hearts we'll find that the spirit underneath all of this stuff underneath all of these things the Lord is showing me is an unforgiving spirit in your heart and if we're not ruthless to deal with it this spirit of unforgiveness festers and becomes a tree that shows all kinds of bitterness and gossip and all kinds of things but the root of it is an unforgiving spirit and I can brush it off and say Lord that's just my feelings getting the better of me but when I see it in the context of if I don't forgive other people God will not forgive me I recognize the seriousness of the cold shoulder of the dirty look of the abrupt way in which I can speak to somebody especially my spouse in dealing with them and I have to be ruthless about it if I'm not honest about it if

I'm not ruthless about it it will continue to fester but the more I can bring light to it and let the light of God shine into it and say Lord there's an unforgiveness in there and this can get me expelled from the kingdom of God I will take it a lot more seriously I need to elevate unforgiveness way above adultery tell you why I'm not discounting adultery I think hopefully all of us are very scared of committing adultery as men or maybe some for women I don't know what it is that's a very serious thing that you would never want to do maybe it's adultery there too can I elevate unforgiveness up to that level because I'm serious this is verse in Matthew 6 14 15 is mean means that we must mean business in this area if we are not radical in our unforgiveness we will find that that

unforgiveness spirit festers and takes a root and then actually starts to bear fruit may it be said of all of us at NCCF that we were radical to root out all pouting faces all silent treatments they will we were radical to root it out we were radical to root out all abrupt and cold demeanors even when we have been wronged even when we have been wronged let us be faithful and radical to root out all the spirit of unforgiveness and the example in this life is Jesus and I want to share with you from the life of Jesus how he demonstrated this what is the most evil thing that people did to Jesus they killed him and in the totem pole of evil things committed you cannot get more evil than killing the perfect son of God who is absolutely blameless he didn't do a single thing wrong he didn't even

think a single thing wrong towards anybody else but yet people killed him you couldn't get more evil than that nobody in human history has experienced a greater injustice think about the injustice that you're dealing with in your lives think about things where people have wronged you in your lives it is peanuts compared to what people did to Jesus and it is from the lesson of Jesus in his life that we say Lord I want to follow you and where Jesus demonstrated forgiveness the most is on the cross it is there that he demonstrated Jesus forgiveness the most so let's start with the verses we know which are well known Luke chapter 23 in Luke chapter 23 this is when Jesus is being crucified we may know these words verse 33 Luke chapter 23 verse 33 we find that Jesus is being hung crucified and

there are criminals one on either side and one on the other left one on the left and one on right and then Jesus says verse 34 father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing and we see what they were doing they were casting lots and the verse 35 the rulers and the religious rulers that is were sneering at him and ridiculing him using his own words saying if he himself is the Christ let him save himself and the soldiers were mocking him saying you are the king Jesus was forgiving others when they were persecuting him and tormenting him when they were taunting him but look at what he said father they do not know what they are doing what do you mean they don't know what they're doing lord for the ever since he started speaking he started his public ministry they were trying to

kill him for three and a half years these religious people were trying to kill him and they finally got a chance to kill him yet Jesus's heart was father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing what were they doing they were not killing some human being they were killing the son of God they didn't understand the impact of what they were doing they did not know what they were doing this is what the Lord was speaking to me through this when people wrong you they know full well that they're hitting that nail into your hands and all of that but they don't know what they're doing they don't know who God is they don't know how holy he is they don't know how much and God loves them there's a lot of things they do not know and they do wrong because they don't know that and the heart

of Jesus was saying lord I know you father I know you I know how full of love you are towards them right now they're doing such evil things they don't know what they are doing and it was a heart that wanted their salvation more than took into account what was being happening to them and I hope through what I'm sharing here today you will remember Jesus on the cross this was not Jesus after hours of counseling sessions and drinking a nice latte and some counselor telling him you should forgive these people you know it'll be nice for you to forgive and you're right okay you're right I'll forgive them he had been beaten almost to the point of death this is a man who's been physically been under under duress to say the least he's hanging there on the cross and it's in this position that what

