

Trouble in Paradise: The Fruit of Forgiveness - P. Theresa Rosario

Good morning! If you are going us for the first time, we are in week four of our Heaven in the Family series - Trouble in Paradise.

P Mike opened up our series to us back to the beginning and the story of God's creation of man and woman. We looked at the original plan of God for family and the role of moms as we celebrated Mother's day.

Then in the second week, P Mark clearly articulated God's plan to create a families that would be on mission for the kingdom of God. Turn to your neighbor and say we are on mission!

Last week P. Lori spoke on Fidelity in the family and our need to be faithful in the times we are facing today. In this message she gave a deeper understanding of what fidelity or faithfulness is with a powerful definition that expressed our need to accurately reproduce the sound or image of our original input. We are to speak, act, and image what we Jesus embodied. We are to be faithful family members that are constant, dependable, dedicated, loyal and steadfast as we are on mission.

OG QUESTION: In light of what we have been learning. How are you doing? How is your family doing? What would you say is the biggest stumbling block for your family?

As we continue to contend for heaven in our homes we now begin to talk about how the Holy Spirit empowers us to overcome the inevitable conflict and strife that arises amongst family members. Indeed we will see trouble in paradise, trouble in our homes. But the key is within our ability to overcome and face those conflicts. The power of the cross to forgive us of our sins releases the power for us to forgive each other when conflict arises. When we walk in forgiveness we release the true fruit of forgiveness which is Freedom!

Throughout the Bible there are countless stories of family feuds. We know offense leads to un-forgiveness which leads to bitterness and prolonged resentment which is why the Word of God instructs us to get rid of it!

“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (Ephesians 4:31-32 NIV).

Scripture also encourages us to live as holy people and tells us how to do this.

“Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make Allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who

offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forever others
(Colossians 3:12-13 NLT)

This is not a recommendation but a command. Turn to your neighbor and say, “it’s not a recommendation”. Turn to your other neighbor and say, “it’s a command.” So for the remainder of today we will be answering the questions what is forgiveness, what is the root of forgiveness and the fruit of forgiveness. Then we will end with a story pulling all of this together and lead us to what next weeks message will be about. If you are ready to dig in say AMEN.

Biblical definition of forgive, or forgiven: to pardon or acquit of sins

The Bible tells us everyone falls short of the glory of God and is a sinner (Romans 3:23). The significance of Jesus to a believer, therefore, is His payment to pardon and acquit us from the penalty of our sins which would have been death.

This is often referred to as atonement which is reconciliation; reparation for an offense or injury; cleansing.

Why am I bringing this up? Because true biblical forgiveness is rooted in Christ. It comes from Christ and his willingness to forgive us. We will see also, that as we receive this forgiveness, it empowers us to forgive. More on that latter. But first let’s talk about how we receive this forgiveness from Christ through repentance. Repentance is essential! Why? It is so essential because there is a difference between confession and repentance.

Confession: a formal statement admitting that one is guilty of a crime.

Definition of Repent: to turn from sin and change one’s heart and behavior; to feel regret and contrition (the state of feeling remorseful and penitent)

True forgiveness takes place when one feels regret and remorse for what he/she has done. (Example of Emet saying sorry)

Remember scripture tells us we are to forgive each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32 NIV). If we have never truly experienced forgiveness through truly feeling regret and remorse and knowing the gravity of what we’ve done, we will not be able to truly understand the depth of God’s grace and be able to extend it to others. You cannot give what you have not received.

I love how John Piper says it,

“Most of our bitterness and anger towards others is rooted in an inability to be profoundly amazed at Christ’s love for us in our sin. If you are struggling with bitterness then it may be that the Lord is letting the very sin that is flowing from your inability to see Christ be the means by which you come to see him.

In Other words, perhaps this season of rage, anger, and a fed-up “I’m out of here and don’t want anything to do with you” spirit is where you have had to come in order to see the greatness of your sin as a forgiven and justified saint. And the Lord has done it so that you would be stunned at his grace in a deeper way than you’ve ever been stunned by the grace of God before. And now, out of that experience can flow grace towards others.” - John Piper

(<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/why-cant-i-overcome-my-bitterness-and-anger>)

So, I know you are thinking, how do I know if I’m walking in un-forgiveness? What would be some evidence of bitterness and resentment in my life?

Well first of all, bitterness is characterized by intense cynicism, antagonism or hostility. (dictionary.com)

Resentment is the byproduct of bitterness and unchecked anger.

Definition from dictionary.com states that it is the feeling of displeasure or indignation at some act, remark, person, etc., regarded as causing injury or insult.

Indignation is a strong displeasure at something considered unjust, offensive, insulting, or base; righteous anger (now this one is dangerous).

A righteous anger is when you feel justified in your anger and un-forgiveness. And yet, the Bible is clear that we must forgive as Christ forgave. He forgave us when we didn’t deserve to be forgiven. As he was hanging on that cross dying for our sins he says,

“...’Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing. ’ And they cast lots to divide his clothing (Luke 23:34).”

