

Unforgiveness: A Luxury No One Can Afford

Matthew 18:23-19:12 In this passage in Matthew, Jesus tells the story of the servant who had been forgiven all his debt by his master, but this servant was unwilling to forgive another the debt he was owed. The conclusion to this story is the following statement: "And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto ye, if you from ye hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses" (Matt. 18:34-35, KJV).

Unforgiveness is a luxury none of us can afford. If we are not willing to forgive our brother, then God will allow us to be tormented. I have seen people who are not willing to forgive; even their countenance reflects torment. Unforgiving people run the risk of having both physical and emotional torment.

Corrie ten Boom was imprisoned in a concentration camp during World War II because her family helped hide Jewish people from the Nazis. Corrie was the only one who survived the imprisonment, and after the war she traveled to Germany and spoke at many churches to share a message of forgiveness and reconciliation. On one of these occasions she had to live out all she spoke about in her messages. After a night of sharing, a German came up to her and asked her forgiveness. As she looked into his face she was shocked as she recalled he was one of the German guards who severely persecuted her family. He reached his hand out toward her to receive her forgiveness, and she froze. She silently prayed, "Lord, I cannot forgive this man." Then she heard the Lord instruct her, "Reach out your hand in faith to him, and I will do the rest." Reluctantly, but by faith, she reached out her hand to the former guard, and suddenly a rush of compassion filled her for this man, and she was able to forgive him from her heart. Her

heart was changed in an instant because she was willing to act in faith, and then forgiveness followed.

Forgiveness is not an emotion. Forgiveness is an act of our will. All God requires from us is our willingness to act in faith to forgive, and He supplies the supernatural gift of forgiveness.

Is there someone you have been unwilling to forgive? Reach out in faith and allow the Lord to forgive this person through you. I am convinced that total forgiveness is a supernatural gift of God, but He can only grant this gift if we are willing to forgive in faith. He will do the rest.

**READ: Exodus 5:22-7:25; Matthew 18:23-19:12; Psalm 23:1-6;
Proverbs 5:22-23**