



1362 US Highway 395 N Ste 102-200  
Gardnerville, NV 89410  
E-mail: [bill@liferesource.org](mailto:bill@liferesource.org)  
Website: [www.liferesource.org](http://www.liferesource.org)

**Transcript**  
**Forgiveness – The Bigger Picture**  
**January 13, 2023**

This presentation is titled *Forgiveness*. It's about the implications of forgiveness and the lack of it, along with some thoughts on how to forgive when we have been wronged.

Have you ever had someone do you wrong? For example, if married, leave you for someone else? Mistreated by a teacher, bullied. Has someone ever accused you of something they did. Somebody steal your stuff or hack your bank account? Why is it sometimes hard to forgive people who have done us wrong. We know we're supposed to forgive those who have done us harm. We know that, if we don't, anger can turn into bitterness and do us much damage. And we also know that there's a great spiritual reward for doing so as well, and a great spiritual penalty if we don't.

Let's look in Matthew 6:14.

**Matthew 6:14-15** – *For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

But sometimes, even knowing that, it just seems impossible to let go. Why is it so hard? And how do we go about doing that? Well, let's think about forgiveness today.

We all have a sense of justice. We read in the Bible about the rich oppressing the poor, the wicked trampling the righteous, and God's many promises to hold all the oppressive and hurtful to account. For Christians, our sense of justice comes right out of the Bible. The problem, however, is that we want justice for ourselves and others, quite often, right now. God never promises to do it when we want, but according to His plan for the world and His plan for us and His plan for our enemies.

Here's a prayer of David. It's in Psalms 3, verse 7.

**Psalms 3:7** – *Arise, O LORD! Save me, O my God! For you strike all my enemies on the cheek. You break the teeth of the wicked.*

I think this is wishful thinking on David's part. It implies that he needs it right now. Now, God *did* take care of David, and He did a lot more to David's enemies than David asked for, but He didn't always do it *when* David wanted it. We can see, in the scriptures, him running for his life more than once.

Sometimes, when we don't get the justice we want, we can become vengeful or bitter or both. You know, if God's not going to do it, then we'll take matters into our own hands. Or, shame on God for not doing what we want.

So, a desire for vengeance and bitterness are both corrosive to the spirit and the body. We can get sick from being in a state of vengeance and bitterness. The truth is, we *can* forgive. And if we believe that, we will be set free from bitterness and vengeance. Jesus promises us that the truth will set us free. All we have to do is believe it and we will no longer be the slaves of sin, held captive by the lies of the devil.

Now, there are some common lies that people believe about forgiveness. Here are a few of the most common:

In this case, forgiveness is impossible. We talked about that. In this case, forgiveness is unwarranted. They haven't repented yet. Or, they still are doing it to us – or me. Here's another one: God isn't going to do anything about this – so, we want to take matters into our own hands sometimes. Another one is: It's not fair of God to make me suffer the injustice in this case. They don't deserve to be forgiven.

So, we're talking a lot about lies here. Why is that? Well, in John 7 – I think it is – maybe 8 – we'll get there later – Jesus tells us that the devil, who is the original liar, keeps us enslaved to sin by telling us lies. If you want more on this, you can go to [liferesource.org](http://liferesource.org) – our Website – and go to the presentation button at the top – there's a menu across the top. Click on the button that says *Presentations* – right? – and then click on the one that says *Series* and look for *Waging Spiritual War*. This series will explain all about how the devil lies to us and keeps us enslaved to sin, and how, if we repudiate those lies and start believing the truth that God gives us, then He will protect us from the devil. Access denied.

So, it's our choice what we're going to believe. And, if we choose to believe God, all goes well. If we choose to believe the devil, then he has access to us. He can start influencing us to do bad things – to do wrong – not forgive, or whatever. And we become His children again. God wants to be our Father and so does the devil, so we have to decide who's going to be that. God will not invalidate the devil's efforts – this, in spite of the fact that when we were baptized, we promised to follow God – to believe Him, not the devil.

So, believing the devil's lies makes us hypocrites and narcissists. You know, "My way be done, not Yours." In our desire for justice, if we are to forgive others we need faith that God will take care of all the problems, all the things that people do that are wrong to us and all the ones that we do to others. We want God to forgive our sins, but sometimes not the sins of others, because they deserve punishment.

