

Week 51

12/15/10

Betty: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! It's "Wednesdays with Beth" and I always look forward to that. I'm Betty Robison and this is James.

James: I just -- I love for Betty to open the program; that way she for sure says something because you never know.

Betty: I've done my part now, you go! [Chuckling]

James: I watch you... when she is going to do the open I'm watching to see if she really is.

Betty: You never know; do you?

James: No, I appreciate it. I thank you. We're so glad we get to share this time with you. By the way, thank you for your encouragement. Many of you have been so kind and so gracious to let Betty and me know that you like us. Some of you can say, "We love you! We love what we get to do together because we get to help people all over the world." As a matter of fact, we're going to show you how you can literally not only change someone's life with the love of God but save their life because of the love of God. I don't think you want to miss that. But Beth is going to talk about "Living Forgiving." And I need to make this real clear -- I think Jesus made it very, very clear because he said, "If you don't forgive you're going to be turned over to tormenters." In other words, you'll be tormented. So if you want to live you forgive because if you're not forgiving, you're at best existing; you're not really living. Let's listen to Beth Moore's teaching.

Begin video clip:

Beth: I want you to turn with me to Matthew chapter 6. I want to say to you as we're turning to these verses that we are turning to this portion of scripture having talked about all of the things we have: homicides, crimes, abuses, betrayals, rejections, maybe abandonment -- there is unfortunately, no end to the list so I'm telling you that I come to you with the courage, with some fear and trepidation, but the courage to tell you

that these verses still fit and I say this to you with just trembling in my soul, these verses still fit in every single one of those categories.

In our last series we've been talking about offenses; we're not talking about offenses here. We're talking about something deeper than that. We're talking about the kind of offense that devastates. I want you to see these verses out of Matthew chapter 6. I'd like to read verses 9 through 15; very, very familiar passages. This is Christ talking to his disciples.

9 "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, **10** your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

This is the most common prayer of the church and rightly it should be. But let me tell you what we're risking any time we've got this kind of familiarity that we can just say something by rote and not get what it is saying. And what it is about to say is huge! It says in verse 11:

11 Give us today our daily bread.

Meet my daily needs. Not tomorrow's need today, but today's need today. And it says in verse 12:

12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Listen, in the kind of context we're talking about today, this almost seems cruel. That we'd have guts enough to bring up this passage in terms of what we've just been talking about. But listen, either it is going to speak a word to us or it is not true. The fact that it is laying there on the page of scripture, God-breathed tells us that it is true.

I don't know about you but I need to know what this means because that bothers me. Would anybody else have guts enough to say that? After what some of us have been through?

I'm going to tell you something that bothers me. What I need you to know is it is not negating -- somebody needs to stay with me here, let's have a doctrinal moment here -- it is not negating the power of the cross. All of our sins past, present, and future went to the cross of Christ with him. They've all been nailed to the cross and he has dealt with every single one of them. All of them are forgiven when we place our trust in him as our personal savior so it is not negating any of that.

But what we're going to learn is that the word that is being used for forgiveness here, part of it means, I don't want to give away too much of it now because we're going toward it a little bit later in our series but part of it means to hold onto something. What God is saying to us, he is using the same terminology back.

He said, "I'm going to tell you what. It is so important to me to force the issue of forgiveness that what I'm going to tell you is this, as long as you're hanging onto that, I'm going to hang onto this."

In other words, "That's still an issue for you -- well, this is still an issue for me. So I'm not going to release you out from under that until you release that person out from under that. Why? So I can coax you into making a very important move."

Does that making sense to anybody? It doesn't mean that it wasn't paid for on the cross of Christ. It means he's going to hang onto it -- he is going to hang onto it. It will remain an issue as long as the other remains an issue. It's just got a hold button flashing on it. Anybody getting that picture with me? So keep that in mind.

So how on earth -- I want to talk in practical terms here through this series because we need some relief and we don't just need some relief, girlfriend and my brother that I had the opportunity to serve today, we need some release -- we need some release. How are we going to get that? How in the world do we do this?

