

PART TWO

MERCY OF GOD SERIES

MERCY OF GOD

Matt. 6:9 Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

Notice that included in the Lord's Prayer is a prayer for forgiveness. And the prayer for forgiveness is directly related to our releasing forgiveness to others. When we consider mercy, we cannot avoid considering forgiveness. Mercy is opposed to judgment. What actually is mercy and when is mercy required? Mercy is required when you have to confront something that is wrong. That's when mercy is required. Otherwise, when there is no necessity for judgment there is no necessity for mercy. Because there is, a judgment then there is a mercy. And judgment comes because things have been done that are wrong. And so, mercy is required.

Mercy is tied up very intricately with forgiveness. We will consider forgiveness this morning and see how it is tied up to mercy. There are many aspects to forgiveness.

Forgiving Means Forgetting

One of the most important aspects about forgiveness involves forgetting. When we want to release forgiveness, we must also release forgetting. It is the ability to forget those things that are past. Our brain, our soul, our mind has an ability to erase off

from our conscious mind the things that hurt us, the things that are unpleasant, the things that are frightening and fearful. Our conscious mind has an ability to do that. It pushes all those things that are unpleasant into the background. Just like in your house, you take care of the outward impression. People seldom go to see what your storeroom looks like. You don't decorate your storeroom but you decorate the living room.

The conscious mind has the ability to push all the unpleasant things into the background. For illustration, there is a line here below this line is where the subconscious mind is above it is where the conscious mind is. All the hurts that you received the conscious mind push it down. The reason the conscious mind does it is because if it does not do that, you cannot live, you cannot have sanity. You will go insane if you remember all those things that hurt your life.

The only problem is pushing the unpleasant things down is not a permanent solution. It is just like sweeping dirt under the carpet. After a few years of sweeping dust under the carpet, do you notice that the carpet is not the same? There are lumps that begin to appear on the carpet. So, in the same way as you push them in, the tension inside increases. In the end, it's just like a kettle boiling. Before long, it boils to a point that you cannot stand it. It breaks through the conscious mind and a person goes mad. The build up tension is too much.

God has created our mind and our soul with a certain ability to take stress. However there is a limit. There is a limit to how much stress a person can take. The limit depends on your condition. It is just like if a person were sick, he would be very weak. He will not be able to do 8 hours' work like he normally does. So the amount of stress a person can take in life is dependent on a person's condition. What determine a person's condition? Sometimes it is his upbringing. And many times the amount of love you receive. The more love you have received in your life the more stable you are. The less love you have received the less stable you are.

However, these are in the soul realm. It is not a permanent solution to sweep things under the carpet and to push all the things down. The conscious mind was

designed to do it so that you could continue with life. The bible offers a greater solution: the Blood of Jesus Christ. What the bible offers here is that when the stress goes in, the bible says that the Blood of Jesus can cleanse your inward part. What it does is it comes in and it wipes it off. The Blood of Jesus comes into your inner most being and whisper, "Peace, be still." Therefore, you understand how a person with peace is a very stable person.

When we talk about forgiveness, we are talking about not just pushing something into the depths of your subconsciousness. But forgetting has to do with wiping it out. It's not even in your record. This is not humanly normal. It takes supernatural understanding to release our forgetting. We need to learn to remember something. And we need to learn to forget something. There is something that we need to meditate and remember all the time, the promises of God, the prophecies that God has spoken into your life, and the visions that God has given to you. We have to remember and meditate on them day and night.

There are on the other hand certain things that we have to learn to forget. And if you don't have the ability to forget you will not be a very stable person. Your life is tortured by unforgiveness. To forgive means to forget. In Phil. 3:13 *Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead.* Paul speaks about the ability to forget. I forget those things that are behind. And I press on to the things that are ahead. Notice the ability to press forward is affected by the ability to forget.

