

# GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



## GIG25 – Forgiving: The Price of Forgiveness

In this podcast today, I am going to talk about “Forgiving: The Price of Forgiveness.” I believe that this impacts our salvation, our walk with the Lord, our relationship with Him in ways that are maybe deeper than we have ever grasped before. And I hope that from this time together that we will find the reality of these Scriptures coming alive in us and deepening our walk with the Lord, deepening our maturing into His likeness like never before. You know we live in a time that is spoken of in the Scriptures. In Matthew 24:12–13, it says, “Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.”

We are living in an age when love is being lost. And anger, hate, and rage seem to be replacing it. This age has really taken away from the humanity with which we relate one to another. And I think that these Scriptures are trying to point us to something very valuable in changing the way that we live and relate. We must recognize that the whole spirit of this age just erodes away the love that we have, the ability to love that we have, the necessity maybe of thinking that we must relate to one another in love and relate to the world in love. This idea of salvation that we hold so dear to us in our experience with God through Christ we realize comes from love. That is the very foundation of salvation. Let that just come once again alive to us. It was God's love that drove Him to forgive us, to forgive our sin and to bring forth Mashiach Yeshua (Jesus) to enable Him to forgive us. In John 3:16–17, the Word of God says, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”

Sometimes we get a focus that in the end-time there are judgments, and these things take place and happen. But God's original purpose, God's drive to the world was through His love. It is not that God was angry at the world and came to see judgment take place in this age. It is that God so loved the world. That word in Greek could also be “humanity.” God so loved humanity. He so loved humankind, His creation. He made us, created us, and put us on this earth. And He so loved us despite all of our sin and iniquity that He found a way to forgive us. He was driven to forgive us. Salvation is not some kind of passive reality; it is the drive of God, that drive that comes born out of His love for His creation, for us whom He has created—not just those who are saved, those who believe in Him, those who are a part of the covenants—but the love that He has for the whole world, for those who are yet to be saved. God loved the world. And therefore He made a way to forgive.

God is just, and He is righteous. He could not just forgive the debt that was owed. The debt had to be paid. When we talk about sin, we are really talking about debt, and it is a debt that must

be paid. So in God's great love and drive to see and bring salvation to the world and to humanity, He had to provide the means for that forgiveness to work. His love had to have a channel through which it could flow to forgive the debt that we owe Him by our sin. Not only did He love us, but He literally created and brought forth Christ in the earth at a time so that He had a means by which His love could be channeled into forgiveness. God's love is so deep. It is so powerful. It is so forceful. And He was determined. He is determined to forgive us. He is determined to wash away our sin and so determined in fact that He brings forth Messiah Yeshua (Jesus), enabling Him to forgive us of the debt that was owed. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge ..., but that the world might be saved through Him." It is that love that covers our sins. And He has provided Christ as the sacrifice through which He is capable of forgiving those sins.

That love is what we must appropriate into our own hearts; because He first loved us, then we love. That is what the Word says: "We love, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). It is not just a love back to Him. It is that love that He had in His heart for the world. It is the love that He had for mankind; not just a love and a worship of Him, but a love for one another. Remember the words of Christ when they asked Him, "What is the most important commandment?" He said, "It is that you love the Lord your God with all of your heart, all of your soul, all of your strength, all of your means; and that you love your neighbor as yourself" (see Matthew 22:35-40). This love that God shed upon the world was not something just between me and Him where He came to forgive me of my sins. He came to pour that same love into my heart that I would also turn and forgive others, that I would forgive the world; I would forgive my brothers and sisters. That is what we are to do. We have Christ as the sacrifice, not just that God can forgive me. That sacrifice that Christ made on the cross is so that I also can and will forgive others their debt, their sin against me. This is such an important idea that we grasp because if we don't, we are missing something in our relationship with Him, our closeness with Him, and we must return to this idea of love and forgiveness.

First Peter 4:8 says, "Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins." This is such an interesting statement to me by Peter, and really grasp what he is saying here. "Above all," in other words, greater than everything else, more important than everything else is that we keep fervent in our love—for God? No, for one another because love covers a multitude of sins. See it started with God. God's great love, His drive of love came, and it was the forgiveness for me that He gave that He might be able to forgive me of my debt towards Him, my sin towards Him. But we are to keep fervent that love that has been imparted to us in salvation. Christ living in us through salvation is to bring into our lives this same love. And because of this love, because we keep this love fervent that we are having one to another, we find that a multitude of sins are covered. That is how God covered your sins because of His great love, His fervent love towards you. And we are to have that same love in our lives, in our hearts for one another, for our brothers and sisters, for our families, but for all of humanity and the world. Just like God had that love and brought that love, let that love in us grow fervently.

