

DAY 2 — FRIDAY, 3 APRIL 2026

SESSION 4: FORGIVENESS THAT FREES

TIME: 8:00 PM – 9:00 PM



Uprooting Bitterness, Planting Mercy

Forgiveness is not a feeling we wait for; it is a decision to release a debt because our own debt has been cancelled.

1. The Math of Mercy: Calculating the Debt.

We often want to limit our forgiveness to those who "deserve" it or to a specific number of times.

Bitterness is a root.

Unforgiveness is a root.

Mercy is also a root.

Whatever root you allow to grow will determine the fruit you produce.

Matthew 18:21-22

Peter asks if seven times is enough. Jesus answers with "seventy times seven"—meaning forgiveness must be infinite, not mathematical.

The Unpayable Debt

· The servant owed 10,000 talents—an impossible amount.
· This represents our sin before God.

Romans 3:23.



David in Psalm 51 "Against You only have I sinned."

The King's Compassion

- "The master took pity... cancelled the debt."
- Forgiveness is not earned; it is given.

Titus 3:5.

The Servant's Cruelty

- He grabs a fellow servant and demands repayment.
- He who was forgiven much refused to forgive little.

The King's Judgment

- The unforgiving servant is handed over to tormentors.
- Bitterness is torment.
- Unforgiveness is a prison.

