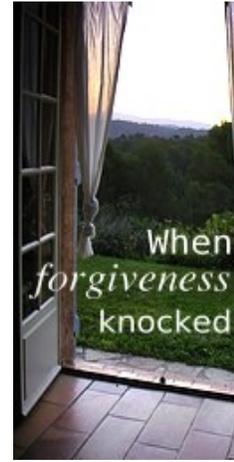


'HEAR'

from Heaven

WEEK 3

*Behold! See! Lo!
if you hear & open
I will come...
(Rev. 3:20)*



"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says".

Revelation 3:22

Luke 23:34 **Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted His raiment, and cast lots.**

"This passage has been one of the most profound ones in my life directly relating to forgiving others who have deeply wounded me. In fact, I would go so far as to say that it was the significant turning point for me a while back in finally having victory and peace in my spirit. It's not that I didn't want to be a forgiver before this. I had in fact, obediently forgiven those I am referring to from my heart many times, but could never seem to be free from the situations as they still haunted my heart and mind. This particular process that I am referring to took 3 years to complete! It was at that point that God revealed a profound truth to me, a perspective of His understanding that gave me the ability to have compassion and finally let go of my grip. Oh, I wish I was so pure that I didn't need to understand... "

Before we look at Luke 23:34, let's peak at Isaiah 53:12. It really parallels the verse in Luke so well...

Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Now, let's look at Luke 23:34.

- **"Father"**

- Notice how Jesus kept His focus? His source of strength was His Father... *"not my will, but Yours"* (Matthew 26:39). This had to have been the climax for Jesus, ranking the most difficult situation He had ever faced on earth. We can learn much from this.

- **"Forgive them"**

- Even Jesus had to forgive. He was bound by the same spiritual laws that we are today (Matthew 6:15). He had to forgive (from His heart) or He would not have been released from all the sin that He now carried for all of us. (1 Peter 2:23-25) He who became sin, could have died! Think of it. If Jesus had quit right here, He would have become a sinner like us... because God cannot forgive us if we do not forgive those sinning against us. He would have forfeited everything for Himself and for us. I can hardly imagine this – it takes my breath away.

"Jesus refused to live at the level of the opposition."

*~Brian Houston,
Hillsong Church,
Australia*

● **“They know not what they do”**

*Here’s the clincher! This is what hit my spirit a while ago and changed my heart’s destiny! Galatians 1:12 says: For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the **revelation** of Jesus Christ. God had been hearing my heart’s cry for a long time. He knew that I wanted forgiveness to be operating, that I had in fact verbally and consciously forgiven those who had betrayed me. But He also knew my limitations and that I could not truly do this on my own. I needed Him to take it to the next level. Some things cannot be accomplished apart from the Spirit of God. The revelation for me that day was this:*

“Some things cannot be accomplished apart from the Spirit of God.”

“We can’t even count the hair on our head, let alone know what tomorrow’s responses will be.”

“I began to see the deception, and that those who had hurt me so deeply, really did not understand the whole picture and probably did not intend the result that happened.”

- **Those who hurt me, could not fully understand what they were doing.** Think about it; can any of us really know the ramifications of our actions, the domino effect of our choices even to generations to come? I don’t think so. We can’t even count the hair on our head, let alone know what tomorrow’s responses will be. I would even dare to say that I don’t even think that Hitler truly understood the devastating consequences his actions would have on souls, cultures, and nations even to this day. The same principle applies for those who give sacrificially and love as Jesus loved... hurt begets hurt and blessing begets blessing.
- **The enemy is a deceiver and tries to manipulate circumstances to bring down the body of Christ.** We must see that it is satan & his cohorts that are behind every negative action taken. Some people work intelligently with Him, but most are deceived into thinking that his ways are truth. Only God is omnipresent ([Psalm 139:7-13](#)) and therefore only God can clearly see the past, present and the future. Even the enemy is limited. Do you think satan would have still prompted so many to kill Jesus if he could see the outcome?
- **You know, the reverse is true for those of us who will not forgive others.** This is a hard but great thing to realize. (remember... the truth sets us free!) When we hold on to unforgiveness, we create a domino effect in our lives and others around us. It is a proven fact that unforgiveness causes stress and in turn will bring us bodily harm. (check out: forgivenessandhealth.org/). This in turn is a burden that we may place on others around us. If our bodies become sick, they need more attention and consideration. But... if our spirits become sick as well, we become more needy and crave attention. This is one way the enemy works and, may I say; quite powerfully! Let’s read the first part of Daniel 7:25. “He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute^[a] the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law... The footnote for the word ‘persecute’ says to ‘Literally wear out’. You know, when I was sunk in the pain, I was a tremendous burden to those around me. I realized (through a loving friend) that I was in fact ‘wearing out the saints’ around me! What a terrible realization for me. I was aghast! ... and broken. (finally!)