There are some other lies that people have believed. Here's a big one: God only forgives once we repent. This other person hasn't repented, so it's not right for me to forgive them yet. This is just another lie that he tells. His goal and the purpose of his lie is to keep us from forgiving, because that's a sin. There's a parable Jesus told about this. It's in Matthew 18:21. Let's read it. It started with Peter coming up to Him and saying:

**Matthew 18:21 -35**— *"Lord, how often will my brother sin against me and I forgive him?"* Maybe he was frustrated with one of the other disciples. *"As many as seven times?"* he said. *Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times."* So, if someone sins seven times, and each time says, "I'm sorry," do you think they really mean to change? Well, probably not. But Jesus tells Peter a parable to explain why he should forgive anyway, even if the offender has not repented. He said, *"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. And when he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So, that was the way it worked back then. People could buy themselves into an indentured state of servitude to pay off their debt. So, the servant, hearing this, fell on his knees, imploring him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." Out of pity for him, the master of the servant released him of his debt. But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii – which is way less than ten thousand talents – and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, "Pay what you owe!" So this fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." So he prayed the same thing. He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. So, even though his master had mercy on him, he was not willing to extend that same mercy to others who had wronged him – who owed him things. So when his fellow servants, however, saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. Then his master summoned him and said to him, "You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?" And in anger his master delivered him to the jailors, until he should pay all his debt. So also, My heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."*

See, God is the God of justice. And, if we want Him to forgive us, then we had better be ready to forgive those who have trespassed against us. So, Jesus was essentially saying to Peter, "Since you continually sin yourself, and want continual repentance – to the tune of seventy times seven

– wouldn't it be the height of hypocrisy to require someone...we would be breaking the golden rule: Do to others as you would have others do to you.

So, if we think deeply about this, we will that Jesus is taking this issue to a much higher spiritual level that encompasses the entire gospel of Christ and every person in the world – a level that He expects us to follow – to become a part of – and a level expects will become a part of us. What level is that? Let's look at some scriptures. Let's go to Ephesians 4:32.

**Ephesians 4:32** – *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

So, how has God in Christ forgiven us? Let's go to Romans 5:8.

**Romans 5:8-11** – *...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

See, God wants us to not be reconciled to Him, but to all of His children as well. You notice that it says that that's how Christ showed His love for us. That's how the Holy Spirit pours the love of God into our hearts – is through the spirit of forgiveness. So, this scripture, which is the truth of God, reveals to us that the idea that we don't forgive until somebody else repents is a lie! So, believe the truth of God instead, and be released from slavery to sin through true forgiveness both received and given. That's what God wants for us.

Now, let's understand the magnitude of all this. In John 3:16 – the most quoted scripture:

**John 3:16** – *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, and whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him – by accepting His forgiveness. That's something I added on, but that's how it works.*

There is much more to this issue of forgiveness than simply letting go minor hurts done to us, because it's for our own good. Forgiveness exemplifies the spiritual love of God for us. And that's to be extended to others, because we're following His example. It's really about the gospel message of Christ. I mean, John 3:16 encapsulates the gospel of Christ. That is what we're supposed to do – extend that same kind of mercy to other people. The whole gospel is encapsulated in that scripture. It's amazing! It's also how we become a part of this effort.

In 2 Corinthians 5:18, it says:

**2 Corinthians 5:18-20** – *All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation – that’s to go out to other people. And we reconcile with them by forgiving them – that is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ – God making His appeal through us.* That doesn’t just mean that we go out and tell them about it. It’s that we exemplify God’s forgiveness in our behavior toward other people. If we can’t forgive everyone, we limit God’s appeal through us. Forgiveness is what draws people. There is no logical reason for it in their minds. But there is in ours, so we’re to exemplify that.

But there’s even more here. While Jesus was on the stake, He was reviled as a criminal when He had done nothing wrong. He was humiliated. And He suffered incredible pain. His physical life was taken violently from Him, though He committed no crime. He suffered incredible injustice and still did not feel like God wasn’t fair. He forgave them all before they repented. Remember what He said? “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” He was begging God to forgive them and He already had.

In Hebrews 12:2, let’s read more. Paul says:

**Hebrews 12:2** – *...looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

He kicked shame to the curb. He was willing to endure all that because of the joy that He was going to receive and experience when we’re all saved by His death. So, He sets an example for us for forgiveness – of looking beyond wrongs done to us to the glory that will be given to us for following His example.

Another important thing: 1 Peter 4:12:

**1 Peter 4:12-14** – *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. Don’t think that that should never happen to you, or that you don’t deserve it, because that is not true. “Many are the afflictions of the righteous.” God says He is going to try us to perfect us, to help us build the character we need to be like Him. And then in verse 13, he says: But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed.* So, you know what’s going to happen when His glory is revealed? Well, ours is going to be revealed too! We’re all going to be resurrected at the time when He returns. *If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.* So, don’t think God isn’t being fair. He *promised* that we would be tried and tested. We signed on for it. So, that’s fair.

When the world takes things away from you, think like Paul thought in Philippians 3:7:

**Philippians 3:7-8** – *But whatever gain I had – he said – I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ....* So, God took everything away from him. That's what he's saying – everything from his past life – all his status he had as a member of the Sanhedrin, and all this other things that he valued so much – at least, at one point in his life. He said they became rubbish to him, because it was all about gaining Christ now.

So, when we suffer injustice and know that God is at work in our lives, we don't have those kinds of feelings. If we do, then we really haven't focused enough on what God is going to give us and also on the trials in life that we have to endure to get there. We have to prove ourselves.