We are in this age when we see that the love of many is growing cold, that love is going away. It is an emotion that we are being robbed of by Satan and his determination to destroy all of humanity. But that love must be in us. And we can't let this age keep going in the direction that it is moving. But instead, we must create in our own hearts, by appropriating God's love and the love of Christ within us, a fervency of love that covers a multitude of sins. God wants to cover and forgive your sin. But He wants you to cover and forgive the sins of others in the same way and through the same methods, which is Christ the sacrifice which has been given.

So Peter learned this lesson. This concept was so great to Peter. He said, "Listen, this is above all things. This is above everything else that you should be doing this." And I think it is interesting that Peter learned this lesson. I don't think it was something that he had by nature. I feel like instead it was actually a problem for him. We see this in Matthew the eighteenth chapter, starting with verse 21. It says, "Then Peter came and said to Him, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves.'"

Now think about this. Here is Jesus telling this parable. And it is for all of us but imagine being Peter where He is literally saying this: "Here's the answer Peter to your question. I have a parable to teach you the answer, and I want you to get it. I want this to impact you and your life." And I want it to impact me and you and our lives going forward. He goes on in verse 24 to say,

"When he had begun to settle [these accounts], one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.' And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt." (Matthew 18:24-27)

What an amazing thing our salvation. "But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him [only] a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe'" (Matthew 18:28). Oh my gosh, this is us in this story He is telling. This is Peter He is talking to. He is wanting to drive this home. So we put ourselves into this parable, knowing what the Master is saying to us. So this slave is saying, choking this fellow slave saying, "Pay back, pay back!" And sometimes I feel that is the way we are to our brother and sister. We have been forgiven, but we find ourselves with our hands around their throat saying, "You're going to pay me back all that you owe me." Verse 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.' But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you

all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?’ And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him.”  
(Matthew 18:29–34)

Think about this. The master had forgiven him all of his debt, let him go totally free—the same thing that happens to us in that beginning stage of our initial salvation. The Lord forgives us of our debt because He receives Yeshua as the full payment of that debt. And yet He is also able to turn and recall that forgiveness. We don't think about that often, but isn't that what this parable is teaching? This lord was able to reinstate the debt that was owed by that slave. And He goes on in verse 35 to say, “My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.” These are the kinds of verses that sometimes we have a hard time with, and we would rather not talk about them that much. But the reality of what is being said here by Christ; this is Christ teaching. It is Christ driving home a point to Peter because of the problem that Peter was having with forgiveness. And He says, “Look, the Father will do the same thing to you.” What same thing? He will reinstate your debt if each of us does not forgive our brother from our heart. Does that seem even possible? We don't find that a lot of times in the doctrine of the Church. We didn't hear this in Sunday school: “The Lord forgave you; He washed away all your sins, but now if you don't forgive, literally all that sin comes back on your head and none of it is forgiven, and you have to repay it. And he turns you over to the torturers.”

This is not a pretty ending to this parable in this story. But this is Christ saying, “My heavenly Father will also do the same to you if each of you does not forgive his brother from his heart.” This parable from the Lord was directed at Peter. It was addressing the obvious problem and issue that Peter was having in relating to others. And it wasn't the only teaching that the Lord gave about this point. One of the greatest places we find this is in the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer is such a key to our whole walk with God and our relationship with Him. And we think what a great prayer it is. We find it in Matthew 6. And I'm going to start halfway through the prayer. Matthew 6:12 says, “And forgive us our debts.” This is us expressing this request like the first servant under the Father. “Forgive us our debts. Please, Father, forgive me of the debt that I owe You. I have no means within myself to repay You. I have no ability to cancel these debts and these sins against—that are against me.” But He taught us to pray, “Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors.” We ask for forgiveness as we are willing to forgive those who have a debt against us. “And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen” (Matthew 6:13). Wonderful prayer.