Think about it this way. How fast can you run? If you were wearing normal running clothes, you would have no problem running 5 miles an hour. But if you wear an astronaut's space suit and run, even a snail would have overtaken you. What has affected you? Something is holding you back. Your ability to go forward is affected by your ability to forget. See how important it is to learn to forget.

The bible does say about things that we have to remember. There are some things we have to remember and there are some things we have to forget. God Himself said, "I will remember your sin no more." It is quoted from Jer. 31 says I will

remember your sin no more. And Heb. 8 and Heb. 10 the author of Hebrews quoted the same thing talking about the cleansing by the Blood of Jesus, a new covenant and a new heart. God writes His laws into our hearts and into our minds. Then the Lord says in Heb. 8 and Heb. 10 I will remember their sins no more.

When God forgives you, He forgets. God has a supernatural ability to forget. And when you have sinned and you came to God and say God forgive me, cleanse me, God cleanses you. The moment He forgives you, He forgets. The next day you fall into that same sin. God has a supernatural ability to forget. And when you have sinned and you come to God and say God forgive me, cleanse me, God cleanses you. The moment He forgives you, He forgets. The next day you fall into that same sin. You come back to God and say God forgive me. This is the second time I have done it. God say no as far as I am concerned this is the first time. Why because He forgot. If He acknowledges, this is the second time it means He didn't forget. You could come to God a thousand times and nine hundred and ninety times you have asked for forgiveness from God. Then the one thousand times you fell again. You feel rotten and the devil condemns you. You come dragging your feet to the throne of grace. So you come to God and say God forgive me this is the one thousand times I failed you. I am no good I just can't make it in the Christian life. God said this is the first time. He says I will remember your sins no more. If your sins are under the Blood He forgets them.

What is the key to God forgetting our sins? The Blood. It is not just an inherent ability in Him. Before Jesus went to the cross, every sin that God forgives and forgot was based on the Blood of Jesus. We all realized that there is a certain sickness called amnesia. We are not talking about amnesia. Sometimes I hear people preaching about how God forgets our sins. They say that God has amnesia. God does not have amnesia. What God has is because of the love. When God forgets is not because there were cells in His spiritual being that was at work. It is because the Blood could cause Him to forget. It's some thing with out Him and not within Him. Amnesia is something within a person causing him to be forgetful.

But the power of forgetting is not from within - it is from without. It is based on what the Lamb of God has done. Look at the book of Gen. 3 way back before Jesus Christ came to this planet earth when the first sin was committed. Adam and Eve

partook of the forbidden fruit. So, Gen. 3 tells us in the very same passage after God judged them. What God pronounced was more or less the cycle that is released. But God give them a chance to come back. Gen.3: 21 *And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments of skins, and clothed them.* The Hebrew word when He *clothed them* tells us that it was an animal that God slew. And God kept the skin of the animal with the blood dripping on it. And God put it on Adam and Eve. It was dripping with blood and God clothed them. What is that pointing to? The Blood of Jesus Christ.

The ability for God to forget is based on the Blood. Every time He sees the blood of the animals, He looks forward to the Blood of Jesus. God forgives those who lived before Jesus based on what Jesus is going to do by His death and resurrection. In the Old Testament when they slew those animals, every act of them points to the Blood of Jesus Christ.

King David in Ps. 103 tells us bless the Lord and forget not His benefits, who healed all thy diseases and forgave all thy iniquities. See God forgave David many times based on the Blood. And for those of us who lived after Jesus look back at the Blood. It's the Blood that causes God to forgive and forget. Every time He sees the Blood He just wipes off the darkness of sin. So, God has an ability to forget. We all must learn the secret of forgiveness from God. Forgiveness is looking at the Blood and not looking at ourselves. In Christ, everybody's sin is covered. And based on what Jesus Christ has done you can forget.

God is not demanding you to forgive and forget based on your own strength. But God demands that you forgive and forget based on the Blood of Jesus Christ. So, when somebody does something against you, you can forgive him or her because the Blood covers the act that they have done. When you see the Blood, you can say that Jesus has died for his sin. That's the power of the Blood. So, forgiveness involves forgetting.

