

Unforgiveness

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[0:00] So forgiveness. We're studying feelings and though forgiveness is far more than a feeling, it's not just feelings, it includes feelings, doesn't it?

It includes right feelings about another person, so that's why it finds its way into our study on emotions. The need for a forgiving heart is not a rare occurrence in this world.

We're constantly receiving injuries, mistreatments, injustice, hurts and pains. People sin against us. They wrong us. Even as we said in our memory verse, they insult us and they falsely say all kinds of evil against us.

They slander us. That's the world. And sadly to say, that's the church. You read the epistles and you find that sort of stuff going on in the New Testament churches and teaching concerning such. That forgiveness is an ever-present issue as long as we live with people. Now, if you want to be a hermit and go off and live in a cabin and shut yourself out completely from others, you might escape some of the personal wrongs being done to you.

[1:20] But real relationships can get real messy and therefore require forgiveness of us. So forgiveness can be tough. It can be very difficult.

In fact, I believe that it's impossible apart from the Holy Spirit. Because the demands of the Bible regarding that we forgive another is so great that it's not just that we must say with our lips, I forgive you, but we must forgive from the heart.

Now, that's something I can't conjure up is forgiveness from the heart where my heart has no malice toward the one who has done evil toward me. And we'll see more of what forgiveness demands.

But who of us has never had trouble forgiving another? Well, let's begin with some discussion on trying to get inside of this thing called unforgiveness.

And let's describe it. What does it look like? What does an unforgiving spirit look like? What does it feel like? What does it think like?

[2:34] Let's describe an unforgiving spirit. Someone get the ball rolling this morning. Unforgiving spirit is when bitterness is still crouching at the door.

Okay. Bitterness. Can we agree that where there's not forgiveness, there's bitterness. There's this bitter root. And what else?

Rage. Actual anger and rage against another. Yes. Yeah. Okay. We carry a grudge against another and then we can rehearse that evil action toward us and just keep going over it and over it.

That's a sign of an unforgiving spirit, isn't it? What else? What does it look like? Okay. How so? Why does... I'm...

Okay. Very good. Anyone else? Steve? Okay.

[3:42] Good. We... Whether from us or from another, we want to see that person pay, don't we? We want to see them suffer. And so rather than a joy in their happiness, we're sad when they prosper and we're glad when they suffer.

And we want them to suffer. There's that... That ill will. That malice. Which is another biblical word that's put on it. Where we... We want to see the other person suffer.

Yes. Someone over here. Steve? Good. So we're wanting them to feel something of the way they've pained us.

And that might be to, as Steve said, just to go cold toward someone. It might be to give them the silent treatment. I'm not dealing with you. I'm not talking to you. You're out of my life.

You're on the bad side of me. Or, as Rex says, it might be the other. It might cause us to rage. It might give us a loud mouth toward someone. There's the silent treatment, but there's the harsh treatment, too, of, Okay, you speak bad to me and you speak a sharp word to me.

[4:55] I'm going to give you back a sharp word. So it's a lack of gentleness and that gentle word in response to a harsh word.

Good. What else does it feel like, look like? Raj? Pride. Pride. How so? I deserve better than the treatment. Okay. I deserve better than the treatment you gave me.

Excellent. Jason. Pastor Jason. I feel like it's sort of a sickness. Okay. Okay. Okay. Yeah.

Honestly, you don't feel very close to Jesus. It's very efficient. Okay. So we see that the Lord Jesus and our relationship with him is bound up, and we'll see that in our study this morning.

You can't be bitter toward another and have a good relationship with Jesus. You might think you can, but Jesus says it's impossible. So our relationship to Christ goes sour, distant, forgetful.

[6:01] Anything else? What does it feel like, Jim? What? Good. Instead, what is the way of love, Jim, using that verse of Jesus?

What are we supposed to do? Okay. And do to them as you would want to be done, not as you are done.

Right? So the office of love is to treat others as you would want to be treated. But as Jim is saying, a lack of forgiveness is a very unloving thing because we don't treat them as we'd want to be treated.

We treat them as they treated us. So love is on strike with a lack of forgiveness. Anything else?

How forgiveness or lack of forgiveness thinks?

How it feels? How it works out? What's it? It's evidences, Sue? Hmm. Hmm. Turmoil.

[7:09] Inner turmoil, isn't it? We're not at peace when we have bitterness. So these and perhaps many others that we could describe further.

Describe for us the inner workings and the evidences of an unforgiving spirit. Turn with me to Ephesians 4 now. And I want you to notice in this passage where the apostle talks about putting off certain things and putting on other things.

