

God never leads us to our destiny in a straight line from the promise to the destiny; there are twists and turns and Detours bringing us to the fulfillment of the Destiny HE has for us.

Today: We will see that **FORGIVENESS** is a key ingredient in God’s guiding us to this fulfillment of destiny.

- Sometimes it’s our fault, sometimes it the fault of others who cause our lives to be disrupted from the order it should have taken.
- But God can use the detour of failure, whether yours or somebody else’s; to guide you to where you need to be.

Nothing will hinder you from arriving at your destiny God has for you like un-forgiveness! Un-forgiveness is the one thing above all others that will block God’s movement in your life; taking you from where you are to where you are supposed to go.

Many are held hostage by a leash around our souls called un-forgiveness!

- May have been something that happened in your child-hood.
- Maybe something by an abusive mate.
- Maybe you were forsaken by – neglected – abused wrongly – fired – a multitude of things.
- Whatever it is – it’s holding your hostage.
- Today – The Lord wants to set you free!

Define forgiveness: Many don’t know what forgiveness really is or if they have really successfully accomplished it.

Biblical forgiveness “The **decision** to no longer credit an offense against an offender.”

- Forgiveness has to do with a **decision**, not an emotion or feeling.
- It is about you making “**The Choice**” to delete the offense of another.

Question: How do I know if I have really made that choice to forgive?
Not just said the words but really accomplished forgiveness?

A qualifying measure whether you have truly forgiven the offense of an offender:

- **Are you still seeking revenge?**
- If you are still seeking revenge – “vengeance is yours” and you’re seeking to pay back – than forgiveness has not occurred.
- When forgiveness occurs, the delete button is pushed and “you seek no record of wrongs” – I Cor. 13:5.

Forgiveness can operate on two levels:

1. **Unilateral forgiveness** – this is when you forgive and the person hasn't asked for it.
 - They haven't asked for it or repented to you for what they did.
 - You - on your own without their involvement grant them forgiveness.
 - Why would you grant somebody forgiveness who hasn't asked for it, want it or who doesn't deserve it?
 - You grant unilateral forgiveness so that you can be free and keep going in life unhindered.
 - Unilateral forgiveness keeps you from being hostage to something the other person may never get right.
 - Unilateral forgiveness is given for many reasons:
 - Maybe the offense is so **small** it's not a big deal.
 - Maybe your offender has **died** and can't say they are sorry.
 - If you don't unilateral forgive them, you are being held hostage by a dead person until you die.
 - Maybe the person has **disappeared** and you lost contact with them and don't know where they are.
 - If you aren't willing to unilaterally forgive – then you are held hostage by something that can never change.

Unilateral forgiveness means – “I forgive, so I can move on in life.”

Is that Biblical?

- Acts 7:16 – when Stephen was being stoned, he said – “Forgive them, and do not hold this to their account.”
- Jesus on the cross – prayed to the Father – “Forgive them, for they know not what they are doing.” They didn't ask for it; but He granted it to them.

Don't let the fact that the person hasn't asked you or sought forgiveness, desired forgiveness, or seemed to care about forgiveness; because you are not willing to be held hostage to the offense.

By an act of your decision you release them so you can keep going to your destiny!

Nothing will hold you hostage to your detours, keeping you from your destiny like un-forgiveness will.

2. 2nd level – “**Transactional Forgiveness**” –

- This is where there is a desire for reconciliation and restoration of a relationship.

- It's where the person who has offended you is willing to confess and repent in order to restore what was broken.
- The Bible calls us to REPENT in order to re-establish the relationship.
- It's reconciliation driven to restore.

Gen. 42- Joseph's brothers wanted to be forgiven and were saying they were sorry, but Joseph was not taking their word for it because people can say they are sorry and not really mean it.

- A person can say they are sorry and not really mean it.
- They say the words just to get the situation behind them.
- It's the thing to do.
- **That is why confessions need to be tested to determine if they are true repentance.**

v. 15 –16 The test!

- “In this manner you shall be tested. By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether there is any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies.”
- If somebody says they are sorry, put them to the test.

Gen. 44:2 Joseph puts them to the test again:

“Joseph puts his cup in Benjamin's bag to test their hearts for honesty.”

- Test was to see whether they would return the cup & if they would protect the youngest brother Benjamin or throw him under the bus like they had done Joseph.
- Joseph tested them to see if they had learned their lesson about deceit and integrity yet.

This is why the Bible says there are to be **Fruits of Repentance** – Luke 3:8 “Bring forth fruits/evidence worthy of repentance...” “See – Touch – Feel” not just – I'm Sorry!

“I'm sorry” is a confession.

“Repentance” is a change of action.

So if a person wants to restore something that has been broken by their offense, you want to see that they not only confess but that they have repentance – a change of action to prove they are serious and have changed.

Repentance with God and with one another opens up the door to some level of restoring the relationship.