**2 Corinthians 12:10** – *For the sake of Christ, then – he said – I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

So, it's a lie that God is unfair. If you believe that, you're believing the original first lie that the devil told Adam and Eve. It is the truth that God loves us. It is perfecting us through losses and trials. That's the truth. And the it's the truth that we have to endure those things in order to be with God. Instead, we should be rejoicing, because suffering is necessary to be a part of God's family, just as it was for Christ. Jesus suffered on the cross. And our trials in life are participating with him. That's how the Bible views it. We're being perfected. It says that Jesus learned something from dying that way, and we do too.

**Romans 5:3** – *Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.* When we forgive others, we do it by the love of God – the Holy Spirit – something our persecutors have not experienced and have not seen.

The way we have presented this to you right now is in the context of believing the truth or believing lies. But besides believing the truth of God and seeing His plan, there are some more insights that we think will be helpful.

One is the concept of forgiving oneself. Some people don't understand that concept. They think that, if they forgive themselves, it means they're denying their sin. Another one is that, when we sin, we often cause harm, and sometimes it could feel like we deserve punishment. Both of those are lies. But it means that we are denying the truth of Christ's sacrifice – so, an egregious sin.

Let's look at John 3:16 again.

**John 3:16** – *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

Believing in Christ means to believe that He has forgiven us for our sins. We are no longer under the death penalty, because of His sacrifice. He paid the penalty for us. And when a person is baptized, they covenant with God to accept Christ as their Lord and Master. So, refusing to accept His forgiveness is a violation of our covenant with God. If we continue to deny His forgiveness, at some point – because God has given us free will and He’s going to stick to it – God may say to us, “You leave Me no choice. Have it your way.” And once we’re under our own sin in not accepting Christ’s sacrifice, then we’re going to die for those sins that we’ve committed in our past. It doesn’t matter how many good things we’ve done since then. So, making it on our own is a lie too. We can’t do that.

Here’s another thing to think about. When someone is in this mode – not letting go of the harm that they have caused and not accepting the forgiveness Christ offers us – do they have a good picture of how much evil they have done? How can a person understand what it feels like to be completely forgiven, if they haven’t acknowledged their own sins? And how, then, can they know how to extend that to other people? So, it turns out that, if we don’t accept Christ’s forgiveness, it again makes us hypocrites – or hypocritical representatives – of God’s drawing forgiveness. If we can’t let go of our own sins, how can we let go of the sins of other people? And if we can’t let go of our sins, and accept God’s forgiveness, there could be a tendency there to try and compensate for that by *being good*. And that takes us, again, back to salvation by works. Well, there’s no such thing as salvation by works. It’s just another lie. No matter how many good things we do going forward, there’s still the record of our past sins that will cause us to suffer the death penalty, unless we accept the forgiveness offered to us by Christ.

Here’s another tricky issue for some people: Why repent at all if we’re automatically forgiven – or are even forgiven before we even repent? When we sin, other people are damaged. It’s a terrible thing. All the great horrible things that happen in the world are because people have sinned. Sin breaks God’s law, which is to help us treat other people in a way that preserves them, rather than killing or weakening them.

Are there even other reasons? Let’s look in Romans 12:1. Paul said:

**Romans 12:1** – *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice – like Christ – holy and acceptable to God – now get this part – the translation I am reading here is the ESV, which says: *which is your spiritual worship*. And that certainly is true, but that translation leaves out another element. It could be better translated: *your reasonable or logical spiritual service*. In other words, the only rational response to Christ’s sacrifice for us – if we understand it – is to sacrifice ourselves to God in return.*

Jesus kept God’s law, so should we. When we break it, we need to repent – that is, to go a

different way. Stop breaking it. And Jesus said that His loving sacrifice would draw everybody to Him. That drawing includes following Him as He followed God. And those who follow God not only repent, they forgive. Those people understand that it's a totally mutual back and forth, where everybody is going to live, eventually, in a state of forgiveness. That includes us having to forgive everybody, and everybody forgiving us, and God forgiving us.

Okay, so looking back over what we've covered today, we started out with a seemingly simple topic – forgiveness. It quickly expanded to the core of God's salvation plan, which is the gospel of Christ. We see that it's all tied together. And it takes faith to believe God and turn away from the lies of our adversary. But unless we do that, we won't be able to forgive and God won't be able to forgive us.

By the way, just in closing here, a really good book to read about overcoming sin – like the lack of forgiveness – is titled, *You're Invited*, by Joseph Saladino. You can get it on Amazon, I believe. It talks about the spiritual battle we're in, and how the devil uses lies to deceive us into doing wrong things, and how God never intended us to have to battle the devil by ourselves. If we start believing His truth, instead of the devil's lies, He will limit the devil's access to us. Isn't that a great thought? You can find out more about that in that great book.

This is Bill Jacobs for LifeResource Ministries, serving children, families and the Church of God.