So we're to put off lying and we're to put on speaking the truth. We're to put off stealing and we're to put on working hard with our hands so that we'll have something to give to others.

And so we have these opposites, you see. Put off the one, put on the other. And it's in that put off, put on context that we come to this discussion of forgiveness.

Eventually we're going to get to verse 32 of Ephesians 4. And you can see that the very last phrase says, forgiving each other just as in Christ God forgave you.

[8:22] That's what we are to put on. But there's something else that we must put off as well as something to be put on. Verse 31 tells us what we've got to put off if we would be forgiving toward others.

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.

So we're to forgive each other and in order to do so we've got to get rid of all bitterness.

Every form of malice. And we're to give ourselves no rest until it's all gone. Did you see how he, how he, he doesn't just say get rid of bitterness. No, he says get rid of all bitterness.

Do you see how, how much is demanded of us in having a forgiving spirit, forgiving from the heart as, as Christ has forgiven us, God has forgiven us for Christ's sake.

[9:35] All bitterness. Not one twinge of ill will toward that other person. And later in verse 31, every form of malice.

He doesn't just tell us to get rid of malice, but by saying every form of malice, he's telling us that these things have many lives, many, many ways of expressing themselves.

And I, I found myself upon reading that saying, you know, we, we would all like to think, and I would like to think of myself as a forgiving person. But we can easily deceive ourselves on this very score.

Bitterness and malice take many forms and they hide out undetected in the dark corners of our hearts. And so I am to be sure that I get rid of all bitterness, every form of malice.

Do I have any bitterness in my heart toward another this morning? Is there any form of ill will towards another? That is the fruit and evidence of an unforgiving heart.

[10:45] And we're not forgiving as we ought to until all of it's gone. So we have much to confess. Even in our forgiving of others, don't we?

Yes, I've forgiven him, but Lord, there's still much that still needs to be confessed as sin. So do you see what I say when, when I say that I believe forgiveness from the heart is, is not only difficult, but it's impossible.

It's impossible. God demands that forgiveness reach to the very emotions of our being. Not just a promise.

It is a promise not to hold something against another. But to forgive them from the heart, as Jesus says in Matthew 18, 35. A heart that is no longer bitter against them.

A heart that no longer wants to see them hurt and suffer. But now a heart that sincerely wants to see them prosper. And praise for such.

[11 : 46] To the extent that we do not forgive from the heart and replace negative emotions toward them with positive ones, to that extent we have not yet forgiven them as we are commanded to.

There is yet sin in our response. There is still something to confess. Something to be sanctified. To be rooted out by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

So we need the Spirit of God to forgive from the heart. Bitterness is a destructive emotion.

Several of you spoke of that. It destroys our own peace and well-being, doesn't it? It destroys relationships. Brian Borgman speaks, quotes a letter from one man whose father had left him when he was two years old.

And he wrote the following. The hatred I carried for my daddy wrecked my first marriage. And it's threatening my second. I am a shell of a person.

[12 : 53] I do not have any close relationships. Now he didn't say, daddy wrecked my first marriage. And my dad leaving when I was two wrecked, is about to wreck my second marriage.

No, he says, the hatred I carried from my dad's leaving when I was two. You see, the sin that comes to us and happens to us is not the cause of our sin.

It's the opportunity and temptation for our sin. And he fell right into it. And it stirred up hatred. And not only did it spill out against his father, but it spilled out against his wife.

And was destroying his present relationship to his second wife. And he says, I do not have any close relationships. It destroys relationships.

It destroys the soul where it reigns. We must get rid of all of it. Now, if there's one lesson that we're learning from this study on emotions, it is that right emotions come from right what?

[14 : 02] Thinking, right? That emotions are to flow from our thoughts. And that's the way God made us. And so, when we have bad emotions, it's often that signal on the dashboard that something's wrong up here.

You're not thinking right, John. You're presently being controlled by lies, by something other than the truth. And so, the challenge to us comes, well, I need to think rightly.

I need to... There are truths that ought to be gripping my mind and my heart in a way that they're not. Or else my emotions would be in line with the truth.

So, we turn to Matthew 18. The parable that Jesus told. That is meant for this very thing. To get us thinking right.

To get us feeling right. And acting right. Toward the one who sins against us. So, Matthew 18.

[15 : 07] It's a familiar parable. And I think we just recently had it read to you. And so, I'm not going to take the time to read it. But beginning in verse 21. We have Peter's question.

