

Topic	For More Freedom and Power in Living
Reference	Matthew 6:9-15
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Well this morning I'm going to speak on the Chinese New Year message. How many of us, we want more freedom and power in living.

Matthew 6:9-15

9 "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." 14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

How many of us, we have been hurt at least once in our life? Can I see your hands? Okay, if your hand is not up, you are almost like Jesus, not hurt, and never hurt at all.

Our human problem is this, hurts, wounds and pains is a common reality of life, something that no one runs away from. That's a reality. After you hear this sermon, you will be hurt again. What happens when we are hurt, wounded and are in pain? It produces in us anger, bitterness, resentment, and sometimes a desire oftentimes to one to retaliate, oftentimes wanting to take revenge. Sometimes CNY is a very uncomfortable time. Why? Because sometimes you'll find brothers don't talk to each other, sisters don't talk, uncle auntie don't talk to each other. Those are some realities of life and living. But sometimes when we are hurt, we want to take it out against the persons who have hurt us.

Revenge is a natural instinct and if I cannot revenge I bring all my brothers along to take care of you. And if all my brothers still cannot take care of that, I bring all my uncles to take care of you. That is why it is not uncommon to see all this pouch hoeing or this revenge taking place, tragically and sadly, isn't it? And that's the reason may friends, many families, many communities, many nations are fractured totally completely. And friends, you know, I have realized that this is something that has created huge problems and problems friends, not just for a while, because if we receive a cut on our hand, within a matter of days it would heal. But emotional wounds can last for years if not for generations.

Sometimes you will find that parents will tell their kids, don't call that uncle, you got nothing to do with them. And so one generation goes on the generation and what a tragedy that it has costs so much brokenness in the lives of so many families, not just Chinese families, particularly more Chinese families. Why? Because in Chinese culture, we are not to forgive, we are not to just forgive it, we have to take revenge.

This thing is not just in Chinese culture, it is in every culture I come across around the whole world, and that's a reality. So therefore, friends, the thing is, what is the answer? What is the solution? And praise God friends, there is an answer, there is a solution. But before that, a hurt friends is something that

happened in the past to us. If we harbor this hurt, the past then imprison our present and prevent us from living to the future. For example, if you're hurt by that person. If you have not forgiven that person, every time you see that person or even think about that person, something not nice happens inside you. Not because you've got a heart attack, okay? But you know, insight not nice. So what has happened that hurt has imprisoned you. And it can prevent you from living the future. If we harbor these hurts the reality is this, we are living in the past, not even the present, because our present is arrested and it has kept us from moving their future. That's a reality.

In our anger, we find that it has imprisoned us. It has kept us from moving on into the future. It has prevented you friends from really begin to really exercise a full potential and the gifts that God has given to you like this. How tragic it is. And therefore friends, what's the solution for us all? And the wonderful thing is, the solution is found in the Christian message. Why? Because at the heart of the Christian message is the message of forgiveness. Only the Christian message teaches that, no other faith teaches that.

On the cross, the Lord Jesus Christ forgive your sin, my sin and the sin of the whole world. If this is so, as Christians why is it that you and I must forgive. The first reason because it is the command of scripture. We who take the Word of God seriously, when the Bible says like this in Colossian 3:13

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

You and I have been objects of God's forgiveness and because we have been forgiven, the scriptures commands us to forgive therefore, and that's why you cannot blame the non-Christian because they have not experienced forgiveness, especially from God isn't. And because they've not experienced forgiveness, they say why should I forgive?

Nelson Mandela, the person who knows best about injury to him. Of course, he fought against apartheid system in South Africa as we know. He was in prison for 27 years, and out of 27 years, 16 years were spent in Robin's Island. Human beings can do this to one another like this, isn't it? He fought against apartheid system. Eventually praise God, it was dismantled and he was elected the first black South African president and when he was elected, all the black say, because in a country of South Africa, 70% are blacks, only 30% of whites and all these years before the whites are in control, ruling harshly, oppressive against the blacks and when Nelson Mandela was elected as president, you know what a black say to him? This is a time for revenge. This is the time to take it back on all the whites, who had bullied us like crazy, like this.