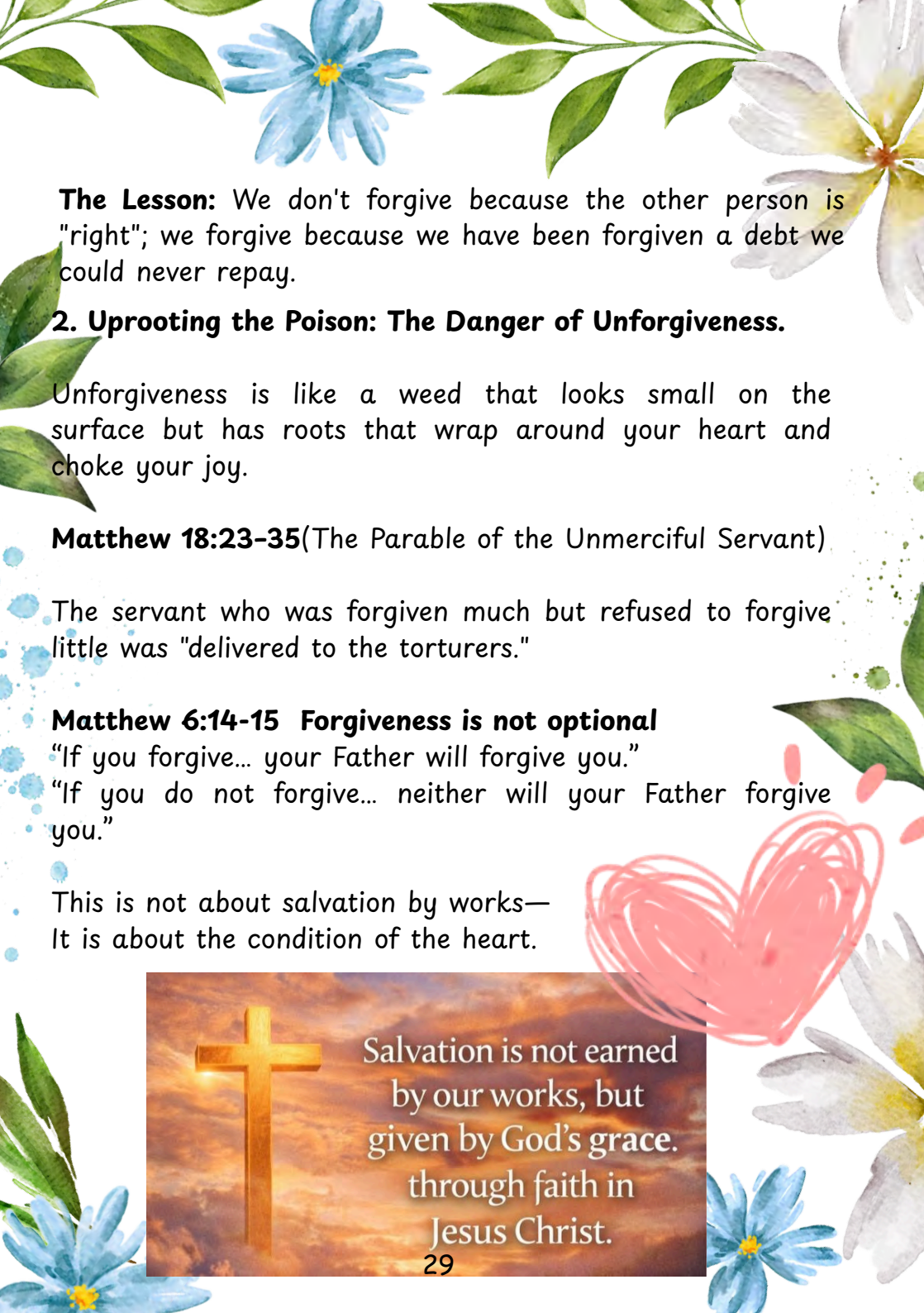
Psalm 103:10-12

God does not treat us as our sins deserve.

The "Unpayable" Bill.

Imagine you are £10 million in debt. You have no way to pay it. The bank calls and says, "The owner of the bank has decided to pay it all for you. You owe £0." Then, on your way home, a friend who owes you £20 for lunch says they can't pay you back yet. If you grab them by the throat and demand the £20, you have forgotten the £10 million grace you just received.





The Lesson: We don't forgive because the other person is "right"; we forgive because we have been forgiven a debt we could never repay.

2. Uprooting the Poison: The Danger of Unforgiveness.

Unforgiveness is like a weed that looks small on the surface but has roots that wrap around your heart and choke your joy.

Matthew 18:23-35(The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant)

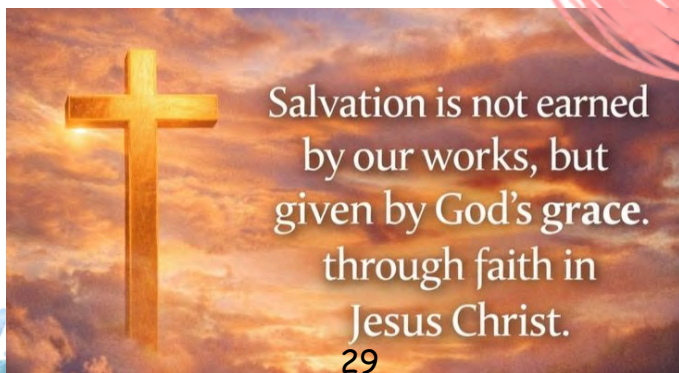
The servant who was forgiven much but refused to forgive little was "delivered to the torturers."

Matthew 6:14-15 **Forgiveness is not optional**

"If you forgive... your Father will forgive you."

"If you do not forgive... neither will your Father forgive you."

This is not about salvation by works—
It is about the condition of the heart.



If you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive your trespasses.

Unforgiveness blocks fellowship

- It blocks prayer.
- It blocks peace.
- It blocks spiritual growth.



Mark 11:25 — forgive before you pray.

Forgiveness is the evidence of a transformed heart

- A forgiven heart forgives.
- A merciful heart shows mercy.

The "Prison of Bitterness."

Corrie ten Boom, a Holocaust survivor, once met a former guard from the concentration camp where her sister died. He asked for her forgiveness. She felt cold and paralyzed. She knew she couldn't do it on her own. She prayed, "Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me Your forgiveness." As she took his hand, she felt a healing chemical-like warmth flow through her.