The context is church relationships. You can see that verses 15 to 20. Someone sinning against you. What are you to do? So, it's in the context of church relations.

And the reality of one sinning against another. And so, in that context. Peter, verse 21. Came to Jesus and asked. Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me?

Up to seven times? Now, he's wondering. What are the limits of the forgiveness that is demanded of me? Surely, there must be limits.

Peter is assuming that must be true. There's got to be a limit beyond which I don't need to forgive. What is that limit? Is it seven times? Now, the rabbis held that you must forgive three times.

[16 : 09] But not beyond that. So, Peter must have thought he was being generous to the Lord when he suggests seven times. But he's knocked off of his horse when Jesus answers him.

Not seven times. I tell you, not seven times. But seventy-seven times. Or maybe some of your translations. Seven times.

Seventy times. In either case, it's not meant to be a math question. It's not that it's four hundred and ninety times and then no more.

That's the line. No. The number seven, as you know, in Scripture stands for completeness. And seventy-seven or seventy times seven is double completeness or multiple completeness.

In other words, Jesus is saying there's no limit. There's no number that you can count and say, that's it. You've crossed from grace into my wrath. You no longer get forgiveness from me.

[17:14] So, that's what Jesus says to him. And that must have been a blow to Peter and the apostles as he said it. And he immediately adds a parable about the seriousness of forgiveness.

The seriousness of forgiveness. He shows that all of God's true people have been forgiven far more than they will ever forgive others. And therefore, forgiveness from the heart is a true indication that they have received God's forgiveness and that they cherish it, that they highly esteem it, that being forgiven by God is not a small blessing in their life.

It is the blessing. When David says in Psalm 103, Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. What's the first one? Who forgives all your sins. That is high blessing from heaven.

That is the greatest blessing that this God, my maker and judge, has forgiven me all my sins. And so, this is a parable to show that who are these people who have been forgiven by God and who cherish that forgiveness?

Well, there are people who forgive. And to the extent that we still struggle to forgive another, to that extent we have still too high a view of ourselves and we've not been gripped with the mountain of our sin against heaven.

[18:36] The offensiveness and ugliness of our own sins and the amazing grace that has forgiven them all, past, present, and future.

So, there's three acts to the story. Act 1, verses 23 to 27. These servants of a certain master perhaps rented property from him to farm it out and now the deadline for paying the rent has come and the master is calling for the accounts to be settled.

And one servant owes 10,000 talents, perhaps comparable to a billion dollars in today's money. In the financial realm, it's so much that it's incalculable.

It's unbelievable. And yet in the realm of the spiritual realm between God and man, it's an accurate reflection of our sin debt to God.

It is incalculable. It is unbelievable how much we have sinned and offended the holy God such that we're not able to pay.

[19:44] It's not possible to pay it all back. And so the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all he had be sold to repay the debt. Well, would that pay the debt?

I mean, how much is he, his wife and his children, his slaves worth and whatever he had? Is that going to pay this billion dollars? Not on your life. It's not even going to be a tiny fraction of what he owes.

And so the point is that there is punishment as well as this being sold and is part of punishment as well as partial recovery of the money.

But he would never be a free man again because of his debt. And so the servant does the only thing he could do. He is absolutely desperate and falls down on the ground and just begs for mercy. Please just have mercy upon me, he says. And he promises to pay the impossible amount. The master is moved with pity and graciously forgives him all the debt.

[20:52] He does more than what he asks. The man asks for time. And the master says, no, we'll do something better. I've wiped clean your slate. You do not owe me a penny.

Cancels the debt altogether. That is absolute grace, isn't it? Totally unmerited kindness from his master. And it reflects God's character and what he does for his people.

He cancels the debt completely because of what Christ has done in suffering it for them. Act two then opens. And this act is meant to grab and amaze us because if ever this servant should have been melted under mercy and been merciful to others, it was this one who's just come from having received this amazing forgiveness.

But instead he finds a fellow servant who owes him some money, a hundred denarii. Now it was a significant amount in those days, but it was a pittance compared to what he had just been forgiven. And so he grabbed the man by the neck and he threatened his life and threw him into prison, enforcing the very same penalty and punishment that he himself had just been graciously released from.

[22:07] And his fellow servant cries for mercy just as he had done. The very words are found in his mouth. But his cry of mercy meets with none in this forgiven servant. Now the scene is meant to be disturbing.

Jesus is telling the story in such a way that he hopes the people will be all agitated at this. It's not right. How can this be? The one who had been treated with such mercy only shows strict justice to others.