How many lessons on forgiveness, if you've been in Christian circles for long, how many have you heard? How many have you heard? Have we done it? Sometimes do we even dread the pastor bringing it up because we think, "Not that again!" And the reason why we think that is because, "You know what? I'm not going to! I shouldn't have to! And if you had any idea what I've been through!"

Now what am I saying? Each hurt has its own bitterness. "You don't have any idea. You're not me going through that. I don't have to. I don't want to hear it." This is the very reason why some people don't go to church.

What we've got to understand is if we're going to forgive, there are a couple of things that we've got to get through our heads and the first one is this: we have got to understand that forgiveness is for us -- forgiveness is for us.

Here is what we're doing through this series. If you've been a part of our Wednesday programs, I hope you're a part of the daily programs. If you've been part of the

Wednesdays for the last couple of years, I have from time to time, every couple of messages, I will bring up the topic of forgiveness because it is so important.

But here is what occurred to me this time, I thought, "Oh, no! I'm not going to bring up the topic. I'm not going to bring it up as part of another message -- we're going to camp on this baby!" Anybody know what a saying?

So it could be little bits and pieces we've hit on before. Oh, no, we're not going to hit on a bit and piece. We need a work -- we need something to happen. We need to be able to say in a year, "You know what? That season when God spoke that word to me finally -- finally, finally I let him do it."

That's what I'm praying for. That's what I want to happen. I want you to see that understanding forgiveness is for us is absolutely critical and it is why God insists. He insists because he knows if we're going to be free, we have got to have it.

Listen, unforgiveness is always -- always an automatic stronghold. You never even have to wonder if you have a stronghold or area of captivity if you've got unforgiveness in your life. I promise you, you flat do. It is itself a stronghold.

Now let's remember together what a stronghold is. In Second Corinthians 10:3-5 as it begins to describe a stronghold, it talks about any exalted thought process. All it takes to qualify as a stronghold is that I become mentally hung up with it where I play, replay, replay, replay, replay over and over and over and over again that it is a hang-up to me. That's all it takes. Unforgiveness is a hang-up every single time. It has become an obsessive way of thinking, an exalted way of thinking and we need freedom from it.

When God pushes the envelope and says, I tell you what -- I tell you what, I'm going to put you in the position where you've got to consider forgiving. And I'm willing to do the hard thing to get you to meet me on this page. I believe that's exactly what God is telling us. It is for us.

Now listen, I saw something this time that I have never grabbed onto before. I love that about the study of scripture. Stare back on your page in Matthew chapter six and I want you to notice something.

12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Then if you'll glance down at verse 14 if you're looking at an N.I.V. and if you're thinking, why in the world don't they have that benediction and that doxology there that some of the other versions have? Because in some of the earliest manuscripts there is just a -- different translators believe that different ones were the inspired ones, and that the oldest manuscripts did not have it put there. So it clears up a little confusion for people who care. If you don't care, move on! Move on! I'm glad you don't. But notice, verse 12 is about forgiveness. Verse 13 says these words, I've prayed these words for my family so many times -- I can't tell you. I've named them, starting with my husband all the way down through my daughters, my son-in-law, myself.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! It was the first time I realized that that verse that I say continually -- and it really is a word that means do not abandon me to temptation, just let me be overtaken by it. Not that he appoints us to it but don't let me be overtaken by it.

Now listen carefully, it was the first time it occurred to me, it is sandwiched between two verses and two segments on forgiveness. What does that mean? When they're sandwiched between it, it is just one, it is in context.

Somebody say it is in context.

Audience: It is in context.

Beth: It is in context! I want to go back and look at that. Remember, what is our first point? What have we got to understand? I want you to say it out to me. We've got to understand that forgiveness is what? It is for us! It is for us. How could you tell it in this particular context?

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

I want you to camp on that, lead us not into temptation because here is what I've got to tell you. This is a fresh word to me. I don't know, you might have heard it just yesterday from somebody else but this is totally fresh to me. There is nothing that has the capacity to lead us into greater temptation than unforgiveness -- unforgiveness.

