



Glenn Brown

441 ½ Lark Drive
Grand Junction, Colorado 81504

Telephone 970-434-1377
Email casabrn441@gmail.com
Website www.glennbrownministries.com

JANUARY, 2020

1

THOUGHTS ABOUT FORGIVENESS

Our pastors are going to start out the New Year with a sermon series on forgiveness. Why is that a great idea?

- **Forgiveness is central to the Christian life.** It's the way we start the adventure of knowing God. God freely forgives us.....when we humbly bow down to Him and repent and receive Christ as our Savior. We start growing to be like Christ as we forgive those who have sinned against us, wounded us, in the past.

John Wimber told the following story: An older lady, Katherine, who attended his church in Anaheim, was sick and in pain and after a worship service came to John for prayer. An impression came to his mind and he asked the lady, "Do you have bitterness toward your sister?" She was taken by surprise and after a few moments told John what had happened. She had a sister two years older than she who was very beautiful and very spoiled. Many boys chased her and caught her. Katherine finally met a young man, and they became engaged. As the time approached for their wedding, her older sister decided she wanted that guy. She got him, and they married. After five years she left him for another man.

John asked Katherine, "Have you ever forgiven your sister?" She said, "No! I haven't even spoken to her in over 40 years." John said, "I believe God is telling me that He wants to heal you, but you must forgive your sister."

Katherine went home and wrestled with God. She really hated her sister and didn't want to forgive her. But she was very sick and in pain with intestinal problems and decided she had better obey God. She wrote a letter of forgiveness to her sister, addressed it, stamped it, and dropped it in her desk drawer. She would mail it in a few days. She "forgot" about the letter.

Several weeks passed and she got sicker and sicker. She got so weak she knew she was going to die. She remembered the letter. She got out of bed, retrieved the letter, and staggered down the block to the mail box. She told John later that the moment she dropped the letter in the box she felt a surge of strength and that in a matter of days she was totally healed.

If you will do a little research on unforgiveness and the bitterness and anger that is behind it, you will find that it is related to depression, high blood pressure, heart attacks, migraines, back problems, anxiety, and insomnia. It also increases the risk of infection and cancer because the hormone that defends us against them is reduced when we are angry.

- **Jesus even included forgiveness in the little prayer He taught us:** *Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespassed against us.* Does that seem to make our being forgiven by God dependent on our forgiving others? Yes, it does say that. Paul reiterates the point in Colossians 3:13 (NKJV): *Bearing with one another and forgiving one another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.* (Emphasis is mine.)
- To reiterate: **We get the same measure of forgiveness from God as we give to other people!** That can't be right, can it? That's exactly what Jesus said in Luke 6:37-38. (If you don't have a Bible, you can check it out on your magic cell phone.)
- **Unforgiveness and bitterness even corrupts and pollutes your family!** Hebrews 12:15 - *Be careful not to fall short of the grace of God, lest a root of bitterness spring up, cause all sorts of trouble, and defile many.*

A ranch family in west Texas were pioneers in the community church in their little town. The youngest daughter was 22 years old when she was stricken with cancer. Doctors and specialists were not able to stop the terrible advance of the cancer, nor did the prayers of the faithful at their church. The young woman went through a lot of suffering and then died.

The mother of the family, the matriarch, was furious at God. She declared: "Our family was founding members of this church. We have supported this church with our giving and attendance for three generations. And if this is the way God is going to treat us after all we have done for him, then I am through with this church, and I am through with God! I will never step foot in this church again, and I will not let any of my family have anything to do with it either!"

The lady's family permitted her to browbeat them into going along with her on this terrible decision, and I

learned about some of the terrible consequences that came to this family across the years.

- **Jesus warned that anyone who refuses to forgive will be tortured!** Jesus told an elaborate parable in Matthew 18:21-35. A king had a servant (Servant A) who owed him an impossibly large debt, and the king freely forgave that debt. Servant A had a servant (Servant B) who owed him a small debt, but he refused to forgive him and had him thrown in debtor's prison. When the king learned about this, he was furious. He said, "Turn him over to the torturers!"