And what does that show? It shows that he has no real appreciation for the forgiveness that has been granted to him. And the fellow servants are deeply disturbed and report it to the master. Act three verses 32 to 35. The master calls him in. And what does he say to him? You wicked servant.

You wicked servant. We must never downplay the sin of an unforgiving heart. It is downright wickedness. That's what Jesus calls it in this parable.

[23 : 16] You wicked, wicked woman. You wicked man. How could you do that? It is wickedness to receive such great mercy, but not to show it to others.

And it shows just how highly he regarded his master's forgiveness. He didn't regard mercy as a wonderful thing. Or he would have showed it to his fellow servant.

Well, the scene is not over. The master has righteous wrath. He not only rebukes him, but he has wrath for spurning the master's mercy by demanding justice for another.

He's sliding God's mercy. Or this man is sliding his master's mercy. He's treating it as a little thing. He's despising it. And spurned mercy stirs up white-hot wrath in the master.

I mean, he's gone way overboard in forgiving all his sin. And it angers him that this man does not appreciate it. I keep referring back to God's view.

[24 : 27] And that is God's view toward the one who does not forgive another. So this master turns him over to the jailers to be tortured until he should pay back all he owed.

Well, how does a man pay back all he owes when he's in prison being tortured? He can't. And the point is, there's no way to repay. It's a life sentence. He'll never be out.

And it all points to eternal punishments. People in hell are not able to pay the debt and then somehow spring out of purgatory and into heaven. No, it's eternal punishment that is here being threatened.

And by demanding justice, the servant cuts himself off from mercy. And then there's the punchline, but there's nothing funny about it at all.

Verse 35, Jesus says, This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.

[25 : 26] No play acting, no saying I forgive you, but holding a grudge inside your heart. No. This is how my Father in heaven will treat you unless you forgive your brother from the heart.

We must not forget this emotional aspect of forgiveness, of forgiving from the heart, the very center of our emotional being, our thoughts, our will.

It includes our affections, our emotions. From there, we must forgive. We must release. We must let go. We must desire the good of the other. Zechariah 7.10 says, In your hearts do not think evil of each other.

It's not enough that we don't speak evil and do evil, but in your hearts, in there where you have affections and emotions and feelings, in there do not think evil of each other.

So God commands the very activities of our hearts No, we can come to a passage like this and just say, Well, I don't need to hear these words because once saved, always saved, and I believe I'm saved, so this really doesn't have anything to say to me.

[26 : 36] It's a serious threat from Jesus Christ to all who claim to be forgiven by God, isn't it?

That's how it comes down to us. That's how it comes down to us from Matthew. He's pointing to the awful fate of every unforgiving person. And Jesus sees no incongruity between a heavenly Father who forgives so freely and a Father, the same Father, who punishes so totally.

He's the one who forgives so great and yet punishes so great. And that's the one and the same Master. That's the one and the same God. And we must not think, Well, how can that be?

Jesus says, That's the way my heavenly Father is. And He knows. He's the eternal Son. So we've not thought biblically about forgiveness if we do not believe the threats against an unforgiving heart. It's not only here. It's found many places. Turn to Mark chapter 11 and verse 25. Mark 11.

[27 : 52] It's a different occasion. It's not just a parallel passage in a different gospel, but it's a different occasion where Jesus is encouraging us to pray with faith and then He comes to verse 25 and says, And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.

Isn't that all-encompassing? As you stand praying, if you hold anything, large, small, against anyone, your enemy, your spouse, whoever it be, whatever it be, if you have anything held against that person, forgive him or else.

You see the implied threat? Why are we to forgive him? We're to forgive him so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. And the implication is clear.

If you don't forgive him, your Father in heaven will not forgive you your sins. Now, there's something interesting here about the way that Jesus is found bringing together these two themes of forgiveness and prayer.

We see it here. When you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive. So, in the context of prayer, we need to be forgiving.

[29 : 29] Forgiveness and prayer are mentioned side by side. It says to us that our prayer times are to be times that move us to forgive others. How do you come before the Almighty God, your Heavenly Father, in prayer?

How do you approach Him? Well, never has anything less than a sinner who needs forgiveness through the blood of Jesus.

I come in Jesus' name. I come and ask you to forgive my sins for Jesus' sake. We never come to God as anything less than sinners.

We're more than sinners. We're saved. We're children and all the rest. But we're never less than sinners who need to be forgiven. Do you come before God that way in prayer? If so, then as you stand praying, if you hold anything against another, forgive Him.