Forgiveness Comes From the One Who Did Not Sin

The second thing that we are going to cover is forgiveness itself. Forgiveness comes from the one who did not sin, not from the one who sinned. This is contradictory to the world's teaching on forgiveness. Do you know what the world's teaching on forgiveness is? If I did something wrong to you, I have to come to you and say please forgive me for what I did. In the bible, we don't call that forgiveness; we call that repentance. You become sorry for your sin and you want to change your life. Every time when the bible talks about forgiveness, it does not talk about the one who sinned coming to the one who did not sin. It talks about the one who did not sin going to the one who sinned and saying, "I have mercy on you, I forgive you."

What a concept. See the world is upside down. The one who has the power to forgive is the one being sinned against, not the one who sinned. Look at the Lord's Prayer. It says *forgive our sins as we forgive those who trespass against us*. You did not do any sin. They sinned against you. But if you sinned against them, they learn to have mercy on you. See how wonderful this teaching on mercy.

Matt. 6:12 *Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors*. Now you are the creditor they are the debtors. The forgiveness is from those who have been sinned against not the one who sinned. That's God's concept of forgiveness. That's mercy being shown.

Matt. 5:23 *So if you are offering your gifts at the altar, (now you are coming to worship God, you are bringing your gifts to the altar,) and there remember your brother has something against you*. It did not say you have something against him. You are the innocent lamb. You came to worship God with the gifts to the altar. And there as you are worshiping God you remembered somebody did something to you. Not what you did to somebody. What you did to somebody you repent. But what somebody did to you, you learn to say, "I give mercy, and I forgive."

See mercy sometimes involved reaching out to say I give you mercy. It does not mean I just stand there and say I give mercy. When God showed mercy to Adam

and Eve after they sinned, He slew the animal and put it on them even though they sinned. Here this brother comes to the altar with the gift and it says leave your gift there before the altar and go your way. Verse 24 says first be reconciled with your brother and then come and offer your gift. You forgive; you go to the person and say I have mercy on you. Mercy is coming to show love to the person. You take the opportunity to show mercy by giving love to the person. That is the bible concept of forgiveness.

Now let me give your Matt. 18:21 *The Peter came up and said to him, "Lord how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him.* Notice it's not him who sin against his brother. And he asks, "Is 7 times enough?" Jesus said, "70 times 7." Not that He wanted to count to 490 times. And then at the 491 times, you really get a hammer ready. Jesus uses an expression in Hebrew that means there is no end to it. The stronger you are the more you have to learn to be gentle. Spiritually the stronger you are the more mercy you must learn to release. When people have sinned against you, you are the one required to release the forgiveness.

The world teaches you they must ask for forgiveness. Look at the bible: the One who did not sin releases forgiveness. Jesus on the cross turned to the Father and said, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Who releases forgiveness? Jesus. He releases mercy. It gives you a chance to be like God.

When we talk about being like God, people imagine having signs and wonders, the power of God and the greatness of God. Do you ever consider that being like God is being like Him in love also? When you want to be like God you have to be like Him in love as well as in power. Not just going out to raise the dead, cast out demons, heal the sick, you demonstrate the power of God. But in forgiveness, you demonstrate the love of God and the mercy of God. When you learn to forgive and forget you are learning to be like God as much as raising the dead or healing the sick. You are acting like God. Who love it better than our Father? He loves it when you behave like Him. You thrilled His heart. The Holy Spirit rejoices, when you are like God in mercy as well as in power.

That is the second area we have touched on forgiveness. No. 1 forgetting and No. 2 that forgiveness is released by the one sinned against. So, if anybody has sinned against you, you have to learn to release forgiveness. Not wait for them, they need to repent, you need to forgive.