There is a spiritual principle at work here. When we refuse to forgive someone who has offended us, we will suffer torture. I believe we will be tortured in five ways:

- (1) The memories, the tapes, will play in our head over and over, like a tune that gets stuck and you can't get out of your mind. "How could he do that to me!" "How could she have said that and ruined my reputation!" "How could that judge have let him get away with what he did to my child?" Etc, etc., unendingly.
- (2) We don't feel truly forgiven by God because we have not obeyed God and forgiven Servant B. Jesus said clearly, *If you don't forgive others, God will not forgive you* in John 6:14.
- (3) As mentioned above, we may get emotionally and physically sick. I prayed for a lady who had ongoing infection and pain in her throat and pain and swelling in her legs and feet. She told me that when she was a teen-ager her father abandoned her family for another woman. Later, she married a man, had children, and her husband did the same thing as her father. I led her through the process of forgiving her father and her husband. (This was extremely difficult for her to do.) Immediately the pain left her throat, and the swelling and pain left her legs and feet. I encouraged her to not let the resentment come back in but to focus on the Lord and His kindness to her.
- (4) Romans 2:1 tells us not to judge and condemn someone for their sins or we will repeat the same sins in our life. If you judge and condemn your parents for getting a divorce, you will very likely end up divorcing your spouse. Note in (3) above that the woman judged and hated her father for abandoning her mother, and she married a man who did the same to her. Of course, there are many factors at play in every life situation, but the Bible says there is a spiritual law in effect regarding unforgiveness.

- (5) As also mentioned above, Hebrews 12:15 warns that when we allow unforgiveness to fester in our hearts, that a "bitter root will grow in our heart that defiles many."

Please note that we must forgive other people, but it is equally important to forgive God if we have blamed Him for the wounds that have afflicted us. It is remarkable that people tend to blame God for things the devil has done.

And it is imperative that we also forgive ourselves for the sins and mistakes we have made. Many times people find it easier to forgive other people than to forgive themselves. If we have repented for our sins and humbly asked God to forgive us, then He has forgiven us. (See 1 John 1:9) Then how foolish it is that we would refuse to forgive ourselves. Is our standard higher than the standard of God in heaven? Ha!

ANOTHER MEMORY ABOUT GOD'S HUMOR

When I was a pastor in Loveland, Doris and I bought a little cabin in Fairplay, located in South Park at 10,000 feet altitude. It was a spectacular, snowy place to retreat with Sonny and T. J., our doggies.

One Saturday in early spring we decided to drive up to Fairplay, a three-hour drive, and see if the road to our cabin had been plowed. We made it back most of the way, but then there was a stretch of snow on the gravel road that extended about 50 feet. I decided I could make a run at it and skim across it. Right. I skimmed to the middle of it, high centered in the snow and came to a stop. I worked for about an hour trying to get out. I jacked up the tires, pushed branches under the tires, rocked back and forth, etc., but I was still stuck. It was Saturday afternoon, I had to preach on Sunday morning, and we had to get back to Loveland.

There were a few widely scattered cabins on that road, but most were summer cabins and I hadn't seen any cars or people. We were about four miles from the little town, and I didn't want to leave Doris in the car alone while I walked back to Fairplay. And it was about 15 degrees. So I prayed. "Help!" I thought I heard God say, "Wait."

So we sat in the car with the motor and heater running and waited. The afternoon passed along. I got increasingly uneasy. I didn't want to wait till dark, and it was a long way back to Loveland. I said, "I must not have heard right. I'll have to walk."

I started down the road to town, and as I went over a little rise I saw an old pickup pull out of a driveway and start away from me. I frantically waved my arms, but he was a long way ahead and I was sure he hadn't seen me. But his brake lights came on, he turned around and even

had a chain to hook up to my car and pull me out. I was so grateful. I asked the young man his name, and he said, “Don Waite.” I slipped \$20 under his seat cushion.