Because you're coming to get forgiveness. forgiveness. It's at the throne of grace that we are to receive mercy and grace for our sins. That's why we come.

[30 : 35] One of the reasons we come. And so, the Lord gives a prayer to His disciples. When you pray, pray like this. And what is one of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer?

Do you know when you pray the Lord's Prayer, you say to God, God, forgive me like I forgive others? That's what you're asking Him when you come and pray the Lord's Prayer.

Forgive us our debts as we forgive those who sin against us. Well, what if He did that?

What if He only forgave the way that I forgive others? Even as I'm asking Him to do as I pray. And it's in that context of prayer, you see, that we not only seek forgiveness for ourselves, but that forgiveness towards others abounds and overflows.

Because when I've tasted forgiveness, it does something to that begrudging, revengeful, unloving heart. It melts it. And I see, I have nothing over my brother that sinned against me.

[31 : 46] And in fact, I've sinned more against God in one day than He could ever sin against me in my lifetime. So I have nothing to hold against another.

It's prayer, though. It's in the context. Do you see why it's important that we pray often? And that when we pray, we pray our way through the Lord's Prayer or we at least confess our sins?

Because it's in the context of confessing our sins and finding sweet forgiveness from the Savior that we'll have our hearts washed and cleansed from bitterness so that we can forgive others.

So, the times between our prayers, the gaps between our prayers of confession are dangerous times in my life. When I'm not real conscious, perhaps, about my need for forgiveness from my Master in Heaven.

And I'm not safe when I've forgotten that. I'm not safe to you. I'm not safe to be around people because I'll lash out and I'll be bitter and I'll hold grudges and I'll give a silent treatment and I'll do all those things that you said.

[32 : 59] So, it's interesting. Jesus brings us back to prayer and the seeking of forgiveness and it's in that context of the Lord's Prayer that He goes on to say in Matthew 6, 14 and 15, For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you.

But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. That's why He said, you may think you have a good relationship with your Father in Heaven, but that is just a lie.

It's just a hypocritical lie if you're having bitterness towards another. So, He comes to do us good by this parable to warn us of the severity of God against the unforgiving.

He quotes Don Carson, Those who are forgiven must forgive lest they show themselves incapable of receiving forgiveness. And again, from Craig Blomberg, Only those who appropriate God's forgiveness by a life of forgiving others shows that they have genuinely accepted His pardon.

So, if people cannot forgive others, it could just be showing that they are no true disciples of Christ and therefore lack the power of the grace of forgiveness.

[34 : 25] They don't have the power. They don't have the Holy Spirit within to enable them to do the impossible, to forgive others from the heart. Those who freely receive, freely give. So, true believers will not refuse to forgive.

Oh, yes, they will for a time, but they will repent of that and they will find mercy from God for their unforgiving heart and they will extend that to those who have sinned against them.

And so, he says, genuine believers may and do struggle emotionally to forgive. The pain, the wounds, the hurt can be so great that just when we think we have forgiven another, a flood of emotions overwhelm us and renew the struggle to forgive from the heart.

I've said I forgive you, but then wounds seem fresh and pain is felt all over again. Feelings of anger, bitterness, and revenge can sweep over us as emotional blockades to forgiveness.

forgiveness. Now, right thoughts feed right emotions, then.

[35 : 33] We must reject wrong thoughts and replace them with the truth of God's word. We need to be clear on what biblical forgiveness is not. And Borgman spends some time, I've just got to read these very quickly, false views about forgiveness.

Sometimes God's people feel guilty of not having forgiven another when they shouldn't feel guilty.

And he mentions these. Forgiveness does not mean that we treat evil deeds as if they were good.

Sin is sin and we have to call it sin. So, just because you're calling it sin and you're viewing it as evil doesn't mean that you haven't forgiven the person. Secondly, forgiveness does not mean that there cannot be righteous anger at the wrong done and that there will be pain caused by the sin of others.

If you still hurt because of what someone has done, that doesn't necessarily mean you haven't forgiven them. People do things that hurt deeply. And the Bible recognizes that fact.

To be hurt is not necessarily the same. It may be something that you're hiding bitterness behind, but it's not necessarily. Hurt is hurt. That's different from a bitter spirit.

[36 : 46] Forgiveness does not look the same when the offender has not repented. If someone comes and says, will you forgive me my sin against you?

I see it. I've been wrong. And you can say, yes, I forgive you. There is this whole, that's the way it's supposed to work. And there's this whole closure to the situation. But if someone never comes and confesses, it may not feel exactly the same and it may not look exactly the same as it would if they did come and confess.