Friends the blacks just can rise up and they can literally push them only to the sea. Nelson Mandela says, this is not a time for revenge. This is a time for forgiveness. That's where he set up the truth and reconciliation commission that if you whites are willing to come up publicly and confess all your wrongs. You will be forgiven. But you must tell the truth, isn't it? And of all people who knows best about being inflicted all kinds of injuries unfairly, this is what he says to all of us.

"When a deep injury is done to us, we never heal until we forgive."

That's a reality and that's why it fits in perfectly with the Word of God.

The second reason why you and I must forgive, because of the example of Jesus. Jesus sets a perfect example for all of us. Why? Because in Luke 23:34

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

Hanging on the cross Jesus says father, forgive them. You and I know he went to the cross for no fault of his own. Jesus is not someone who just teaches about the need for forgiveness. As we read earlier on it, Matthew chapter six verses nine to 15 about the Lord's prayer. He doesn't only teach it, he models it for all of us about what forgiven is.

The third reason why you and I must forgive is because otherwise we cannot come to God in prayer. Why? Because. You find that in verse 12 of Matthew 6

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

When we come to God in prayer, oftentimes we come to God in prayer. Firstly, confessing our sins are also gone. When we come to God, who is altogether Holy and righteous, we know our friends when we come done something wrong, you and I need to confess. Because otherwise there is no way we can connect with God rightly and properly. So therefore friends that we come to God, we confess our sins to God. Jesus also teaches us, as we confess our sins to God, Jesus says, we have also forgiven those who sin against us.

If we are unwilling to forgive those who sin against us, we have no right to ask God for forgiveness. That's the two parts of the one same thing.

The fourth reason is that otherwise we will not know God's forgiveness. Why is this a case? Because this is what Jesus says in verses 14 and 15

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. Matthew 6:14, 15

How many times are willing to forgive a person three times? It is not just our struggle as Christians, it is equally the struggle of apostle Peter too.

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."

So it's not seven but 77. What does 77 mean? 7 as we know from scripture is a perfect number. 77 means, it goes on and on and on and again and again. In other words, it is endless. It is countless, and that's what the father does to all of us when we confess our sins to him. God never keeps a score as of course, in our confession, we must be serious. We must be humble. We must really, really be very honest

before God. But sometimes, right? In spite of all God we're trying to do, to seek not to do wrong. Sometimes we still do wrong. Even though we try to do right, sometimes we do wrong.

Martin Luther King Jr. said,

“Forgiveness is not an occasional act; it is a permanent attitude.”

You and I need to forgive again and again and again. It is hard, it is difficult.

So forgiveness is not just an occasional act. It is a permanent attitude. Something that is hard and difficult, but friends, by the grace of God, he will enable us to do that.

More importantly, what happens to me when I forgive

Forgiveness is a choice. God will never force us to forgive. He leaves it to you and me to decide whether to forgive or not to forgive. The wonderful thing is, when I choose to forgive, it sets me free. Secondly, friends, it sets the other person free.

When we hold onto a person and imprison that person in the cage of our heart. So what happens? One, unforgiveness results in two prisoners. You're not free. That guy is not free. Can I say there are more prisoners walking in the streets of KL than all the prisoners in prison put together.

There are tons of people, they look free, they walk free in the streets but if you harbor unforgiveness you become imprisoned too.

Letting a person go, you let yourself go. It's an amazing thing, isn't it, about the power of forgiveness. It frees us to living. When I choose to forgive, it sets me free. It sets the other person free that there's a third reason as to why that the reason that there is healing. Why? Because in James chapter 5:16 it tells us like they just come.

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16

When we confess we pray, God amazingly brings healing to us in our lives.

Sometimes living in a big house is new indication things are okay in the inside, sometimes the problem living in big houses is just we can hide from each other in a mini rooms we have got. How long can we hide, how long can we run away. Some people are running away for years.

Our pains are not equal to Jesus Christ. The pain that Jesus went through on the cross for our sins is greater than our pains. So when people are in denial of forgiveness, they are denying Christ too.