On the trip back home, the revelation suddenly struck me: God hadn’t said, “Wait.” He had said, “Waite.” I laughed again and again all the way back to Loveland.

NEW AND PASSIONATE INSIGHTS

Jolee and Micah, my precious granddaughter and her husband, gave me a new Bible for Christmas, the Passion Translation of the New Testament, and it has some amazing insights into the original Aramaic, Greek, and Hebrew. Following are a few verses from the book of John that deeply touched me.

1:1 - *In the very beginning the Living Expression was already there and the Living Expression was with God, yet fully God.*

fn. - The first eighteen verses of John are considered by most scholars to be the words of an ancient hymn or poem that was cherished by first-century believers in Christ.

1:2 - *They were together - face-to-face, in the very beginning.*

fn. - There is no Hebrew word for “presence” (i.e., the “presence” of God), only the word *face*.

1:14 - *And so the Living Expression became a man and lived among us!....*

fn. - The Greek and Aramaic reads, “he pitched his tent among us.” This takes us back into the book of Exodus where God came down and lived in the tent (tabernacle) in the wilderness. See Exo. 25:8.

1:19 - (Concerning the crowds that came to John the Baptist to be baptized.)

fn. - Some estimate that John and his disciples baptized as many as one million people. It is possible that John was a part of the Essene community of devout Jews.

1:28 - *This all took place at Bethany, where John was baptizing at the place of the crossing of the Jordan River.*

fn. - This place of crossing is likely where the children of Israel crossed into the promised land when the Jordan River parted and they passed through on dry land. This place was a powerful reminder of crossing into a new era for Israel.

1:29 - *The very next day John saw Jesus coming to him to be baptized, and John cried out, “Look! There he is - God’s Lamb! He will take away the sins of the world!”*

fn. - “Take away” - Or “lift off” the burden. The Greek word used here is often used for “lifting up and away” an anchor from off the ocean floor.

1:32 - *As John baptized Jesus he spoke these words: “I see the Spirit of God appear like a dove descending from*

the heavenly realm and landing upon him”.....

fn. - This “Dove” points to the dove that Noah released from the ark. It found no place to rest in a fallen world. It never returned to Noah. It flew throughout history and found no place to rest until at last there was a heavenly man who carried the life of heaven - upon him the dove (Holy Spirit) rested and remained.

1:38 - *Jesus turned around and saw they were following him and asked, “What do you want?”.....*

fn. - This, the first recorded saying of Jesus in the Gospels, is a question that should be asked to every follower of Jesus: “What do you want in following me?” Do we want something only for ourselves? A ministry? Answers to prayer? Or do we want to be with him? The first question God asked to Adam and Eve was, “Where are you?” The first words of the God-man were, “What do you want?”

2:20 - (Jesus at the Temple) *Then the Jewish leaders sneered, “This temple took forty-six years to build, and you mean to tell us that you will raise it up in three days?”*

fn. - Our bodies (temples) have forty-six chromosomes in every cell.

3:3 - *Jesus answered, “Nicodemus, listen to this eternal truth: Before a person can perceive God’s kingdom realm, they must first experience a rebirth.”*

fn. - Here we see a distinguished and moral man speaking with Jesus. In the next chapter we will see an immoral woman speaking with him. Each must experience a “birth from above” (from the Greek) to enter into God’s rest. The Aramaic word is clearly “born from the origin.” The implication is that you must be born again like Adam was born by the direct breath of God.

3:13 - *No one has risen into the heavenly realm except the Son of Man who also exists in heaven.*

fn. - Jesus shares a mystery with Nicodemus. While he was on earth ministering, Jesus was also in heaven in the spirit realm. Being in two places at the same time is also the privilege of every believer. We are seated with Christ in heaven in the heavenly realm.... and living our earthly life to please him. See Eph. 2:6 and Col. 3:1-5. In the realm of the spirit, heaven and earth is one. Most Greek manuscripts read “the son of Man who came from heaven.” But the Aramaic is clearly “who is in heaven.”

Reflection: What do you want?

LOVE OR POWER?

