



FEED MY SHEEP

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What jubilee forgiveness is **not!** *Forgiveness, part 4*

As we commence today, let us quickly review the four different types of forgiveness which we outlined in a prior issue.

- There is conditional forgiveness.
- There is distant forgiveness.
- There is partial forgiveness.
- There is what I call jubilee forgiveness.

Conditional forgiveness is self-explanatory. It is when we place conditions on forgiving someone. Secondly, there is **distant** forgiveness. We are not referring to geographical distance. Here we are talking about *emotional* distance. In other words, there might be some degree of feeling less negative about a person, but there is no reconciliation or restoration of a relationship with the one who offended you. We are very distant emotionally from the offender.

Of course, that could include some physical distance as well, such as when a husband and wife separate. After a while of being separated, they might have less animosity towards one another, but that is about the extent of it. It is distant forgiveness.

Next is **partial** forgiveness. Here we find that there is a considerable lessening of negative emotions toward the offender. There is a partial restoration of a relationship. This might happen in a marriage where a spouse has been unfaithful. They might work through it to a great extent, but in many cases such as that, partial forgiveness is about as far as it goes. Consequently, the marriage relationship will never have the original innocence, the trust and intensity that it once had.

Finally, there is what we call "**jubilee forgiveness.**" We call it jubilee forgiveness because jubilee is a biblical term with which all Christians should become fa-

miliar. Other people may use other terms for it which help us to define it. They might call it *full* forgiveness; or *complete* forgiveness; or *total* forgiveness.

Most importantly, it is unconditional forgiveness. This means that there is a complete cessation of negative feelings toward the offender and, when possible, the relationship is fully restored. Years ago, we presented a series of four parts where we studied in great detail the laws of jubilee. I hope to get it in book form some day. So if you really want a much fuller understanding of the topic of jubilee, which is God's legal basis for total forgiveness, I would suggest you obtain our lectures on CDs concerning the Laws of Jubilee. They are CD #271, 272, 275 & 276. \$25 postpaid.

To summarize those four lectures in a couple of sentences, it would be this:

Our heavenly Father looks upon all sin as a debt. It is a debt that we cannot *ever* repay. However, through His law of jubilee, there comes a time when Father declares a jubilee, which means that every person is unconditionally forgiven and returns to his inheritance. In the Old Testament, this had direct reference to the land inheritance of each Israelite family, but when understood in its typological application, it has far greater—indeed, **cosmic** and **universal** significance.

Romans 10:19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.

With this series on forgiveness, it is my purpose to provoke you to jealousy. Of course, I do not mean that I am trying to provoke you to sin, but rather to strongly

motivate you to become jubilee forgivers.

20 But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

You see, the secular world, the non-believers and the non-Christian social scientists are discovering that complete forgiveness benefits the one doing the forgiving more than the one receiving the forgiveness. And so my purpose here is to say:

“Hey fellow Christians! Look! Here we have had these principles and instructions right there in our Bibles all along, and now the secular world is discovering these godly principles.”

In other words, as God said: “I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.”

How much more, then, should we as Christians be regularly practicing these principles. Furthermore, as we have stated numerous times over many years, to be an overcomer, one must put into practice the law of jubilee. Therefore, it is also my intent that this series will provide us with some very practical advice on learning just how to do that, to be jubilee forgivers. From a practical standpoint, let us now define what jubilee forgiveness is not.

First, jubilee forgiveness is **not** condoning the wrong that has been done.

To be a jubilee forgiver in no way means that we ever approve of sin. God does not and neither did the Son of God. We have an example of this in the New Testament in the story in the gospel of John, chapter 8, of the woman caught in adultery. Did the woman commit sin? Absolutely.

I will not take the time to explain here just how Jesus used the law itself to free her—we have discussed that in other messages—but the point here is that even though Jesus forgave her, He did not condone her sin. He asked her: Has no man condemned thee?

John 8:11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

So God forgives us but He does not condone our sins. We should do likewise with those who sin against us. On a practical level, this is not much of a problem, because when we have been offended or injured, about the last thing most of us feel like doing is condoning their actions against us.