Forgiving Releases The Power To Change

That brings us to point No. 3. What is the purpose of forgiveness? What is the purpose of this life that you live in? What is the will of God on this earth? This is it that all man will grow from glory to glory, grace to grace, to be more and more like the Father. All of mankind has been conformed to the image of God. So, our goal in life is to be like God and to help others to be like God. You don't want your life to teach others to be crooks, do you? Teach them to be rude, teach them to be murderers, teach them to be thieves. Deep in the depths of your being you want to cause others to be better.

Now if we do not forgive others we are not seeking to change them, we are seeking to destroy them. The opposite of forgiving and mercy is judgment. Judgment does not change; it destroys. The purpose of judgment is to destroy. So, if somebody sinned against you, the fact that they are sinning shows forth that they are weaker than you. And the fact that they are sinning shows forth that they need more help than you. If you really have God's nature in you, you will want to see them changed not just see them destroyed.

For example if this brother sin against me, and if I don't release forgiveness, my unforgiveness blocks this person from receiving the blessing through me. So, I am in a struggle. Deep within my being, I want everybody to change for the better. Because I don't forgive the other part of me wants to see this person destroyed. And if you choose not to forgive, all your prayers for this person will never work. It is tied to the power of loosing and binding.

In Matt. 18:15 *If your brother sin against you, (not you sin against your brother, it's*

the other guy sinning against you. There is where forgiveness is required from you. Not the one who sin need to release forgiveness. But the one who did not sin but who is sinned against needs to release forgiveness.) *you go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained a brother.*

You know what is the purpose - to show mercy and to gain a brother. Not to go there and judge the brother. This is what sometimes people do. They just want to justify themselves. We don't need to be justified. We have already been justified in Jesus Christ. If you are right, you are right. If you are wrong, you are wrong. Here it says if he does not listen to you, take it to two or three more witnesses, if he refuses tell the whole church.

Matt. 18:18 *Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.* Suddenly He ties it to the power of binding and loosing. We always use it in casting out demons. But Jesus uses it in reference to forgiveness. And the subject is not over.

In verse 21 Peter understood what He is talking about and asked, "How many times must I forgive?" The whole chapter is on forgiveness. Forgiveness binds or looses a person. When you don't forgive some people, you are binding them. And when you bind them, judgment is due on them. And when judgment is due on them, you don't want them to change. You want them destroyed. Jesus on the cross knew if He did not forgive them, they would all be finished. I believe because He released forgiveness most of them have a chance to repent. Among the 3000 and 5000 in Acts 4 and 5 that came to know the Lord were those who were against Him at one time. Remember it is the same Jerusalem that He walked. So, they had a chance.

If you don't release forgiveness, you are not releasing the power of God to change that person. You are holding back the power of God from changing that person because of your unforgiveness. You are binding that person. And this is so true in relationships. Those whom you have trouble with unforgiveness are those closest to you, those whom you know by name, your own family, your own brothers and sisters, your parents or close friends. This has to do with people you know. But it is

the people whom you know that you hope will change.

You talk to any one who has unforgiveness and he will tell you he really wants to see the other guy change. They say if only that person will change without realizing that their unforgiveness will bind that person from changing. So unless you change they don't change. You say I can't release to him after all that he had done to me. Forgiving means forgetting. And when you forget you treat as if it has never happened before.

I know that is hard because you want to forgive but the devil won't let you forget. When he reminds you, you should tell him to shut up. Remember when you hold back to the past you cannot live in the future. Your ability to forget determines your ability to go forward. Some people have never gone forward in their life because they are holding to the past. You can't hold to the pole and get into the bus. Two things will happen: either your hand will be left in the pole or the pole will go with you in the bus. You can't hold on to the past and yet go forward. Some thing has to give way.

Forgetting is the ability. Learning to forget is you treat a person as if it never done before. When you release forgiveness to that person God is going to change that person. It opens the floodgates of heaven and releases blessings on that guy. What you loose on earth is loosed in heaven. When you bind up its bound in heaven. So, you choose to release so that God could release the blessings on their life. This is the art of showing mercy. As long as there are imperfections, we need to learn the art of mercy and forgiveness.