

SERIES: "LIVE LIKE YOU WERE DYING"

MESSAGE: GIVE FORGIVENESS

TEXT: Matthew 18:15-35

DATE: APRIL 20, 2008

GIVE FORGIVENESS

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Introduction:

- A. "The Rock" Video
- B. I think we can all relate to that video.
 - 1. Even though no one can see it, some of us carried big rocks of unforgiveness in with us today.
 - 2. Maybe you've been carrying it around for a long time.
 - 3. Maybe like the woman at the close of the video, something has happened recently and you have a decision to make.
 - 4. Are you going to pick up the rock and carry it with you or are you going to let it go?
 - 5. When you came in today, you were given a small rock. We are going to let those rocks symbolize our own struggle with forgiveness.
- C. Psalm 118:24 (NIV) says, "*This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.*"
 - 1. This morning while we were sleeping the Lord created another sunrise.
 - 2. He also deposited another 24 hours in your account of life. What a gift. Think about it folks.
 - 3. You can spend those 24 hours any way you choose.
 - 4. But, here's the catch. You can only spend it once.
- D. Psalm 90:12 in Today's English Version says, "*Teach us how short our life is, so that we may become wise.*"
 - 1. In terms of eternity, no matter how long you live, it is a short period of time and the clock is ticking.
 - 2. So we need to be wise about how we spend our days and not miss opportunities.
 - 3. One of the opportunities that we miss far too often is the chance to forgive and make things right.
 - 4. For most of us that is really hard to do.
- E. Today each of you were given a rock as you came in the auditorium.

1. We want you to let that rock symbolize the difficulty of carrying around the burden of anger and hatred that causes us not to forgive.
 2. We get hurt as we stumble our way through life.
 3. The apostle Paul challenges us to, “***Do all that you can to live at peace with everyone.***” Romans 12:18(NLT) That is hard!
- F. In Matthew 18, Jesus has teaches about the three step process believers are to follow when someone sins against them.
1. Confront them yourself.
 2. Confront them with witnesses.
 3. Confront them with church leaders and if one is definitely in the wrong and unwilling to repent cut them off from the church.
- G. Peter starts feeling pretty good about himself and asks Jesus if he does that seven times is that sufficient.
1. Jesus tells a long parable to illustrate to what links we must go to forgive.
 2. Tell a modern version of Jesus parable.
- H. This morning I want to give you two positive challenges from this story and one negative word of warning.

<p><u>You’ve Been Released from God’s Judgment –</u> CELEBRATE</p>

- A. I am not a big fan of all these self-help books and pop psychology.
1. One of the original “feel good” books was I’m O.K., You’re O.K. .
 2. Did anyone really believe that?
 3. I want to start doing some writing and I am considering a sequel called, I’m Not OK and You’re Really Messed Up.
 4. Maybe a better title would be Some Days Life Stinks – Deal with It.
- B. Here are some truths that I know from God’s word, because I choose to accept His word as truth.
1. I know that , “***No one is good – not even one.***” Romans 3:10
 2. I know that, “***All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.***” Romans 3:23
 3. I know that, “***The wages of sin is death,***” Romans 6:23

4. I know that, “*We were by nature objects of wrath.*” Eph. 2:4
- C. If you don’t believe that is our nature, just go to our two year old class and observe.
1. You don’t have to teach them to be selfish, or to lie, or to fight, or to throw a fit when they don’t get their way.
 2. They come from the factory that way. It is in their nature.
 3. Later Paul reminded the Colossian church that, “*At one time we were far away from God and were his enemies, because of the evil things we did and thought.*” Col. 1:21
 4. To me the emphasis there is “WERE”
- D. That takes us back to Jesus story in Matthew. We all had an ENORMOUS SIN DEBT, that we could never payment.
1. The only way to pay that debt was with the death of the first born.
 2. Jesus died in our place.
 3. A little later this morning we will remember that as we celebrate communion.
- E. But even before we have communion we are going to give you a chance to receive payment in full for that ENORMOUS SIN DEBT.
1. If you only had a few weeks left to live and you knew it there is nothing more important that you could do that to know you were leaving this earth with no outstanding debts, that your accounts payable ledger read PAID IN FULL.
 2. Now here is a huge truth fro you to grasp. There is a direct connection between your sense of being forgiven and your ability to grant forgiveness.
 3. Eph. 4:32 tells us, “*Be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*”
 4. SO LET ME ENCOURAGE YOU TO CELEBRATE BEING RELEASED FROM GOD’S JUDGMENT.

<p><u>Release Others from Your Judgment –</u> LIBERATE</p>

- A. The point of Jesus telling this story was not to minimize things that have hurt you very deeply.

1. It is simply to say, “No matter how much you have been hurt, every other debt is small compared to the one Jesus died for.”
2. Solomon wrote, “*A man’s wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.*” Proverbs 19:11
3. But it doesn’t come easy does it.
4. Sir Walter Scott said, “Revenge is the sweetest morsel to the mouth that was ever cooked in hell.”

B. How many of you know what TIVO or DVR is? How many of you have that capability at home?

1. A lot of us TIVO our hurts as well. We record them for later play back.
2. A man was telling his friend that he and his wife had a big fight the night before. He said, “Yea, she was so upset she went Historical on me.” His friend said, “Don’t you mean hysterical?” The guys said, “NO, I mean historical ... she brought up everything I had ever done wrong.”

C. When you have been hurt, you have the **CHOICE** to forgive. Here are some clues that you need to **CHOOSE** to forgive?

1. You feel resentment towards somebody. In fact, their name may have just come to your mind.
2. When their name comes up, you are instantly critical.
3. You can’t stop thinking about the hurt. You keep hitting rewind on your mental TIVO.

D. So what does it mean to forgive?

1. Forget? **NO**
2. Minimize the hurt or justify the other person’s actions? **NO**
3. Pretend nothing happened? **NO**
4. Forgiveness is me giving up my right to hurt you for hurting me.
5. Colossians 3:13 (NLT) – “*Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.*”

E. I know that many of you are thinking, Dave you don’t have a clue. You don’t know what happened to me.

1. It may have been a business partner or boss who took advantage of you.
2. It may have been a friend or even family member or spouse who you feel deserted you.
3. It may have been someone who stabbed you in the back.
4. It may have been someone who physically or sexually abused you.
5. But you have the CHOICE. You can choose to carry that to your grave, but the load gets heavy!!
 - a. Life is too short!
 - b. Step back and let it go!
 - c. Pick up your rock!
 - d. Let's PRAY about that right NOW!

Now let me leave you with one warning! If you don't learn to forgive ...

<p><u>Release Yourself to Torture –</u> DEVASTATE</p>
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- A. Back in that parable in Matthew 18, the master who had forgiven the huge debt and a name for his servant who chose not to forgive.
 1. "*You wicked servant.*" Mt. 18:35
 2. Then he had the man arrested and sent to prison.

- B. Harboring hatred and bitterness may not literally send you to prison, but it will imprison your soul and your spirit!
 1. It won't change the past.
 2. It will rob the joy from today.
 3. You'll be like the GRINCH whose heart grew a couple sizes too small

BOTTOM LINE

We have all sinned! We all need forgiveness! Everyone needs compassion, the kindness of a Savior! If you have been carrying the burden of hatred and anger against someone around it's time to **PUT DOWN THE ROCK!**