

Now Concerning Spiritual Things.....

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INTRODUCTION

I keep a log, or journal of sorts, on things the Lord teaches me. That began with my Holy Spirit baptism on November 29, 1965. This was suggested to me by a friend in 1968 who said, "If you will do this, in three years you will be able to look back over your notes and see how the Lord deals with you specifically." I liked the idea and soon thereafter attempted to construct a chronological record of things the Lord had taught me for those three years. Since then, I have jotted down notes in the margins of newspapers, on hotel stationery, note pads at the office and at home, restaurant napkins and upon awakening in the morning or in the middle of the night. These notes are usually started with the date followed by a brief record of the "teaching," since often these "interruptions" occur at a time when elaboration isn't practical. But when the Spirit does the teaching, a brief written reminder is usually all it takes to bring the blessing to mind again. Unlike other teachers, when the Spirit is the Instructor, it may take a thousand words to give away each one He gives you. Hence, the fragmenting of the loaves and fish to feed the multitudes on two occasions.¹ Since January of 1996, I have recorded these notes on my computer, which has proved helpful. In reviewing the computer print-out recently, here is what I discovered. As a result of prayer beginning in January of 1996, the Lord began to teach me a number of things in preparation for ministry in the latter years of my life. For example, among other things, his teaching² has

¹Matthew 14:15-21; 15:32-38.

²His teaching over the past two years have at times been awesome to me from the standpoint of one whose ministries have not been public, meaning not in a visible leadership capacity in the Church. But they nonetheless have allowed me to do His bidding in more than one area in an effort by this sinner to glorify His Name through whatever medium He chooses. I expect His teaching to continue, for He has revealed some things to me which are not yet clear as to total intent. But I can tell you this: I am excited about what He is doing in my life. Truly, a revelation of the Word from the Holy Spirit is the only way I have found to understand what Jesus meant when He said, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they

included revelation concerning forgiveness and unforgiveness, of which I was not previously aware, or which I had not previously considered. Although I realize there is yet much more for me to learn about God's forgiveness, this letter is an effort to share with you a part of what He has shown me in this area.

FORGIVENESS

In the "Sermon On The Mount"³ Jesus taught on the subject of prayer, particularly in the sixth chapter of Matthew, verses 5 through 17. Previously I had not seriously considered verses 14 and 15 which deal with forgiveness and verses 16 and 17 which deal with fasting, as a continuation of His teaching on prayer. But I have been shown that forgiveness AND fasting in these verses are *a part of His teaching on prayer*.

Concerning forgiveness: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."⁴ If you have sinned against someone else, that sin stands between you and God until you take the necessary steps to be reconciled to the ones offended.⁵ The Apostle John adds, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."⁶ Confession therefore cleanses us and reconciles us to God; confession, apology and restitution, if in order, cleanses us and reconciles us to the other offended one. But that may be the easy part of the forgiveness prescription.

The more difficult part is the reverse side of forgiveness. What about someone whose sin or sins

are life." (John 6:63). To Him be praise and glory forever.

³Matthew Chapters 5, 6, & 7.

⁴Matthew 6:14, 15.

⁵See Matthew 5:23, 24.

⁶1 John 1:9.

offend you when there is no intent or ability by the offender to right the wrong. Further, assume someone sins against you and it is impractical or impossible to use the solution given by Jesus in Matthew 18:15-17. Regardless of the circumstances or the condition of the party who sinned against you, whether he is dead or alive (death does not pardon unforgiveness), you must forgive him! There can be no exception. This, of course, includes extreme cases of sin against you, against someone you know or against someone you know about. Regardless of the offense, and regardless of who was harmed by the offense, you must not harbor unforgiveness. And our example is Jesus. He paid the price for our sins on the cross⁷ and forgave everyone. And so must we, or we will not be forgiven. To enforce this further, look at what Jesus said to Peter the Apostle: “Then Peter came to Him and said, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.’”⁸ Then Jesus told a parable about a master, moved with compassion, who forgave his servant a 10,000 talent debt, the equivalent of \$16,425,000. This same servant who was owed a 100 denarii debt (the equivalent of \$17.00)⁹ by a fellow servant, threw him in prison till he should pay the debt. When the master found out about the unforgiving servant, Jesus, in concluding the parable, said, “And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you, if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”¹⁰ The word *torturers* here refers to jailors who elicit information by torture. However, there is another meaning which is spiritual and is applicable to this parable today. Torturers means demonic spirits of

⁷Romans 5:8.

⁸Matthew 18:21,22.