comes out of him is an abundant forgiveness this was a man this is not it's a fully God fully man tempted in all points facing the very last temptation maybe very last temptation which was will you not forgive these people even then at that moment he said Lord forgive them because he had a clear vision of who these people were that they were lost souls that these were people who needed to be saved from hell and whatever they were doing to him was nothing compared to what was going to what their soul needed which was the love of God to touch them and he was saying father don't hold this against them don't hold back your Holy Spirit from continuing to reach them and grab them and take bring them back to me even they said you can do whatever you want to me my father said don't don't hold

this against them don't withdraw your Holy Spirit from drawing reaching them and you can maybe apply that to the people who are wronging you or who have wronged you are you really rooting for the Holy Spirit to draw them back Lord ignore what they did to me don't take into account what they've done to me you know what I'm talking about you know how hard it is to say that you know how hard it is to say that to somebody who has done wrong to you who has abused you who has hurt you no matter what has happened to you it is nothing compared to what happened to Jesus perfect son of God you have done maybe one or two things wrong in your life to say the least Jesus did nothing and yes you didn't deserve to be abused as a child or whatever it is well Jesus didn't get didn't deserve he's asking

you he's not asking you to decide justice or not but he's asking you will you have a spirit of forgiveness like I did like I did not anything more than what I did and this spirit of forgiveness has to be radical it starts with people who have hurt us knowingly these people had hurt them knowingly but yet Jesus could say they don't know what they're doing they have no idea what these guys are doing these people are acting out of hurt these people hurt me so bad but they had no idea what they were doing in the greater context we have to grow to have that hard family of God when people have mistreated you look at Jesus on the cross and may he speak to you of how hard a situation he was in and yet he was able to forgive all of this will only happen if we have been filled again and again with

the Holy Spirit I'm not against counseling sessions to get us to forgive please hear me right I'm not I kind of jokingly talked about that I'm not against it what I'm saying is we have to move from that to follow Jesus to

where even when we are crucified we'll be able to say that one day are you on that journey are you on that journey where you don't need some external sources to come alongside but you can say Lord the Holy Spirit will speak to me and I will radically forgive I'm setting the bar of what Jesus was and we say look are you gonna say you're gonna follow him if we're serious that we're gonna follow him let me show you what he did on the cross the other thing he did was he forgave Luke 23 and 39 he then he also forgives the man who was the thief on the cross he forgives the

thief on the cross you know in Matthew I don't know if you know this this may not be well known you can turn with me if you want or you can just listen to me in Matthew chapter 27 the same account of Jesus being crucified on the cross it says in Matthew chapter 27 verse 44 this is the people on the cross it says here that the robbers who had been crucified with him were also insulting him with the same words and what words they were insulting him with was look he trusts in God let God rescue him that's what the religious rulers were saying but in Matthew 27 44 it says that the robbers too were saying thing saying the same thing both robbers were insulting Jesus imagine Jesus perfect son of God Matthew 27 44 the robbers were both insulting him just think about that situation Jesus hanging

there never sinned a single thought in his life and he's listening to these okay religious readers then he's looking at these two robbers he's like what good have you ever done in your life period I did good all my life and here are these two robbers insulting the perfect son of God but that's not forgiveness the real beauty of forgiveness was in if you go back to Luke 23 when one of the criminals repented this man is insulting Jesus both of them were insulting Jesus one continues to insult Jesus something happens maybe he heard Jesus said father forgive them and he was blown away and with five minutes left to live or maybe one two hours left to live he changes his mind and he says in verse 40 of Luke chapter 23 look I mean I'm seeing things differently now how can we do we not even fear

God we are under the same condemnation and this man's done nothing wrong in verse 41 and then he says Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom there's a whole bible study we can do in that verse I've spoken on that some other time this is a dying man telling another dying man Lord remember me when you come into your kingdom what kingdom is this dying man going to come into you're going to die in a few minutes but the thief's eyes were open that this man was a king that was his kingdom and that this thief was gonna that this man Jesus was gonna come back from the dead he was surely gonna die but he was gonna come into another kingdom it was an incredible faith that this thief got a few minutes before he died but what I want to point out to you is the heart of Jesus the moment that