Listen, when we think we are unforgiven or when we won't forgive; either one of those will catapult us into a life of severe temptation, things like anger and

entitlement. Something devastating can happen to us. We can have a spouse betray us and leave us for someone else and we can get an idea of entitlement in our soul that says, "You know, I can just sleep with who I want to. I can do anything I want to. My kids are going to have to deal with it. I've got needs here."

You hear what I'm talking about? We've been wronged so how are we going to react to it? Every time we've been wronged, we are set up with a greater capacity to fall to temptation. Is that making sense to anybody? -- That entitlement. "I get this! I get to do this after all I've been through." -- Entitled to be mean.

We can go through a hardship and just think, "People are just going to have to deal with it. It is just how I am. After what I've been through, I'd like to see them do it."

See what I'm talking about? -- Anger, all these deep kind of hurts when offenses come to us of a devastating matter, we will never be led more strongly into temptation than when we refuse to forgive somebody.

I want to show you something and let me tell you, I really thought this through. I do not come to you lightly. I don't come talking about a topic this serious to you lightly. This is big!

I am suggesting to you, based on the authority of the Word of God, that no matter what depth of hurt you've been through, it is time to forgive. It is gutsy. So this passage we're about to look at, whoa! It has the capability of making somebody go way left and I'm going to ask you, try to stay in the center with me. But turn with me to Matthew chapter 18.

I have lived the truth of these passages. So I'm just going to ask the Holy Spirit to protect our minds and just show us truth. Look at the words of Christ. It says that he was asked by his disciples, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And I want to read verses two through -- I believe I'll go to six.

2 He called a little child and had him stand among them. **3** And he said: "I tell you the truth, --

He's telling us the truth! Somebody say, he tells us the truth.

3 -- unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

4 Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 "And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. **6** But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

That is rough! And let me say to somebody before they think something that is not true, God's forgiveness extends to all no matter what. There is somebody listening today that's been on the other side of this situation and has abused and I want you to know God's grace as freely flows to you as it flows to any victim.

But I want you to see these verses. It says in verse seven, "Whoa to the world because of the things that causes people to sin."

That word is a word that in some of your versions is translated "offense." -- These kinds of deep offenses.

In other words, because of the nature of this world system and because of the activity of the evil one and the darkness that surrounds the system of the world, these kinds of things will happen.

But he said you need to know, "Whoa be unto them! Whoa be unto them!" Let me back up to something that I want you to see. Here is what I wanted to tread lightly on. Notice that it says:

6 But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin --

To sin -- dude! I can tell you exactly what that means because I have experienced it. I told you I have no idea the first time I was abused -- no idea. But I'll tell you this, when I began to grow up and all of the dysfunction that I did and I carried all of that with me, is anybody relating to what I'm saying? Until I dealt with it openly before God and began to work with him through forgiveness, all in the world it did was cause me to sin.

Now here's the thing, when I came to repent of it and when I began to see how much I had reacted in my own sin, I cannot tell you how much capacity you have for all manner of sexual dysfunction when you have had the kind of background that I have.

It doesn't make it my perpetrator's sin. My sin is my sin; he cannot repent for me. But I will tell you this, because of some of the hurts that happened to me, it made it a whole lot easier to take some of the paths that I did -- some of the self-destructive paths that I did. It is not an excuse, it is just a reality.

Anybody know what I'm talking about? -- Because things can happen to you that can set you up for an overwhelming capacity to sin. Is that fair? I know that's hard -- but is that fair?

It is exactly what the Word of God is saying. I have lived it. I know this is true because it has been my personal experience. That's why the Word of God says, you forgive in the context of, lead us not into temptation -- lead us not into temptation.

Because I'm going to tell you, if you don't deal with it, not only am I going to be led into temptation, I'm going to go barreling into a pit of sin. Then it is no longer that I was only a victim, then I began whole scale stupidity. Can anybody but me go to that place? Anybody know what I'm talking about?

