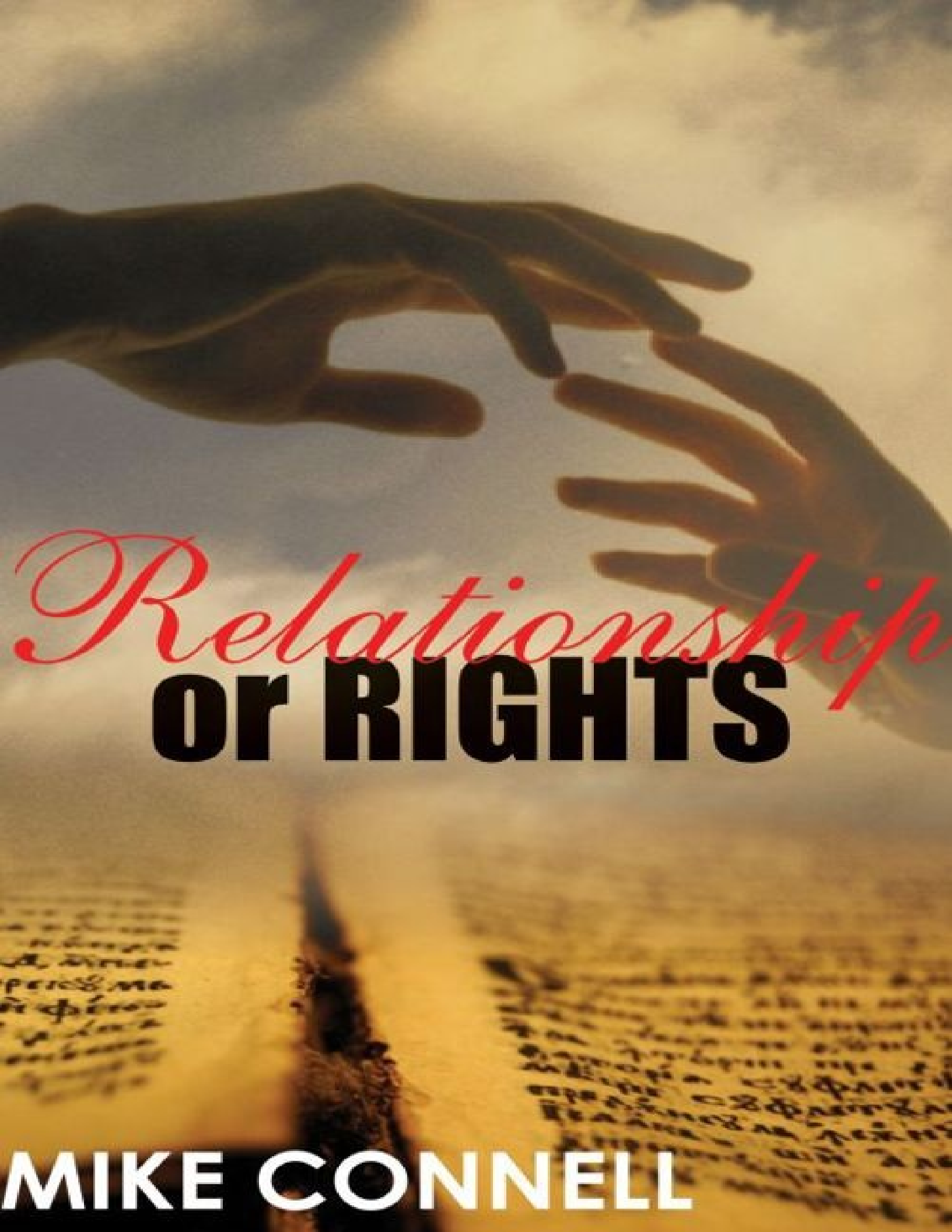
Relationship
or RIGHTS
MIKE CONNELL

Relationship or Rights

Sermon Transcript for Sunday, 6-Feburary-2011

Mike Connell

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Smashwords Edition

Summary: *Hurt people hurt others, without even realising. We have no power really to stop painful things happening in our life. We do have the choice how we respond, and it's the choice how you respond that positions you to walk in blessing and increase of the grace of God, or to literally open your life to demonic oppression.*



I want you to open your Bible with me in Matthew, Chapter 18. I want to speak a message called Relationship or Rights. Relationship or Rights - would you rather be right, or would you rather have relationship? While you're finding Matthew 18 - there's a scripture in Ephesians 5 that goes something like this. It says be imitators of God and walk in love as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us. In other words the Bible says don't copy the guy next door to you. Don't copy someone down the road. Don't model your lifestyle on people who are broken and sinful. Rather model your lifestyle on what God is like.

We're called to become like Him, so God has designed us for relationship and to become like Him. To become like Him means we need to model our life on how Jesus, what He taught and how He lived His life out and walk in love as He walked in love. So this is the challenge is walking in love, a lifestyle of love and it's not ishy-gishy or all that kind of [woohy] sort of thing. It's much, much more than that. It's something substantial that involves our character, what goes on in your heart. Now in life there wouldn't be anyone here in this room who didn't get someone upset you or hurt you, probably on the way to church this morning - upset you or hurt you just by living in life, and living in life one thing is absolutely certain is taxes. The other thing that's fairly certain is that you're going to get hurt, you're going to suffer injustice, you're going to suffer pain, you're going to get wounded in your interactions with people.