Verse 14, however, goes on. The Lord actually had a commentary to the prayer. Interesting. When we read that prayer, there is so much to it. It is so alive. There are so many facets that we could spend time. In fact, I have written a book about the different facets of this prayer. But when you look at this presentation of the Lord's Prayer, the Lord comments only on one point. He only emphasizes or reemphasizes one point about this tremendous prayer. In verses 14–15,

it says, "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions." That is blatant. "If you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."

We think about salvation, and we always use the terminology of *grace*. It is by *grace* that we are saved through faith; and that not of ourselves, it is a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8). And it is a gift of God, but it is a gift that God holds the right to take back from you if the requirements or the process of that forgiveness are not met within you. And that process of forgiveness is that we forgive. If we want to be forgiven, we must forgive. And if we don't forgive, then the Father is literally able to take that grace and remove it from us and take it away from us. God help us. We do not want to see that happen. We can't afford to see that happen.

In like manner the Father in turn asks us to forgive the debts that are owed to us by our brother and sister or anybody else who has a debt of sin or just a debt against us, debts that we require. One thing you noticed about this prayer and all through these parables, it doesn't say that this is a requirement for your brother or your sister or somebody to come and ask you for forgiveness. It says you have been forgiven; therefore, you forgive. You don't wait. It is not mandatory that your brother or sister even ask you for this forgiveness. It is all based on the reality that the Father upon your request to Him for forgiveness has forgiven you. And He has given you the Holy Spirit. He has put Christ in your heart and in your life. And because of that request that you made to Him for forgiveness, then the obligation is upon us to forgive our brother and our sister and everyone.

We should walk through life having no debts that we are holding on anyone, no IOUs: "You did this and therefore you owe me. You owe me because you did this to me. You messed up. You offended me. You hurt me. You violated me somehow." Whatever it was, we write out our little IOUs day by day saying, "This brother owes me. This person owes me that." And we live in this state of feeling like people are obligated back to us. We have to remember one thing: Christ came to set us free, and He didn't come to set us free from the debt that we owe God. He came to set us free from all debt, especially the debt that we owe to one another. We must give up these IOUs. We must give up these debts. And we must recognize that Christ is the payment, not just to the Father for our debt. Christ is the payment to me for the debts that others would owe me.

He comes to me and says, "Now, will you give up that debt? I'll trade you that IOU for Me living in your heart." And that is what we see in this process of salvation. We see that this is what is going forward. We see that according to the Lord's Prayer, we ask the Father to forgive the debt of our sin to Him and accept Yeshua, accept Jesus as the sacrifice, as the payment for that debt. But in like manner, the Father in turn asks us to forgive the debts that are owed to us by our brothers and sisters because of their sin against us. And to do that, we must receive Yeshua and His sacrifice on the cross as full payment of every debt that we feel, whether true or not true. If we feel we are owed a debt or an IOU by someone, we must forgive that.

Ephesians 4:32 says, "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." This is a requirement that is placed on us in order to receive forgiveness. Maybe it seems harsh to some people. I don't know, but I feel like there is a heart of love behind the requirement. And that heart of love from the Father is that He knows if we can move in this love and forgiveness, that we are maturing into His likeness and into His nature. That is what He also wants. He doesn't want just to have us forgiven of our sin. He wants us to grow up in all things unto Christ. He wants us to mature into the likeness of His nature. So to me that is the reason He puts on us this requirement of forgiveness because for me to forgive my brother, for me to forgive others, I must reach into that same love that God had that was able to forgive, that was driven to forgive, that received Christ as the payment for all of those debts. As we practice this, as we are able to do this drawing on the impartation of God's love into our lives, we see that we are in a process of maturing into His very nature and likeness, which is love and forgiveness.

If we want to be and are believing to be a force of change into this age which is losing its love, and we see the love of many growing cold, then let us remember a few key points from this. Yeshua (Jesus) has suffered and offered up His life as a sacrifice for us. God has accepted that sacrifice of Yeshua as full and complete payment for our debt of sin to Him. Messiah's sacrifice on the cross was also made as a full and complete payment for our debt of sin or the debt of sin from others to us. That is a full and complete payment to us for the sins of others. Will you now accept the suffering and sacrifice of Christ and honestly cancel all debts and IOUs that you hold against others? Or is His blood not enough to pay your brother's debt? We consider these key points, and we ponder our answer to this question. And as we do, I want you to remember the words of Yeshua's admonition to each one of us. John 14:15, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." John 15:12, "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you." Shalom.