But it never gives you the right to hold animosity in your heart toward them. If you hold anything against anyone, forgive him. So there's never a reason to hold animosity.

But it won't be the same if the person doesn't come and ask forgiveness. It just won't have that closure to it on their part. But it should be closed as far as your part.

You release them. You no longer hold it against them. How to break the emotional blockade of bitterness?

[37 : 55] First of all, take the warning seriously. The greatest risk of an unforgiving spirit is the loss of heaven. And if we ever think that we as Christians don't need the threats of Jesus, then we're more than biblical Christians because he gives us these threats to say, wake up, John.

You're not forgiven here if you're not forgiving down there. I remember a sister sharing with me recently that the very thing that helped her to forgive another was this very point in the words of Jesus.

She said, I saw, I couldn't expect God to forgive me if I didn't forgive another. And God gave grace to her to forgive. And God used that warning. Second, keep the scales of sin in perspective.

Borgmans says, keep reminding yourself you've been forgiven by God far more than anyone's ever sinned against you. So keep the scales out.

Keep them out and ready to use when someone sins against you. Put it on one side and then put your sins against God on the other. And if it doesn't do that, then you need to keep praying.

[39 : 14] Search me, O God, and show me my heart. But you see, when it does that, it gets us thinking right and it gets us feeling right again. I've received mercy.

This brother needs mercy from me. So keep the scales of sin in perspective. bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.

Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And when we're no longer amazed at God's forgiveness of us, and that's not high on our priority of the benefits we receive from God, then we're dangerous.

So keep the scales out and ready and glory in the cross that has washed you whiter than snow. And then, trust in God's sovereignty, number three.

Trust in God's sovereignty. You remember how Joseph's brothers mistreated Joseph? And when their father died, they came to Joseph and said, oh, before our father died, he wanted you to make sure you treat us right and not to treat us with bitterness.

[40:15] You see, they were afraid that Joseph would be bitter toward them. Was Joseph bitter toward them? No. And he says to them, no, what you meant for evil, God meant for good.

To bring about the salvation of many. And so, how can I be bitter? I have a God who's sovereign. He wasn't sleeping on his watch when you sold me into slavery.

He wasn't sleeping when I got falsely accused by Potiphar's and all the rest. That God was sovereign. You know, he could have stopped that from, it would have been easy for God to have stopped that from happening.

He didn't. It was part of his plan. And he means to do me good and him glory in this plan. And so, if you see the sovereign hand in God, of God, in the wrongs done to you, that will help free you from a bitter spirit against the offender.

God has used this person to bring some good to me. It feels bad, it is bad, and all the rest, but God means to use it for good in my life. Romans 8, 28 was never suspended in your case, no matter how much wrong was done to you.

[41:21] Let that free you from bitterness. And lastly, trust in God's justice. If those who have sinned against us are in Christ, then their sins have been fully punished at the cross of Christ.

So don't you want revenge? Don't you think, I've got to take it into my hand to pay them back? God has fully punished his own son for that sin. Then magnify the cross and forgive your brother freely. Magnify the work of Christ and forgive them of all. But you say, well, what if they aren't a Christian? Well, God will deal with them in perfect justice.

He will mete out full punishment in hell. So either on the cross or in hell, all wrongs will be dealt with by God so we can leave the one who has hurt us to Him.

Isn't that what he tells us in Romans 12? Don't take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath. For it is written, it is mine to avenge, I will repay, says the Lord. On the contrary, if your enemy's hungry, then feed him.

[42:29] If he's thirsty, give him to drink. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Do you see, ultimately, unforgiveness is a matter of unbelief.

I really don't believe the threats of Jesus. I really think that I can hold a grudge against my brother and still be forgiven by God. It's unbelief.

You don't believe Jesus' words. Or it's unbelief that God's sovereign and He has purposes for allowing that into my life.

I don't believe it. Or I don't believe that He's just and He can be trusted to handle the matter without me intervening. Or I don't believe God's grace is so wonderful that He has forgiven me in Christ, that He would punish Christ instead of me.

I don't believe His grace is powerful enough to enable me to forgive. Well, these truths of the Bible and the power of the Spirit come and enable us to release the one who has sinned against us and have no ill will against them.

[43:40] May the Lord teach us and may not only teach our heads but our hearts so that from the heart we can more and more forgive even as God in Christ and for Christ's sake has forgiven us.

Well, our time is gone. May the Lord help us.