robber's heart changed you see the heart of Jesus where he said he'll be with me in paradise how immediate the forgiveness was how immediate you know why because unforgiveness never entered into him he was guarding himself on the cross beaten and bloodied these people throwing insults on him and it was just flowing off his back saying I'm going to maintain a spirit of unforgiveness because I don't know when somebody might repent and somebody might turn and if I if they turn I want to give them words of life immediately how unlike us how much we want to have them spend five minutes or five years or five months earning back our forgiveness how much we like to hold it over them that wrong thing that we did how much we want to go back and have them talk about well you remember what you said

that in an email about me three years ago and then this other thing you happened two years ago let's go dig it back up and let's talk and talk meanwhile this thief on this cross is throwing insults and Jesus says the moment he sees this man saying oh you're gonna you want me to you want to come with me into my kingdom you've seen something that you haven't seen before welcome welcome no need to discuss all

the details of all the things you told me all you called my name this bad name and that name all of that welcome into my kingdom what a spirit of forgiveness Jesus had that had never gotten to the system family the spirit of unforgiveness runs deep within us think about somebody who's wronged you in your life are you that quick to draw them back and to give them full access to your

kingdom to your life to your intimacy to your friendship not that you have to trust them but you're willing to completely forgive them it's very applicable in marriage relationship very applicable in family relationships how our forgiveness must be brutal must be so radical and Jesus is our example and this is my favorite John chapter 19 the forgiveness of Jesus we talk we see how he forgave even the unrepentant rulers and soldiers we see how he forgave the repentant criminal but you've seen John chapter 19 um actually let's turn with me to Matthew chapter 26 I'm sorry Matthew chapter 26 this is right when Jesus was being arrested Matthew chapter 26 verse 55 and 56 Matthew chapter 26 55 and 66 at the time Jesus said to the crowds have you come to me with swords and clubs to arrest me as

you would against a robber every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize me all this has been taking place to fulfill the scriptures and of the prophets then just that last little sentence there then all the disciples left him and fled all the disciples every single one of them left him and fled they were just hanging out with Jesus a few minutes ago a few hours before they were hanging out and Jesus spoke to them they shared communion together and now they all left him and fled now turn with me to John chapter 19 John chapter 19 this is just a few hours later Jesus is now hanging on the cross and John chapter 19 verse 25 onwards there the soldiers did these things but standing by the cross of Jesus where his mother his mother sister and Mary Magdalene verse 26 when

Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby he said to his mother woman behold your son then he said to the disciple behold your mother from that day or that hour the disciple took her into his own household this is I believe he's talking about John who wrote this book the gospel of John the apostle John the disciple John as I said just remember a few hours ago this John had also fled what would you do if your closest disciple you know Jesus John was very close to Jesus even physically it says on the last supper he was resting on Jesus' breast he was right there with Jesus and he said Jesus hey who tell us who's going to be the one who's going to betray you John has such an intimate relationship with Jesus he's such a loving person loved Jesus like a like almost

just a brother must have been this was not this raging Peter who said I'll go to you to the death this was a more quieter but a more friend of Jesus and John must well Jesus and John were very close clearly he took John up to the mount of transfiguration he took John with him to raise Jairus' daughter he took John with him as well as Peter and James to pray with him in the garden of Gethsemane John was one of his closest disciples and even John fled and then you see him a few hours later they're now standing with his own mother who will you entrust your mother to don't you think John must prove his faithfulness now before you'll entrust your mother now that you're dying how incredible the forgiveness of Jesus was and how reaching back in was the spirit of Jesus that he was saying John I

know you fled I saw you bail on me a few hours ago but back you're back here with me now I don't need to process this with you what happened why'd you do all of that why'd you run away from me you're here standing next to my mother I don't know where all the other disciples were but John was the one who was willing to come back and stand at the foot of cross he's willing to own up to saying this you know I bailed on you a few hours ago but I'm back now way before Peter could come back John was back and Jesus said you know what what an incredible honor John had for the rest of his life to take care of the mother of