As much as possible – repentance is about restoring a relationship: Sometimes it's not possible.

- If a spouse walks away from their mate and marries another, then realizes it was a sin; it's not possible to go back to the first spouse.
- The restoration is limited because the situation is changed.

Gen. 45- **Steps to validate your own forgiveness:**

- It's now 22 years later in the life of Joseph.
- V. 1-2 “Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood before him, and he cried out – “Make everyone go out from me!”
So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers.
And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard of it.”

Here is how you know you're serious about forgiving others:

1. **You don't bring others in who have nothing to do with the sin**
 - Joseph had everyone go out of the room when he revealed his identity to his brothers:
 - You confront the offenders.
2. **V.4- You know you have forgiven when you make the offender at ease with you.**

“Joseph said to his brothers, please come near to me.” So his brothers came near, then he said: I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.”
You let them into your space.
3. **True forgiveness will help the offender to forgive themselves:**

V. 5 – “But now, do not be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.”

 - Don't be angry with yourself, they had passed the test of transactional repentance and showed it by their honesty and integrity.
 - He didn't heap guilt on top of their guilt.

How can we do that?: Remember your view of God!

- Gods' Providence has brought me here: “**You sold me** here, but **God sent me** here.”
- When you have a view of God that He even uses the mess that messed over you to take you to your destiny – it enables you to help the guilty people to forgive themselves caused God used their wrong to promote you to where HE wanted you to be.

But if you don't have that view of God; you will be seeking your own vengeance!

Joseph released them from more guilt.

4. **Joseph protected them from the one who would be hurt most by it:**

V. 9- “Hurry and go up to my father [Jacob], and say to him. Thus says your son Joseph; God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry.”

- Go back home and tell daddy, I’m ok.
- You mean, you’re not going to tell dad what we did to you and rat on us?
- Joseph was seeking transactional forgiveness.

If you are holding on to vengeance – then you are blocking God from taking care of it for you!

- If you are trying to pay people back yourself; God will stay out of it!

Rom. 12:19- “Beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; **I will repay says the Lord.**”

- God believes in Justice and will repay in His time and His way; and HE doesn’t need our help.

If someone breaks the law, that is different. We are talking about personal vengeance.

So when you are forgiving; it doesn’t mean you skip over it or ignore it: Joseph brought it out in the open to them.

But realize – God was up to something in Joseph’s life and He is up to something in your life also.

Remember – whatever happens to you must pass through God’s fingers first!

What helped Joseph to forgive?

- Many here today have suffered being mis-treated, wronged, offended and violated.

Gen. 41:50-52 It set Joseph up to be able to forgive and it will help you to.

“To Joseph was born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him.

Joseph called the name of the first born Manasseh: “For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father’s house.”

And the name of the second he called Ephraim: “For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.”

God set Joseph up for forgiveness by giving him another family:

- It was his original family that messed Joseph up.
- God now gives him a new family to help him forget his old family.

- The way Joseph reminded himself he was no longer hostage to his old family was in naming his sons.
- Baby #1 is **Manassah** means “God has helped me to forget all my toil in my father’s house.
 - So you need a Manassah in your life – something that is a daily reminder that through God – you can overcome the pain.
- Baby #2 is **Ephraim** means “God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.”
 - “God is blessing me where I am right now.”
 - If you get so locked into the past that you don’t see the goodness of God that He is showing you right now;
 - You can see a Manassah – a reminder you can overcome the pain; but you have to see your Ephraim – God can make you fruitful in the land of your affliction.

Ephraim sees what happened to you yesterday; but also what God is doing on your behalf today – His blessing today; His benefits today; His provision today!

I may have had a bad day yesterday; but my Ephraim is today!

“God is blessing me in the land of my affliction” – God is blessing me even where I am not supposed to be – I’m in Egypt, I’m not supposed to be here; but God is blessing me here.

You can be released from the pain of the past and be fruitful in a place you never expected to be in!

- In a vocation you never thought you’d be in.
- In a situation you never thought you’d be in.
- You never thought you’d be single and he/she walked out on you.
- You never thought you’d be a single parent raising those kids on your own.

What happens if you forgive?

- **Forgiveness crosses you over to the supernatural!**
 - Un-forgiveness blocks you from the supernatural.

Lord’s Prayer:

Matt 6:12- “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.”

VV. 14-15- “For **IF** you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

We all have two sides to our story:

1. The need to forgive.
2. The need to be forgiven.

There are very few people who need to forgive who don't also need to be forgiven.

Forgiveness is a beautiful word when you need it- but a painful word when you need to give it.

But we all need both words – we all need to be forgiven and we all need to be forgiving!

When you do – your Father in Heaven will forgive you.

- This is not talking about your salvation; it's talking about your fellowship, your experience with God and with others.
- We are walking in the Light of I John 1:7- “If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

You move into the light of the supernatural and you are ready for God to take you into the place of your destiny.