

Sunday 13th October 2019 - Matthew 6:5-15

'Freedom in Life - Unforgiveness'

Matthew 6 includes an instruction from Jesus as to how we should pray, it is a prayer that has become known as 'The Lord's Prayer'. We always include the Lord's Prayer in our Sunday services and we can probably pray it from memory (even though we might switch back and forwards between the traditional and modern versions!).

In this morning's talk I focused on the line, '*And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors*'. The disciples found this to be a very difficult piece of teaching to accept (Matt 6:14, Matt 18:21)

1. Do you find it easy to forgive people who have hurt you in some way? Does it depend on the severity of the hurt? What causes us to be able to forgive some things and, perhaps, not others?
2. What things do you find it easy to forgive and what things to you find it hard to forgive?

Jesus makes it clear that we should always forgive (Matt 18:21-end).

3. Have you ever considered what the impact of the parable in Matt 18:21- end, should have on your actions / responses to people?

The Bible makes it clear that, if unforgiveness is in our hearts, we will never know true freedom. Unforgiveness (and the bitterness that results) can imprison us and torture us.... just as it says in the parable.

Read 2 Cor 2:5-11. Paul talks about the fact that, if we don't move out of a place of unforgiveness, Satan will get a foothold in our lives.

4. Discuss 2 Cor 2:5-11 further. Do you agree with my previous statement on this passage? Do you interpret it in another way? Do you see unforgiveness in a new light?

In this morning's talk I outlined 4 things about unforgiveness that I think are important, if we are to move into a place of having freedom in our lives.

- ▶ Forgiveness doesn't mean forgetting - God cannot change our past, but He can heal us from it. See Joel 2 (repaying us for the years the locusts have eaten)

- After forgiving someone, you still need to live with the consequences of what has been done to you - If we still need to live with the consequences, you might well ask, *'Where's the justice in that?'*. See Romans 12:9
- Forgiveness is choosing not to hold the bad thing they've done to you against them anymore - Often we don't want to forgive someone because we don't feel like it! We need to understand that the act of forgiveness has very little to do feelings.
- Forgiveness cannot wait until you feel like it... it is a matter of choice, regardless of how we feel. We have to decide to forgive, knowing the benefits to us when we do so. Feelings towards that person can come later, but the decision to choose to forgive has to come first.

5. These four points can be REALLY hard to take on board, if we've been hurt deeply by someone, but can there be any other way out of the place of unforgiveness?
6. Spend some time talking through each of the four points outlined above. Are there any particular aspects of these points which are harder to follow? Why?
7. If you can, share with the rest of the group any deep issues of unforgiveness that you might be carrying. Spend time, as a group, praying for freedom from unforgiveness. If someone decides to move to a place of forgiving someone, it is really important to speak out that decision.... it removes the hold that Satan might have.

Finally, as a group, thank God for Jesus and the forgiveness we can receive from Him.