Eddie Hyatt says that, “Love and power, like oil and water, do not mix. This is evident when a couple whose marriage is disintegrating receives counseling. The counselor can tell which one loves the least; it is the one

sitting in the power seat and making demands. The one who truly loves has let go of power and is willing to make any sacrifice to save the marriage.” (Of course, there are limits to how far the lover can or should go.)

“When the time came for God to demonstrate His love for humanity, He set aside his power. In the Old Testament, God demonstrated his power through Moses by bringing plagues on the Egyptians and by parting the Red Sea, and so forth. But in the New Testament when Jesus came to reveal the heart of God, He emptied himself of the power he had known with the Father and became powerless. *He gave up his divine privileges and took the humble position of a slave...*(Phil. 2:6)

This is why the Son of God was born in a stable and grew up in Nazareth, an insignificant and despised village, and why he showed no interest in Herod’s throne, or in the position of high priest. Jesus had come to demonstrate God’s love, and he could not show love while at the same time seeking power. When James and John sought two power seats (Matt., 20:20), Jesus rebuked them.

But this is not a namby-pamby form of love for the weak and selfish. This love requires great courage and resilience. This love desires the best for the other person and is willing to sacrifice its own self-interests to see it happen.”

As I read Dr. Hyatt’s wise words, I remembered a story about George Muller, who founded an orphanage in London in the 1800’s. Most of the children responded to the tough love they received in the orphanage, but a few were so wounded and rebellious that they could not be helped. A red-headed boy named Stevie was like that. He was incorrigible. He terrorized the other kids and even the staff. Finally, Mr. Muller reached his limit. He held Stevie firmly in his arms and told him they were going to have to send him back to the street. Then he turned his face up to heaven to pray. Stevie’s body was rigid and his eyes shut tightly.

Stevie cracked his eyes and peeked up at Mr. Muller. He was shocked to see tears running down the old man’s face. Instantly the boy’s heart was changed. He received Christ as his savior and in a few years became a powerful preacher for Christ.

God has a question for us today: “Are you a person of love or power?”

Mother Theresa: Only rarely in our lives are we called **QUOTATIONS**

Mother Theresa: Only rarely in our lives are we called upon to do great things, but every day of our lives we are called upon to do little things with great love.

Eric Metaxas: Are we making souls or making money?

Robert Morris: By 2005 our church had grown to where we were having six services on the weekend and I was working probably 70 or 80 hours a week. One morning it became clear to me that I was in trouble. On my way to take a shower I opened my dresser drawer and saw that there was only one pair of underwear. I thought, “What am I going to do tomorrow?” I was so mentally fatigued that it never occurred to me that we had a washing machine, or that I could go to Walmart and buy six pairs of underwear for \$1.98. I sat down on the floor and started crying.

I went to see a pastor friend and told him I was having a nervous breakdown. He said, “No, you’re just tired. You’re going to have to start setting aside a day of rest every week, just like God said.”

Resting one day a week is so important that it is one of God’s Big Ten! If we don’t take a day of rest, we are sinning against our own body with bad consequences.

Bill Johnson: When James and John wanted positions of power and glory, Jesus asked them, “Are you able?” They wanted big, important positions, but promotion is connected to our ability to suffer - not from sickness or torment of mind from sin, but for living righteously. The way we handle persecutions and suffering determines our level of promotion. God wants to protect us from failing, so he is careful about promoting us.

Lou Giglio: On Mt. Carmel, Elijah called down fire from heaven to burn up the sacrifice. Then he challenged the people: “If the Lord is God, worship Him; if Baal is God, worship him.” We have this same choice today. Haven’t you seen enough to know that God is God? Make up your mind. If Baal is God (and you know what Baal is in your life) then worship him; if God is your God, worship Him. No matter if things go well or if they go terribly, make up your mind! Worship and serve God!

I would like to thank each of you for your support of this ministry. If any of you want to receive tax credit for your financial contributions, you may send them to:
CANYON VIEW VINEYARD CHURCH
736 24 ½ Road Grand Junction, Co. 81505