⁹Source of these dollar figures: **The New Analytical Bible And Dictionary Of The Bible**, New Analytical Edition, (John A. Dickson Publishing Company, 1950), Weights & Measures, p. 1464. These dollar figures were reportedly accurate when the conversion was made about 1950. However, it is the relative comparison of the dollar figures that is important. The master forgave a debt almost one million times greater than the debt the servant was unwilling to forgive.

¹⁰Matthew 18:34,35.

evil who gain entry through the mind as the result of thoughts, words and actions which are the consequences of unforgiveness. For additional reinforcement, the bible declares, “*Be angry, and do not sin*’: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil.”¹¹ Anger may be the root cause of unforgiveness which, if not dealt with, can lead to such things as bitterness, self righteousness, self-pity, self-condemnation, retaliation and resentment. If dwelt on and not dealt with, these “problem thoughts” can allow entry of demonic spirits which may become the cause of spiritual, mental and physical illness and death, the wages of sin.¹²

But how does one handle a situation where the hurt is so deep and emotional that it is impossible to truly forgive from the heart? Here is the solution. First, be honest to God. Tell Him exactly how you feel and what you think about the offense and the offender. Hold nothing back. Be brutally frank. He already knows what is in your heart, but you must confess it to Him to *start* the healing process. Also confess to Him your unforgiveness, your desire to forgive from the heart, but your inability to do so and ask His help for healing. Then, while trusting in the Lord with your eyes on Him (not the offender!), thank Him for your healing and begin to confess orally to Him in prayer, and at other times as the thought occurs, I forgive _____(name of the offender). Continue this procedure by faith as the substance of things hoped for until the evidence of things not seen¹³ becomes a reality in your heart. What you then confess with your lips¹⁴ will confirm what is in your heart, and you are free. This is not the power of positive thinking, but the power of the Word of God to change lives when we act by faith on what the Word says. And it works! “The kingdom of heaven is likened unto an antibiotic coursing through the veins

¹¹Ephesians 4:26, 27.

¹²But let the reader take heart and know full well that believers today have been given authority over demonic spirits in the Name of Jesus. See Mark 16:17.

¹³See Hebrews 11:1.

¹⁴See Romans 10:9, 10.

on a seek and destroy mission”¹⁵ A physician gives a patient with double pneumonia an antibiotic prescription to take three times daily for ten days. If the lungs are not clear in ten days, the prescription is refilled. That’s 60 tablets taken over a 20-day period. The patient has faith in the physician and in the antibiotic prescription and is healed. But he doesn’t stop the medication after taking 19 of the tablets. It is the same with difficult cases of forgiveness. When we have faith in the Physician and His Word, the prescription is “with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”¹⁶ In the kingdom, confession *precedes* possession, but in the world, confession *follows* possession. One biblical example is, “if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”¹⁷ This scripture affirms that confession with the mouth precedes the possession of salvation in Christ. Confession¹⁸ is a powerful spiritual tool for the believer -- it is a *kingdom principle*. The bible declares that Christ Jesus is the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.¹⁹ As I was learning this principle one day, the Lord spoke to me and said, “Make public your confession. As you do so, you are strengthened therein.” And these thoughts followed: As you make public your confession, you water the seed²⁰ within you and cause it to germinate, grow, flourish and bear fruit. But if you speak

[confess] negative, harsh or critical words, you create a drought within and no growth can occur. Further, if the seed has grown and flourished and you then speak negative or critical words, that growth withers and dies. The sum of plus one and minus one equals zero. This is confirmed in Proverbs 6:12, “You are snared by the words of your mouth; you are taken by the words of your mouth.” Further, when we as Christians make public our confession, that is, speak as the oracles of God as the Apostle Peter wrote,²¹ and learn to avoid negative confession, growth will flourish. Hence the reason to spend time in the Word. And here’s another goodie: As a believer, when you make public your confession, you water the implanted seed with Living Water, the Holy Spirit; hence the supernatural Word, watered with supernatural Water grows and flourishes to bring forth fruit in the kingdom to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Confession waters the seed; prayer fertilizes it. Believe it, practice it and be blessed.

