

05172020 Living in the Saturday between salvation and Friday of salvation and the Sunday of Resurrection... **and as we studied two weeks ago we started with the question if you were to ask me... joe in your 30 years of ministry what would you say is the most difficult thing for Christians or people in general to overcome? Without hesitation I would say winning the battle of their thought life. And I tatught on how to win that battle...now this week if you were to ask me Joe in your 30 years of ministry what is the hardest thing for people to do? Without hesitation I would say to truly forgive others who have harmed them and often themselves for what they have done.**

Before I speak on those , a little understanding about our design is neseccary. We were made in the image of God...

NLT Gen 1:26 *Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us.* **An image is a likeness...a reflection...a commonality...God has put into us character traits that mirror his, even in our fallen state we bear the fingerprint of God in our design.**

Now God... (Elohim) in Hebrew.. Is the plural form of God .. It is used as the mighty name of the creator, It is a plural name with a singular meaning. The Uni-plurality of God. This reference to the Uni-plurality of God over two thousand times in the Bible.

- **God is one yet more than one. It is where The Christians speak of the Trinity or Tri-unity of God. One God made up of three distinct persons The Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God's nature is Relational...** their relationship is in complete unity Father, Son, Holy Spirit yet each is unique and separate. and They exist in each-other. Their nature is personal with their own personality, moral and spiritual capacities, and persaonla in emotions, intellect, conscience and will.

So this triune God calls a meeting, the father, Son and Holy Spirit...he was not speaking to the angels...for we were not made in their likeness. Nor the animals or any other creature...In God's Image and Likeness... God designed and created man in accordance with his nature.

- **That mirror like image was designed in the human race from the beginning...** God also has in his nature the capacity to forgive which is the character trait of being a peacemaker...
- This character quality is necessary in God's relationship with humanity...for there is no need to forgive nor be a peacemaker in the Godhead as they are in complete unity and do not sin..
- Now in order for humans to have long-term successful relationships with God we need forgiveness as we sin often...and in our human relationships we need the ability to be peacemakers therefore forgivers. we have the capacity to be image bearers in the fact that we are peace makersforgivers
- **Peace will be the rule of the Kingdom on earth just as it is the rule of the Kingdom in Heaven as the prophet says:**

NLT **Isaiah 9:**⁶ For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace.**⁷ **His government and its peace will never end.**

Since Jesus was called The Prince of Peace ...we as fellow children of God, are therefore princes and princesses of Peace also...

Jesus said... *NIV Matthew 5:9* *Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called the **Children of God***

The peacemakers shall be called children of God..it is one of the image bearing traits we all carry.... The word "peace" is not just the absence of war, but a positive state of well-being between humans and between God and Humans...

- The peacemaker's goal is to end the hostility between two parties and if possible restore the relationship.

Why is this Peace so important??? because in this world we will experience...conflict...hurt...trouble...personal and collective wars and collectively...if we can't make peace we will be in continual conflict...

NLT John 16: 33 I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”

- **When you know there will be troubles and trials and battles in the Saturday of life..and you expect them...you are half way to peace...**
- **Take Heart...keep your heart strong! you know that Jesus has overcome them all... he brought the way of peace...before any trouble ever comes to you..and the way to overcome is forgiveness...**
- **Evil and wrong ultimately will not win... and the way of overcoming its damage is through forgiveness**

*****What does Peacemaking look like?...It looks like Forgiveness**

- **Just as God forgives us bringing peace between God and man... we are peacemakers with others... Jesus was teaching his disciples how to pray said:**

NLT Matt 6:12 and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. 13 And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one. 14 "If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. 15 But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins. **without forgiveness there is not peace between people and between God and people... God does not forgive us for not forgivingas that would approve of evil...it goes against our image bearing...we are disfigured by unforgiveness and God will not allow that to be ok....**

So how do we forgive??? The first Step to forgiving is the mind set to give up any hope of having a better past...by fantasizing about redoing our past for a better future... or living in the presence seeking Revenge or at least seeking whatever it is we consider justice...for example making them hurt the way we were before we forgive...this keeps us at war with people? **AND that's where so many of us get stuckWE GET STUCK THERE..**

listen...Peacemaking is leaving revenge or punishment up to God...nobody gets away with anything...we all will answer to God either as those forgiven or as those who will reap what their sins deserve.

So Paul leaves us this comfort... *Rom 12:19 Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD.*

- **Revenge and justice is his...he know how to do it perfectly as he understands all the movties and reasons why someone hurts another...he can handle it justly and he knows the consequences that are appropriate..**
- **and we have been given recourse through the justice system ...if we need justice there is way to handle it**
- **You want to know if you have forgiven someone? the Apostle tells us...**

Rom 12:20 Instead, "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads." 21 Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

Why is forgiveness good for us??? Because Without forgiveness it is impossible to do verses 20-21... you cannot bear with someone long whom you are carrying grievances against! Which is the opposite of peacemaking.