The Lesson: Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of the prison you are sitting in. As long as you hate, the offender is living rent-free in your head.

3. Planting the New Soil: Putting Away the Old.

To plant mercy, we must first clear the ground of the toxic waste left by bitterness.

Ephesians 4:31-32

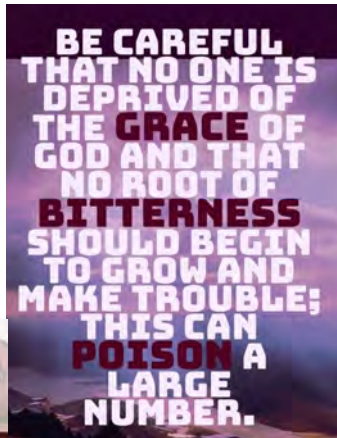
"Get rid of all bitterness... Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

Paul lists the weeds that choke spiritual life:

- Bitterness
- Wrath
- Anger
- Clamour
- Slander
- Malice

These are rooted in unforgiveness.

"Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord."



A. Bitterness is a root that grows silently

- — "a root of bitterness" defiles many.
- Bitterness spreads into relationships, families, churches.



B. Bitterness distorts perception

- You see people through the lens of pain.
- You interpret actions through suspicion.

C. Bitterness destroys spiritual sensitivity

- You cannot hear God clearly when your heart is hard.

Planting Mercy (Ephesians 4:32)

Paul gives the antidote:

- Be kind
- Be tender-hearted
- Forgive one another
- As God in Christ forgave you

A. Mercy is a seed

- When planted, it grows into healing.
- Mercy breaks cycles of pain.

B. Mercy imitates Christ

- “As God in Christ forgave you.”
- We forgive because we are forgiven.

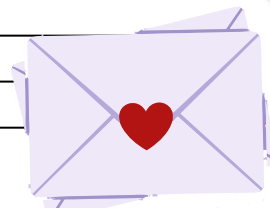
C. Mercy frees the giver and the receiver

- Forgiveness is not saying the hurt was okay.
- Forgiveness is saying I will not let this hurt control me anymore.



Example:

Joseph forgiving his brothers (Genesis 50:20).



The "Burned Letter" Ritual.

A counsellor once worked with a woman who had been betrayed by her spouse. He had her write a list of every "debt" she felt he owed her—the wasted years, the broken trust, the financial loss. Then, they took the list to a fireplace and burned it.

The Lesson: The burning didn't mean the pain wasn't real; it meant she was no longer going to try to "collect" the payment. She was clearing the soil so she could finally breathe again.

4. The Freedom of the Harvest: Living in Mercy.

When you are rooted in forgiveness, you become a person that others want to be around. Your life produces the "fruit" of peace.

Psalm 103:12, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."



God's Model of Forgiveness.

David describes the mercy of God:

A. "He does not treat us as our sins deserve"

God's mercy is undeserved. **Lamentations 3:22-23.**

B. "As far as the east is from the west"

- Infinite distance.
- God removes sin completely.

C. "So great is His love"

- Forgiveness flows from love.
- Love uproots bitterness.



Real Life:

People who experience God's mercy become merciful people.



The Amish of Nickel Mines.

In 2006, a gunman entered an Amish schoolhouse, killing five children. Hours later, the Amish community visited the killer's widow to offer her forgiveness and even set up a fund for her children. The world was shocked. They weren't "special" people; they were just people who had practiced "planting mercy" every single day in the small things, so when the big storm hit, their roots held.

The Lesson: Mercy isn't a weakness; it is the ultimate strength. It stops the cycle of pain from continuing to the next generation.

God is calling you to:

- Uproot bitterness
- Release the offender
- Plant mercy
- Walk in freedom

Final declarations:

- I will not be a prisoner of bitterness.
- I will not rehearse the pain; I will release it.
- I will plant mercy where hurt once grew.
- I will forgive as Christ forgave me.