I know many are listening to this message and your are struggling to forgive because of the horrible things that have been done to you or said about you. And, I don’t want to minimize that.

I am merely wanting to help you receive the fruit of forgiveness which is freedom. Freedom from the penalty of your sin and freedom from the bitterness, hate, anger, and resentment weighing you down and keep you in bondage.

Releasing forgiveness is not freeing the assailant from their penalty, but releasing you to your freedom. **It is allowing you to let go of the pains of the past so that you can walk in freedom towards your future.**

I found an article online I felt was very practical and useful to help in this area of overcoming resentment and bitterness. I've included the link in the Ohana group notes for further study.

<https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/spiritual-life/proven-steps-for-overcoming-resentment-letting-go-of-bitterness.html>

In the Article it lists 4 Signs of Resentment and 4 Signs of Bitterness.

4 Signs of Resentment in Relationship:

1. Anger
2. Un-forgiveness
3. Ungratefulness
4. Lack of Empathy

4 Signs of Bitterness in your life

1. Hopelessness
2. Discord
3. Gossip
4. Double Standards "In our own case we accept excuses too easily; in other people's we do not accept them easily enough." -[C.S.Lewis](#)

This article also gives you basic steps to overcome Resentment and Bitterness. However, if you really feel like this has become a stronghold in your life; I would recommend you take Hope Class on Monday nights and see the inner healing and deliverance teams. Don't leave this unchecked. It will become like a cancer within you. And the Lord wants to bring you freedom!

OG QUESTION: Do you see any signs of un-forgiveness, bitterness, or resentment in your families? If so how is it manifesting and what can you do to take steps for forgiveness and reconciliation?

Jesus teaches us how to pray The Lord's Prayer:

Give us today the food we need,
And forgive us our sins, As we have forgiven those who sin against us.
(Matthew 6:11-12 NLT)

He knew we would need His power to be able to forgive and to come to Him daily for that strength to walk in the fruit of forgiveness - freedom.

You may be thinking, well every time I forgive my parents or my spouse they just act out again. How many times do I gotta forgive them before enough is enough? To that I

would say let the Lord answer you. I can merely point you to what Jesus taught his disciples when they asked a similar question.

Matthew 18:21-35

New American Standard Bible

Forgiveness

21 Then Peter came up and said to Him, “Lord, how many times shall my brother sin against me and I *still* forgive him? Up to seven times?” **22** Jesus *said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy-seven times. [other translation say seventy times seven]

23 “For this reason the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his slaves. **24** And when he had begun to settle *them*, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. **25** But since he did not have *the means* to repay, his master commanded that he be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment be made.

26 So the slave fell *to the ground* and prostrated himself before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.’ **27** And the master of that slave felt compassion, and he released him and forgave him the debt.

28 But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and *began* to choke *him*, saying, ‘Pay back what you owe!’ **29** So his fellow slave fell *to the ground* and *began* to plead with him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you.’

30 But he was unwilling, and went and threw him in prison until he would pay back what was owed. **31** So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their master all that had happened.

32 Then summoning him, his master said to him, ‘You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. **33** Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?’ **34** And his master, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he would repay all that was owed him. **35** My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.”

OG QUESTION: When you read the Parable of Forgiveness; how does it make you feel? Is there someone in your life right now you need to forgive? How have you experienced Christ’s forgiveness and how can it help you to forgive others moment by moment?

Family Example - Misha and Giscelle; special element song

Excerpt taken from <https://www.biblegateway.com/devotionals/care-instructions-worth-living/2053/07/17>

The Law of Lamech

Genesis 4:23-24 NIV

23 Lamech said to his wives,

“Adah and Zillah, listen to me;
wives of Lamech, hear my words.
I have killed a man for wounding me,
a young man for injuring me.
24 If Cain is avenged seven times,
then Lamech seventy-seven times.”

God created human beings in his image so they can be friends—intimate, love-filled companions—with him and one another. But soon they learn to live as enemies. To all the wonders that God has created, human beings add an invention of their own: revenge. You hurt me, and I’ll hurt you back. A kind of Newtonian law becomes as inevitable as the law of gravity: For every infliction of pain there must be an equal and opposite act of vengeance. A character in the book of Genesis named Lamech takes this concept to its ultimate extreme. He kills a man for wounding him; **he says he will seek revenge seventy-seven times** over against anyone who hurts him. This is the Law of Lamech: If anyone inflicts pain on me, I must make them pay. One of the most poignant statements in Scripture comes shortly after the episode of Lamech as God views the violence and corruption that has spread like an epidemic through the creatures he loves: “The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.” ([Genesis 6:6](#))

So God, who created the heavens and the earth in six days, has to create once more after the Fall. He invents a kind of spiritual surgery that can remove what is toxic to the heart and make dead relationships live again. This new creation is called forgiveness. It is in some ways his last, best gift to the human race. It is the only force strong enough to heal relationships damaged by hatred and betrayal.