2)unforgiveness damages us through the birthing of the twin cancers: Bitterness and Resentment, which leads to all kinds of image disfiguring behavior...

Here is what that energy of unforgiveness turns into...

Paul say it well... *Ephesians 4:30 And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, (attitude)rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, (violent actions) as well as all types of evil behavior. (willfully continuing the war). 32 Instead,*

*be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another(action), just as God through Christ has forgiven you. (mimicking our Family) **Forgiveness is choosing not to hold someone's sin against them any longer***

- **Bitterness and resentment... Anger/rage and bitterness create victimhood mentality...which leads to entitlement thinking... we believe we are owed because these bad things happened..**
- **It is common for bitter people to bring up past offenses with those who have hurt them They want them to feel as bad as they do...but there is little value...Love is what changes people**
 - **which holds us back from moving forward in life and relationships...**
 - **Bitterness and anger imprison you emotionally, for there is a rippling effect of holding a grudge. When you won't forgive someone, it negatively infects other relationships ...it is very stressful maintaining a war with people, and the collateral damage effects everyone else we are in relationship with!**

Hebrews 12:15 Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many.

So what do we do?

NLT COL 3: 13 Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

- **if we don't make allowances for the faults and hurts from others...we will continually be blindsided by the human condition.....**
- **we must count it as a part of the cost of relationships that we will get hurt...I am not talking about abuse...but hurts will happen against us and to us...**
- **if not we will develop unrealistic expectations of how people should act ...which will create havoc in all our relationships>>That is why so many people only have superficial short term relationships ...because when they hurt they get bitter go to war and move on... and the consequences of living in unforgiveness is a life of resentment and ultimate isolation**

- **Others who do stay in the relationship simply dig trenches and continually fire wounding ammo at each other**

If I forgive someone for a wrong done to me, I no longer allow that event to determine how I treat the other person.

- I may remember the wrong or I may forget it, but either way I have disarmed it.
- **It no longer determines my actions, thoughts, or words.**

If you are locked in war of unforgiveness over past or present hurts, you have less available energy for your life now. ..energy that cant be used for more productive things..

*****But here is the Beauty...If you forgive someone's hurts they are removed...I am not at war with you any longer...I get freedom... something happens inside of our souls, I can then begin the healing process...Peace and war cannot simultaneously reside in the same Space...**

Forgiveness is agreeing to live with the consequences of another person's sin..to become at Peace with it...it happened I cannot fix it, but I can be free from its control over me in the present and future

- How many people blame their past..for their present failures and lack of hope for the future?
- we are all living with the consequences of someone's else's sin...The only choice is whether we do so in the bondage of bitterness or in the freedom of forgivenessand and you will be able to direct your life in positive thoughts and actions.
- Allow God to bring to the surface the painful memories and acknowledge how you feel with those who have hurt you...then put your weapons down...allow God to deal with them...

*****Let me demonstrate..... If you forgive someone's sins they are removed from you and given to God.....if you don'tWhat are you going to do with them?**

- Those I don't forgive... I carry with me into my life (show the backpack of potatoes... These Potatoes represent people places and things that have hurt us, and it still hurt as we carry them around...sometimes we think we get rid of them by moving them away from us ..to the backpack! ...
 - So the Unforgiveness goes from an attitude of the heart to a burden in the life... for Unforgiveness becomes a weight over time...
 - Nursing Unforgiveness requires energy.... every now and then you like to pull it out and relive it...
 - Then something happens ...that wound which was once fresh...begins to decay and become moldy...and roots begin to grow out Roots of bitterness and Resentment.... put their stench in our lives... we become stinky...no one wants to be around us... this smell effects every new and existing relationship.
 - unforgiveness poisons me ...it kills us... WHY?? many of those people in the backpack...are not even in our lives anymore...yet the wieght of unforgiveness is still greatly effecting me negatively.
 - There is someone else we need to forgive ourselves...especially when God forgives me...I wallow in guilt becoming withdrawn and critical...becoming less open and affectionate
 - I make myself a judge of me and others...
 - unforgiveness keep me stuck in the past... Until I am willing to let go of seeking Justice and revenge for past hurts, I stay locked into a victim mentality.
 - The ones you carry will hinder every other relationship...run into people with the pack... heavy load creates a bad attitude... the look at me I am a victim attitude
 - So forgive yourself and anybody else you need to and get on with your life....
- ****So How do I forgive...? I take out the potatoes...admit the hurt and pain caused by them...and I give it to God...to deal with and judge..**

And when placed in God's bucket...he will deal with them fairly something we cannot do....

