Getting Past Your Past: The Challenge of Forgiving Others

*"And whenever you stand praying, **forgive**, if you have anything against anyone, **so that your Father** also who is in heaven **may forgive you** your trespasses."* **Mark 11:25**

I. Introduction

"Forgiveness is the economy of the heart. Forgiveness saves the expense of anger, the cost of hatred, the waste of spirits."---**Hannah Moore**

II. Forgiving Others: Getting the Victory Over What Seems Impossible

1. If you don't choose _____by default you choose life-long _____

*"The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But **for we who are being saved** it is the very power of God."* **I Corinthians 1:18 (NLT)**

*"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, **that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need**."* **Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV)**

"And you know, when you've experienced grace and you feel like you've been forgiven, you're a lot more forgiving of other people. You're a lot more gracious to others."—**Rick Warren**

Key Thought: Whenever a person experiences a snakebite---let's say a rattlesnake---the first thing that medical personnel do is to inject them with an antidote. God has given us the single antidote that can help us live free from bitterness-----***FORGIVENESS!***

2. _____people must then choose to _____

*"...and **forgive us our debts**, as we also have forgiven our debtors."* **Matthew 6:12 (ESV)**

*"If you are **angry**, don't sin by nursing your grudge. Don't let the sun go down with you still angry—get over it quickly. For when you are angry, **you give a mighty foothold to the devil**."* **Ephesians 4:26 (LB)**

*"**Stop being bitter and angry and mad at others.** Don't yell at one another or curse each other or ever be rude. Instead, be kind and merciful, and forgive others, just as God forgave you because of Christ."* **Ephesians 4:31-32 (CEV)**

"Unresolved anger is like a *"gateway drug"* for bitterness and personal internal decay."

*"**Do not repay anyone evil for evil**. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody…Do not be overcome by evil, but **overcome evil with good**."* **Romans 12:17 & 21**

<u>KEY THOUGHT</u>: GOD TELLS US THAT FORGIVING IS FOR US---NOT OUR OFFENDER, AND AS WE FORGIVE HE IS THEN FREED UP TO DEAL WITH THE OFFENDER!

"I know from personal experience how damaging it can be to live with bitterness and unforgiveness. I like to say it's like taking poison and hoping your enemy will die."---**Joyce Meyer**

"We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies."--- **Dr. Martin Luther King**

<u>III. Getting the Facts Straight: Six Things Forgiveness *IS*</u>

- **Cancelling a debt**
- **A decision <u>and</u> a process**
- **A gift for them**
- **Genuinely wanting good for them**
- **Letting God avenge you**
- **Removing the person's control of you**

"I will never allow another man to control my life by allowing him to make me hate him.
---**Booker T. Washington**

<u>IV. The Five Things Biblical Forgiveness *IS NOT*</u>

- **Diminishing the sin**
- **A response to an apology**
- **Forgetting**

<u>Joseph's journey to forgiveness:</u>

<u>MANASSEH</u>---The Lord helped me to forget all my troubles (GEN.41:51)

<u>EPHRAIM</u>---God has made fruitful in the land of my affliction (GEN.41:52)

- **Trust**
- **Reconciliation**

Answer Key:

1. forgiveness------bitterness

2. Forgiven-----forgive