Jesus for the rest of her life rest of his life John Jesus was able to entrust to John this man who had failed him had run away from him I want to point towards the forgiveness

of Jesus though I want to I hope you can put yourself in Jesus's shoes beaten bruised bloodied dying barely able to breathe that's what happens when you're on the cross and you see this disciple who betrayed you who's who bailed on you not betrayed you but bailed on you and fled and now he's back with your mother the tendency would be like I don't know if I can trust you with taking care of my mother just yet let's wait a couple of years and see if you can prove back your loyalty forgiveness of Jesus was so complete there was no unforgiveness that came into his heart and whatever the father told him to do he could do it with such purity unfiltered whatever the father said tell John take care of your mother he's going to take care of him you know Jesus didn't question well God did you see

what he just did a few hours ago no the forgiveness of Jesus was so complete and I want to say to our church too we will not move forward you will not move forward in your spiritual life if you're not radical and if we're not more radical about our forgiveness husbands evaluate the quality of your forgiveness towards your wives when she wrongs you wives evaluate the quality of the forgiveness that you give up towards your husband when they wrong you when they do contrary to what you told them specifically to do the way they you like it to be done and they do it differently when you're offended that they didn't remember something or didn't do it your way evaluate the spirit of unforgiveness that is lurking that's crouching at the door and ask yourselves if you have the fragrance of Christ

the fragrance of Christ I believe starts with the warm smell of forgiveness that cannot be repressed I hope that in this church with the brothers and sisters between husband and wife there will be a beautiful spirit of forgiveness that not a single smell of a spirit of unforgiveness will lie out as I said that comes across through just an abrupt way of speaking can come up through a cold shoulder can come through daggers in our eyes it can come through many different ways family let us be radical Jesus does not put out the smoldering wick he does not stamp out the bruised reed he seeks to kindle afresh the Holy Spirit in other people I hope we're seeking to do that if there's any encouragement in Christ if there's any fellowship of the Holy Spirit if there's any consolation of love that

you see in somebody else the moment you see that I hope we will be of those who will try to encourage it back those who they say something wrong if they're back are you going to embrace them back with a full spirit of forgiveness or are they going to be able to see in our eyes I remember what you said about me or is there going to be eyes that are washed in the blood of Christ remember the story let me end with what I started Matthew 18 is a story of forgiveness we have to remember how much we have been forgiven this is the secret family of God this is why unforgiveness resides in us even now is because we just don't know how much we've been forgiven amazing love how can it be that my savior my God died for me the perfect son of God died for me the amazing love that is in there has been

lost in us when we allow the spirit of unforgiveness to continue and it is absolutely true that even when people wrong us they owe us hundred dollars in the eternal scope of things and we hold them to it and we give them a bad look we make them sleep on the couch physically the couch maybe just a few feet apart but in our spirit we're creating a wall within us we have lost the reality of how much God has forgiven us let us fight the spirit of unforgiveness family of God God doesn't condemn us about what we don't know but now you have been warned now I have been warned and the Holy Spirit has been warning me for a while let us be brutal about it this marriages won't fall apart if you'll take this word seriously if you'll fight the spirit of unforgiveness where will our church ever deal

with issues of divorce divorce by members in this church it'll be far from our lips because we'll be fighting the roots of all these sins in unforgiveness family don't let unforgiveness fester remember that it all starts with how much you've been forgiven that's by our heads in prayer father we come before you Lord help us to meditate about you on the cross help us to remember Lord that you are our example you are fully God but you are also fully man and as you attempted with unforgiveness you overcame as a man filled with your Holy Spirit and we have that same Holy Spirit living within us all of us have been wronged in our lives Lord but nothing like how you were wronged nothing yet you overcame with the power of the Holy Spirit and a life that was fully surrendered towards you teach us

this way Lord we want to deeply repent Lord for the spirit of unforgiveness that might reside in the corners of our hearts God touch our lips touch our eyes cleanse it Lord wash it we are deeply sorry Lord for all the words of meanness the looks that we have given other people our loved ones the ones we claim to love father drive it far from this church protect our marriages Lord in this time where it's going to get dark and darker Lord protect our marriages protect our church Lord our brother sister relationships oh God fill us with your Holy Spirit we may be full of forgiveness be full of love that Lord that we do not take into account wrong suffered there will be patient and kind and long-suffering fill us with your love Lord Jesus name we pray amen

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