It says then, glancing back at Matthew chapter six, it says then, not only lead us into temptation but in that same context, sandwiched in-between two portions of that prayer, talking about how we must forgive others, it also says, lead us not into temptation but deliver us from what?

Audience: From evil.

Beth: Deliver us from evil or deliver us from the evil one.

Listen, nothing has a greater capacity to hold us captive to the enemy than unforgiveness. Listen, that is his job! He has no greater agenda than that. So we are automatically in his grip, not infiltrated by him.

If we're in Christ, we're sealed until the day of our redemption. We are told that two different times in the book of Ephesians. But he can play havoc in our lives.

I want you to hear -- you just sit tight but I want to read you a couple of verses out of Second Corinthians 2:10 and 11.

10 If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, **11** in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

Let me tell you, that has really spoken to me and it is something we're going to get into in a moment. But when I began to see what I could forgive in the sight of Christ, so there would be something I could lay out before him on the altar in the sight of Christ

and for the sake, not only for myself but the people that I live around that my bitterness affects.

Hebrews chapter 12 tells us, make sure no one misses the grace of God by which many are defiled, and I'm paraphrasing that.

But let me tell you something, our bitterness is a gift that just keeps on giving. We will never keep bitterness to ourselves; that means we will never keep unforgiveness to ourselves. It will have an impact on others.

What it goes onto say is this, this is what is so profound.

10 And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, **11** in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

Every time we refuse to forgive, Satan will outwit us and he will have a scheme. There is something he is after and unforgiveness is the path he will take to get us where he wants us.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: When Paul complimented the Corinthian church because they had forgiven someone who had actually really stepped over the line, he made it clear that we're not ignorant of Satan's schemes because once he gets us in that place, his scheme then is to take us captive and he will when we get into unforgiveness. Betty, I want to share with our viewers something that every time you and I reflect on it and see it, it moves us because we have 11 grandchildren and nine of them are teenagers; one is out of the teens on the upper end of teens, in her 20s; the other one is not quite a teen. But our oldest grandson won a national championship in hockey with his team, as the goalie, and rather than go into the pro's and even going off to play on a college scholarship, he went to the mission field. I want you to hear, I really believe God's heart in that teenaged grandson in his prayer. Listen to him and watch.

On the mission field:

Luke: Father God, I come to you right now and I ask you to perform a miracle in this child, God. Please stop its suffering, Jesus. God I ask you to put your hand on this child and heal him.

Ruth: Lord Jesus, you've made this child. You gave this child life. We ask that you will touch this body. Lord, give it the nutrition that it needs.

Peter: We pray for a miracle for, Lord, she needs food but she needs your miraculous touch too. In the name of Jesus.

Jeanne: Lord, I just ask you to let the food we give him be a nourishment to his body and quickly restore him, in Jesus name.

James: I pray, from the bottom of my heart, that you would raise them up as a great shining light in a country so desperately in need. God, bless them, Bless this hospital. Bless these nurses. And God, bless these boys. Raise them up in Jesus' name.

Beth: Lord, I pray that you would move in this village and that you would move through us, God. We praise you, Lord. We thank you that you are the God who knows, you are the God who heals and you are the God who provides. Use us, Lord, as your instruments. Use us as your servants. In Jesus' name, amen.

End of clip

In the studio:

James: You heard the prayers of our grandson, you heard Beth Moore, you heard Billy Graham's daughter, Ruth praying. Our grandson's prayer for a child they thought would not live another day or two was saved. We actually have a picture of that little boy saved because somebody like you said, "I'll get food for that child and others." All of the others we don't know. We have seen miracles happen. We've seen the lives saved. It's not like we're looking for a cure, we know what it is, it is just food, it is nourishment. That's why we have the mission feeding emphasis. And right now we're in the last week, Betty, this is -- we need a miracle. We feel the impact of people who feel financial strain. We know there is a world food crisis and shortage in many areas and we sense that and we feel it. And right now I can tell you in the last days, right now this last week, we need a miracle response. We need the greatest response we've ever experienced in our mission feeding. Now we do have this miracle, we have a matching gift challenge that anything you give today will be doubled. If you gave \$1,000 it will become \$2,000; if you gave \$5,000 it will become \$10,000. It is possible for someone to do that. Let me show you what we can do. \$1,000 enables us to feed 100 children for the next months to stabilize their diet, get them on their feet, literally turn it around in a matter of months and give them a future, give them a hope; that will be doubled to 200. \$30, \$50, \$100 -- we can feed three, five, or ten children for the next