Let’s see the love of Jesus by looking at the end of the verse in Luke 23:34. Knowing the beginning from the end, knowing the thoughts of men, Jesus still forgave ... even while he watched those at His feet bargain off His clothes – seemingly totally oblivious to what they were party to in aiding in His death.

“Behold, He stands at our door and knocks.” He already sees what’s on the inside and yet He asks to come in and have a meal with us. He asks to be our friend. He offers to be our Saviour. He brings to the table all that we need to live this life to the max!

Will you open the door today?

THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF FORGIVENESS

exerpt from: forgivenessandhealth.org/

Research has shown that no matter how awful the offense, the ability to forgive is a technique that can be learned. And learning to forgive can...

- lower your blood pressure,
- improve immune system response,
- reduce anxiety and depression,
- improve your sleep,
- improve self-esteem and sense of empowerment,
- help you to have more rewarding relationships, both professionally and personally,
- reduce stress by releasing toxic emotions,
- reduce dysfunctional patterns of behavior,
- increase energy for living and healing,
- improve relationships and social integration,
- increase peace of mind,
- aid peaceful death.

Chronic anger, hurt, guilt, hostility can have a debilitating effect on us. These toxic emotions create an avalanche of stress hormones. For instance, cortisol makes you feel speeded up, tense and overwhelmed. Over the long run, heightened cortisol levels impact the immune system. And recent brain research has demonstrated that excess cortisol levels impair your cognitive ability and damage cells in the memory centers of your brain.

Researchers have also looked at the actual physiological effects associated with granting forgiveness or harboring grudges.

A study of 13,000 men and women showed that anger-prone people were three times as likely to have heart attacks or bypass surgery as less-angry people.

Article 1. **The New Zealand Medical Journal** published a letter from a clinician who did an analysis of 200 case histories that showed that 60% of chronic pain patients showed a strong element of a failure to forgive.

A seven-year study of 2,100 men showed that those who were better at diffusing anger had half as many strokes as those who were angrier. The results showed that "unforgiving thoughts prompted more aversive emotion and significantly higher [forehead muscle tension], skin conductance, heart rate, and blood pressure changes over baseline." These physiological changes persisted even after the participants stopped remembering the hurtful events.

On the other hand, forgiving thoughts were associated with a lower physiological stress response.

These findings might explain why unforgiveness may contribute to disease -- and why forgiveness may enhance health.

At The University of Tennessee, psychology professor Kathleen Lawler studied the effects of anger and hostility on the heart. After 25 years of study, she found the health dangers of anger and resentment so striking that she wondered what people could do to short-circuit the damage. So Dr. Lawler turned her attention to forgiveness.

After measuring adults (ages 28-70) for their baseline blood pressure, heart rate and forehead muscle tension, she asked each person to tell a story of betrayal. She also asked each one to fill out a questionnaire about physical and mental health. Everyone showed increased blood pressure, heart rate and muscle tension as they recounted their story. But for those who had not forgiven their offenders, the increases were 25% higher than for those who had.

Nonforgivers were also more likely to report illnesses and symptoms -- such as colds, infections, fatigue, and headaches -- that had sent them to the doctor in the previous month. The non-forgivers also took 25% more medications than those who had forgiven.

The data keep coming in. And they all point to one conclusion: forgiveness is one of the most important things you can do for your long-term health and quality of life.