Secondly, jubilee forgiveness is not excusing what they did.

As we are attempting to be full forgivers, we do not make excuses for the sins of others. A family member or friend may have a problem with alcohol or drugs and while under the influence, they may have injured you.

We ask God to give us the grace to forgive them, but that does not mean that we excuse their behavior such as by saying to them or to ourselves that “Well, I know he can’t help it. I guess he just inherited the alcoholism gene from dad.”

To use a Southern colloquialism, that dog don’t hunt. We know that the Bible says that the sins of the fathers are passed on to the third and fourth generation and so it is quite possible that there may be some kind of genetic inheritance and/or disposition to certain sins.

But let me tell you something. In the world of biological science, there is a term called genetic determinism. For the past many decades it has been THE central dogma of biology that life is controlled by our genes. As Christians, we know or should have known that was bogus.

That in fact, our faith, that is to say, that our beliefs determine our life-path. Now comes a Ph.D. biologist, who although in the past has been considered somewhat of a renegade and heretic in the scientific community, he is now garnering much more respect for his ideas. He recently wrote that he was “exhilarated by a new realization that I could change the character of my life by changing my beliefs.” Well, what does the Bible say in Proverbs?

Proverbs 23:7 For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...

This Ph.D. biologist is not a Christian, but what he is discovering should again provoke Christians to jealousy. He also wrote “my research offers incontrovertible proof that biology’s most cherished tenets regarding genetic determinism are fundamentally flawed.”

Translation: the idea that we can blame our bad behavior on our genes is false. So whether we want to excuse a person’s behavior because of their genes or anything else, that dog don’t hunt. We *can* forgive at the highest level without excusing their behavior.

The scientist that made that statement then goes on in his book to demonstrate that his research is turning the world of cell biology upside down. I have been

pondering whether or not to offer his book. Ultimately, I decided against it. I had a dilemma. The reason I finally decided not to offer his book is because along with some exciting insights into the world of cell biology as it relates to mind and matter and consciousness, the book also contains some ideas diametrically opposed to the Scriptures. (Granted, so do some other books I have carried and offered to readers, but I drew the line at this one.)

I do not want to be providing the opportunity to overthrow the faith of some. Nor do I want Stone Kingdom Ministries to be accused of promoting some of his false ideas and theories. So my endorsement of his work is highly qualified. If you should choose to obtain it, be discerning; eat the meat and spit out the bones. It is called *The Biology of Belief* by Dr. Bruce Lipton. I met him and heard him teaching on two occasions here in Asheville back circa 1990.

Thirdly, jubilee forgiveness is not justifying what the offender did.

To justify means to declare someone or something righteous. As we learn to practice jubilee forgiveness, we must not fool ourselves into thinking that somehow the offender's offense was actually righteous.

Contrary to our rapidly devolving culture where what is right is defined by each individual, true righteousness is defined by the standards of God's laws: the commandments, statutes and judgments. If any action or behavior is in violation of any of these, it is, by definition, evil and sin.

Now we who are Christian universalists can easily be caught in a trap with this one because we know that *everything* that happens is part of God's *plan*. Not His *will*, mind you, but His plan—which includes (the struggle between) both good and evil. Therefore, we must not carry this to the extreme by saying that it was actually a good deed that my relative was murdered because if that had not happened, then such and such could not have happened which turned out to be a very good thing.

No, we do not think like that. While we do acknowledge that everything that happens is part of God's overall Plan, and that His Plan is the highest and ultimate good; we must also recognize that everything that happens is *not* good. Evil is part of God's plan but evil is not good. Therefore, we forgive but we do not justify evil. We do not call evil good.

Fourthly, jubilee forgiveness is not pardonning what they did.

A pardon is a legal procedure whereby an offender is released from the legal penalty for his action. A pardon is mercy granted by an entity who has the authority to do so, such as a governor or the president.

It was widely reported that when the Bulgarian or Romanian or Turk—whatever he was—who attempted to assassinate Pope John Paul II years ago, that the Pope forgave the man. I think he even went to visit him in prison. But the fact is, the would-be murderer still went to prison. So forgiveness can take place without having to pardon the perpetrator.