months. If you would help us -- by the way, don't think that \$30 gift is meager and not important. How important is it for three children? It will now become six children; it will be doubled because someone is going to match your gift. But we need to hear from you. Would you put your arms around three children or five children? Let me tell you this, I'll always ask you to help as many as you can. If you can help ten children, do it! But if it is three, please do it. We've asked God to raise up people who would care enough to do just what our friends have done, they'll match what you give. They know it works. Some of them have been and seen firsthand what happened, they wanted to see it and after seeing this, they said, we'll do anything to save these people's lives. What you're doing works in mission feeding. Would you make that call? Please do it. Right now, go to the phone, get your bankcard, use it like a check or write a check, make it to *LIFE* because that's precisely what you're giving. LifeToday.org, if you want to make the gift online. Many people are doing that now and we thank you for that. But if you write a check and plan to mail it, please do it, mail it today but call us and tell us you're putting it in the mail because we need to hear from you this last week. We have some very special gifts for you to bless you as you help us share life. We want to bless your life as you help us give life to others. Thank you so much for making that call. Thanks for the gift.

Begin video clip:

Announcer: At this very moment children are drawing their last breath, struggling to stay alive due to a lack of food. Today you can help stop the cycle of death... you can help save a life! Life's mission feeding teams are in place right now ready to answer the hunger cries of hundreds of thousands of children throughout remote areas of Angola, Mozambique, and Sudan. With previous food reserves gone, we desperately need to replenish our supplies for the feeding programs *immediately*! As an answer to prayer, a group of *LIFE's* friends has set a \$750,000 matching challenge for mission feeding. This means your gift today can have a double impact! \$30 to help feed three children will be doubled to impact six children! \$50 to help feed five children will be doubled to help save ten children! And \$100 for 10 children will be doubled to help feed and minister to 20 children! With your gift of any amount we'll send you the "Living Free" audio series and companion study guide. With your double-impact gift of \$100 or more to help save the lives of 20 children, you may request the "Living Free" series on both audio and video. Finally, please consider a double-impact gift of \$1,000 or more to help save the lives of 200 children, and you may also request the beautiful "New Creation" bronze sculpture, as well as "The Butterfly Effect" by bestselling author Andy Andrews. This is the last week! Please call, write, or make your gift online!

End of clip

In the studio:

James: I do want to remind you, this is the last week and I've got to be very honest with you, we need a miracle support. We've got a miracle matching gift; whatever you give will be doubled. I'm holding the bronze butterfly "New Creation" but we need a miraculous work of God. We're asking you to have "The Butterfly Effect," we're giving that book to start in motion love that saves lives by the thousands, and we really will but we need your help. If you can help us care for 100 children or several hundred, whatever you can do it will be doubled but we really need to hear from you this last week. Please! Father, I pray every person watching will make a gift today to help save lives. In Jesus' name. Thank you for helping us! Thanks for watching *LIFE Today*!

Announcer: James and Betty Robison share their personal journey and keys to an exciting and fulfilling marriage in their brand-new book, "Living in Love." James and Betty reveal insights into communication, how to face challenges and overcome failure to enjoy marriage as God intended. "Living in Love" is available wherever books are sold or order today at [Living InLoveToday.com](http://LivingInLoveToday.com).

Announcer: Tomorrow, her son committed murder. His son was paralyzed in a car accident. Together they give new insights in escaping the prison of our circumstances.