As the Lord was teaching me about forgiveness, for some period of time my attention was drawn to the following incident as related by the Apostle John. After His resurrection, but before His ascension, Jesus appeared to a group of His disciples and said to them, “...Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained.’”²² This statement by the resurrected Jesus certainly has reference to preaching the good news that Jesus died for our sins and when we turn to Him in repentance, accept Him as our Savior and Lord, our sins are remitted, for without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins.²³ But I believe there is much more than that implied by what Jesus said on this occasion. When we forgive others whose actions are unworthy of forgiveness, *it does something for us*. It frees us from bondage to sin and allows us to do things in the kingdom we would otherwise be unable to do. For example, there are some things concerning

¹⁵James L. Ash, **For Christians Only**, “Gleanings” (Published by James L. Ash, 1989), p. 43.

¹⁶Romans 10:10 (b).

¹⁷Romans 10:9, 10.

¹⁸Confession meaning a lifetime of believing with our heart and *saying* or *confessing* with our lips every one of God’s promises, *thereby claiming them as our own!*

¹⁹Hebrews 3:1. The Authorized Version translates the word “profession” here instead of “confession”. However, this does the context no harm since Webster’s dictionary defines “profession” as an open declaration or public avowal. Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words translates the word “confession” and a number of translations later than the AV use the word “confession.”

²⁰The seed in this teaching is the word of God, exactly as Jesus taught in the parable of the Sower in Luke 8:5-15.

²¹1 Peter 4:11 (a).

²²John 20:21-23.

²³See the 9th Chapter of Hebrews.

forgiveness I have been led to do by the Holy Spirit which I am not at liberty to share at this time, but here is one I can share. For years my daily prayers have included the names of certain people. One morning as I had done for years, I was praying for three people with whom I formerly had a business relationship. But this time, I know in retrospect, I was led by the Holy Spirit to say to the Lord, "I forgive these three people of every sin they have ever committed." As I did so, I began to weep under the power of the Holy Spirit. After that I was able to enter into fervent prayer for them as I had not done before. None of the three had harmed me, and, if I know my heart, I harbored no unforgiveness toward any of them. I do believe, however, that two of the three had been involved in something that was not right in God's sight. My thought about the prayer, therefore, was that my willingness to forgive them, as led by the Spirit, allowed me or freed me to more efficaciously pray for them as an intercessor. Of course, each of them is responsible to God on a personal basis as each of us is, but a willingness to forgive releases the power of God unattainable any other way and carries with it blessings for both parties.

Unforgiveness does not bring about restitution or reconciliation, does not harm, "get even with" or change the offender. "Unforgiveness is as idolatry,"²⁴ is harmful only to the one offended and stands as sentinel at the door of blessing.

Recently I was watching an evening TV newscast. The subject was the execution of a death-row inmate by the State of Texas in Huntsville. I'm not sure I remember the details of the crime correctly, but as I recall, the man was convicted of raping and killing a child. But here is the thing I do remember: the mother of the victim found that she had forgiveness in her heart for the criminal and went to death-row in Huntsville to visit the man who had killed her daughter. She told him that she had forgiven him, that she loved him and that God loved him. And the man wept. The next day he was executed. That, in essence, sums up God's teaching on forgiveness: two lives blessed instead of two lives cursed. Two lives

²⁴These words were given to me by the Holy Spirit about September 25, 1997.

freed instead of two lives bound. To God be the glory for His marvelous ways in loving us while we were yet sinners,²⁵ and choosing to humble himself, even to death on a cross,²⁶ to take upon Himself our sins, our iniquities, our diseases, our pains, our sorrows,²⁷ and then offer to all who will accept His invitation, the opportunity to be loved into Life forever.²⁸ That is what our Lord has done for us. Dear reader, if you don't know the Lord Jesus, ask Him now by faith to come into your heart through the precious Holy Spirit, to make Himself known to you personally and you will never be the same. Trust Him today for an abundant life now, with Heaven as your eternal reward.

GOD'S LAWS

God's laws are just that: laws intended to govern, never designed to restrict and constrict, but to free and bless. God's laws are absolute, designed to bless you absolutely. When you disobey God's laws, a penalty is exacted to drive you back to Him. God's laws were never designed to deny you anything of value, but to give you something Invaluable. You may not understand God's laws, for how can the finite understand the Infinite? It is the Potter who molds the vessel according to the pattern in Mind. So be attentive to God's laws. Study them diligently. Write them on the recesses of your heart. Train the mind to seek after them as a thirsty man seeks after water, for therein one finds Life.

When the mind and heart become curious to seek after God, a victory is won, for He hides so as to be found.²⁹

....more later, the Lord willing.

²⁵Romans 5:8.

²⁶Philippians 2:8.

²⁷Isaiah 53:4, 5.

²⁸John 3:16; Revelation 3:20; 21:6.

²⁹Isaiah 45:15.