On the personal level, let's invent a dreadful example. Your 21-year old daughter or granddaughter has been raped. The rapist has harmed not only your daughter, of course, but everyone in the family and extended family is affected and offended. So we see that the forgiveness issue is one which affects you as well as your daughter.

As an overcomer candidate, *must* you forgive this offender? The answer is yes. But what we are in the process of doing here is making sure we understand that jubilee forgiveness does not mean that the rapist's brutal act is condoned. Nor is it excused; nor is it justified; nor is it pardoned.

I would imagine that one of the hardest things anyone might ever have to do would be, as a victim, to testify against your rapist, and at the same time, to be able to genuinely forgive that individual...the hard part being genuinely forgiving the offender. And I will address later how we know when we have truly forgiven someone.

You see, in this hypothetical case, it is absolutely incumbent upon your daughter to testify against the rapist. Why? So that society will be protected from any further such actions by him and other potential rapists might be deterred. How many times have we heard over the years of rapists and pedophiles who have been paroled from prison, and who then go out and do the same thing again—or worse, they murder their victim the next time.

You may recall the case in Sarasota, Florida in the news some years ago of the man who kidnapped, raped and then murdered a little 11 years old girl—I think her name was Carly Bruschia or something like that. Remember that they caught the guy because there just happened to be surveillance cameras on the corners of some warehouse where he abducted her.

Well, that case hit me pretty strongly not only be-

cause it was such an atrocity in itself but because I know that location. At the time they were showing the surveillance video on TV, my late mother-in-law who had lived in Sarasota called to say that it was right around the block from her house. I had taken many a walk around her block. So that heinous event was “close to home” to me in that sense.

In Asheville, I have become friends with a man who knew that I had lost a daughter when she was 13. Then he shared his story. Like me, he was originally from the Midwest—he, from Indiana, but had migrated to Florida and went into business there, the Orlando area if I recall correctly. Tears welled up in my eyes as he told me the long version of how his 13-year-old daughter was kidnapped and disappeared. It was six months before her body was found.

So even when we must forgive for such an unspeakable crime, that does not mean we are obligated to speak out in favor of pardoning the rapist. There will be plenty of liberals and the ACLU doing that, don’t you know. No, we must advocate for just the opposite. God’s law requires that for the good of society that the rapist be punished. And depending upon the circumstances of a rape, it often means the death penalty for the rapist. Painful though it will be, the victim should testify against her attacker.

Fifthly, jubilee forgiveness is not reconciliation.

This, too, is very important to understand. The two can be related. Reconciliation can be *part* of the forgiveness process, but it does not *have to be*. Genuine forgiveness can take place without reconciliation. It takes two parties to reconcile. In some cases, it might be that there is no reconciliation possible. That might be because (1) the offending person is dead.

Over 20 years ago now, I shared with you my personal testimony on forgiveness, and in those messages I revealed how I had hated my father for most of my adult life, and how I went about learning to forgive him and then to attempt to reconcile with him. Those messages are still available, free for the asking. They are very different from all my other lectures. Ask for the free CDs on “Could You Forgive God?”

Part of reconciliation is to restore a relationship. But sometimes that is not desirable at all because the initial relationship was bad. So it was with my father and me. So restoration to the way it had been was not desirable. So instead of restoration, it was more a case of the two of us beginning a new relationship as adult son to father.

My father passed away in 2000. Now supposing I

had worked on forgiving him and had felt that I had achieved that and yet supposing that he had always and at every attempt, had refused to meet with me. And then he died. No reconciliation of any kind would have been possible.

Some of us may have similar situations. Say you had a bad relationship with your mother or with a sister or a brother, or whoever, and they died years before you ever knew of such a thing as jubilee forgiveness. It does not mean that you cannot forgive them just the same. Because, you see, *the real work is not in them; the real work is going on inside your heart!* Much more on this and then on the positive principles of jubilee forgiveness next time. (*To be continued.*)

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