- That is why he is the one to pronounce Judgment ...That is why we give him people... **one by one...incident by incident... it is a choice to forgive ...and one must acknowledge the hurt, hate pain, and consequences of this action...**
- **and I choose to drop the case...and trust God to deal with them fairly something I cannot do...**
- **I then I ask God to heal my damaged emotions**
- **Then God does something for me...He Receives the potato out of my backpack into his bucket...and the process of healing my damaged emotions.... Transforming my thinking and as God heals me I become of source of healing for others...**
- **The weight I carry gets lighter and I get to replace the rotten potato with refreshing water, trail mix ...fruit ...joy , love, lighter weight...things that are actually helpful to carry in a back pack to deal with life...)**
The Result... something miraculous begins to happen... as God heals me I become of source of healing for others... Is there someone you are carrying around you need to give to God...letting them out of your bucket ... And then healing really begins!

*****. I do my self a favor to forgive others...It is in your own best interest...it is good for you.. and here is an example of how you can do it...**
A little background..

In the OC Weekly dated October 27 2005...in an article describing how the Archdiocese of Los Angeles hid pedophile priests in Orange county...there was a list of the worst offenders and in it was the priest who molested me... I quote this part of the article...

“The October 11, 2005 release by the Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles records on 176 suspected child-raping priests adds new evidence that church officials played hide- the- pedophile for decades....the documents provide graphic proof that Orange County Catholic church officials

accepted, tolerated, and sometimes conspired to hide known pedophiles before and after OC split to form its own diocese in 1976.

Here are six of the worst LA/OC cases....the priest that molested me headed up that list... I needed to forgive the church in general too. But I want to walk you through my forgiveness of Father B... as an example for you and my hope is it will help you ..if you have forgiveness issues yet undealt with.... Know this God wants to heal you and healing is possible and it is real...

Lord... I forgive Father B. for: Molesting me ...and how that messed with my mind and heart... I forgive him for...Taking advantage of an emotionally needy child...me

- Making me think he cared for me, and making me feel like I was special... when he was setting me up for his own perverse pleasure
- I forgive him For robbing me of my innocence...
- I forgive him for....Abusing his position of religious authority...to fool my family
- I forgive him for ...For misrepresenting Jesus to me...as a condoner of abuse... as a weakling with no power to stop evil
- I forgive Father B....For turning me away from Jesus...and his church and his ways... I forgive him for Confusing me about God... for blurring good and evil...right and wrong
- I forgive Father B for making me think all Christians are fake hypocrites...
- I forgive him for making me feel sick and dirty...Confusing me in my sexuality... for filling me with shame and guilt, For making me feel less than, and not good enough, and that something was seriously wrong with me for this to happen...
- I forgive him for the devastation my self worth establishing a long inner struggle of low self worth...of feeling less than others
- I forgive him for the suffocating fear of anyone finding out...and introducing me to living a double life...fragmenting my mind
- I forgive him for making me carry a dark secret....that crushed my spirit....and a compartmentalized my mind

- I forgive him for being a prime instigator of my distrust of and rebellion against authority of all kinds.
- I forgive him for causing such a deep wound in my life ...that I was easy prey for the anesthetizing and pain reducing lure of alcohol and drugs...
- I forgive him even though he never said nor was sorry

I prayed....Lord, I forgive him and surrender revenge and resentment and give up my right to hurt him for hurting me and I leave him to you to judge... I pray that you Help him. Now I ask that you Please heal my damaged emotions and all the places of damage in me because of Him, and free me from the bondage of bitterness and revenge. ...And Jesus now that I forgive him ...I choose to take responsibility for my life... I choose to not blame him anymore for my present decisions and actions in Your name I pray.

Once forgiveness is offered and our heart wounds exposed and we pour out the cup of our grief and pain... right there in our hearts becomes the free space for God to enter in and begin the healing of the hurt and pain...

Wounds go deep but Gods healing goes deeper... Your wound will become the means to lighten the burdens of the pain and sufferings of other.....

God is the Great healer...I stand before you today as a testimony to that fact, what he has done for me he has done for countless others...in the world I am nobody but to God I am his precious child...and what he has done for me He will do for you!!! What were once deep wounds are now just scars...indicators of past hurt... no longer effecting me negatively...just a scar an indicator of a wound once suffered ...that can help someone else who is hurting know healing is available

so today you can leave here knowing that true forgiveness can happen ...and you can be healed...write their names down ...acknowledged what they did..and how it impacted your life...and forgive them for that...give them to God to Judge...and then ask God to heal you damaged emotions because of it...

Healing must begin with forgiveness because the forgiveness of Christ is the source of our healing, and our forgiveness of others is the means of sustaining our healing.

Then God turns us right around and uses us as wounded yet healing as a sources of help and blessing and healing for others...which is another name for Peacemakers...

² Cor ³ All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. ⁴ He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.

forgiveness is the key to life in abundance...

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