When this happens, which is part of life, it's natural to feel a bit hurt and a bit upset. Sometimes we might even get angry - tell someone next to you that's you he's talking about now. I know you ... [Laughter] ... so it's quite natural to be like that. But the thing is we have no power really to stop painful things happening in our life. We do have the choice how we respond and it's the choice how you respond that positions you to walk in blessing and increase of the grace of God, or to literally open your life to demonic oppression. My observation is the majority of Christians suffer needlessly, suffer in their life and relationships in ways that we should never have to suffer, because they don't understand how to walk in the love of God, how to walk and reflect the character of God. We would rather be right than do that, so when someone upsets you you have a choice.

Your choice - remember, you have no choice over what they did. Here's what your choice is. Your choice is in how you respond and you're either going to decide to move in blessing or in cursing. Choose life, choose blessing rather than cursing. We always have the choice, so the moment someone upsets you, gets on your wick or anything, you can choose to walk in blessing and release blessing, if you release grace and forgiveness, or if you want to demand your rights and hold that the person has to put it right and demand they apologise to you, you will walk in cursing.

I'll show you why you'll walk in cursing. God opened to me something from scripture; I've read it enough times and you have too, but I saw something I had not seen before because I've puzzled about this parable. So I want to go through the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew, Chapter 18, Verse 21. So in Verse 21, Peter came to Jesus and said Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? How about seven times? That's pretty big of me if I forgive him seven times. That's not to bad is it aye, I'm a pretty guy aye don't you think? And Jesus said no, seventy times seven. He said what? Then Jesus began to speak a parable and so He said the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. When he begun to settle the accounts there was one brought to him who owned him ten thousand talents. That's millions of dollars - and he was not able to pay.

His master commanded he be sold with his wife and children, all he had and that payment be made. The servant fell down before him, said master, have patience. I will pay you all, then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him and forgave the debt. Man, isn't that something else. So you have to understand that there's a whole area where Jesus has been teaching on offences and issues in relationships. In the context of that Peter sort of says well you know, if someone upsets me, hurts me or gets me annoyed and gets on wick, how many times should I forgive him? Once, twice, maybe seven times, how about that? And Jesus said no, no, no and then He teaches a parable.

Parable is to open up an insight and understanding related to the issue of being hurt in relationship. This is a kingdom parable and so you notice here that it's about a kingdom and about a king, so the first thing is who is the parable addressed to? Well you know, maybe it's just to unsaved people. No it isn't, it's addressed to Peter and if you read at the end of it the application Jesus gives; so will My heavenly Father do to you if each of you from your heart does not forgive everyone, his brother their trespasses. So twice in the parable it's clear

this is something for Christians. I'd encourage you to open your heart to listen, because what I share with you will shift your thinking about how important it is to walk in forgiveness and grace.

I guarantee that people are going to hurt. I guarantee that you will respond not always well, but if you can get an insight from this parable it will help motivate you to make choices which ensure no matter what anyone does, two things happen; one, you respond in a way that gets you into a new flow of grace and blessing and two, that you actually ensure you grow from the experience, become a greater person.

So the first thing is well who's it addressed to? It's addressed to Christians, addressed to you. Second thing is what is the key issue in this parable? The key issue is this: how will you treat people? How will you respond to people who annoy you, tick you off, offend you, do an injustice to you, do something that really hurts and upsets you? How will you respond? That is the key issue. This is about the response and you can choose to respond with the law. You can choose to respond with grace. That is the choice - law or grace. If you respond with law you will demand your rights. You will demand justice. This is not fair, you must do something, you owe me. You have to do something to fix this up. That is the law.

Or you can respond with grace. Grace releases something to people they don't deserve. It releases forgiveness. It releases blessing. If you respond with the law then you and the other person end up into cursing. If you respond with grace, you and the other person end up in blessing. It's always your choice. We're going to just flow through and I want to show you this, how it works. So first of all what's the nature of the kingdom? You notice it talks about the kingdom of God and here's the nature of this kingdom that we serve. It says the king, when faced with the man who had debts of millions - there's no way he could repay it. That king is Jesus Christ. That kingdom is the kingdom of God and the nature of that kingdom is like this: he was moved when compassion, when the man said I just can't do it. I can't fix this problem up. It's too big.

when you and I come to Jesus Christ He opens His heart with compassion and extends grace to you. None of us are saved by doing works. None of us are saved or come right in relationship with God by doing anything to help ourselves. We come right by receiving grace through believing in the goodness of God. That's

how you start your walk with God. You believe He is good, you believe He's done the work for you and by that you open your heart and you are forgiven. You enter a flow of grace. The Bible says we're to come to the throne of grace.

Now grace is not some funny word you hear in church. Grace is a flow of power that enables you to change, enables you to live the life God wants you to live. It empowers you to do what God called you to do, so grace is a flow of the power of God. It's nothing deserved or earned, it's something that comes to those who are in a place of faith and closeness with God.

Some people look and they see Pastor Lynn and she pours out her life and does hours of counselling or whatever. How does she do it? You say well how can someone at that age be so alive and full of life and do so much? I'll tell you, one word, grace. Look at Sargin and all the hours he does and works and pours himself out; how does he do it? Grace. Look at Cecelia and how she does what she does - grace.

It's not human ability or strength. It's actually a substance from heaven that enables you to do what you could never do. How can I do 10 days in Taiwan praying for people morning and night, hundreds and hundreds of people, get on a plane, fly down to Auckland, up to San Diego and then pray for hundreds and hundreds of people and still be able to do it. I'll tell you very simply, it's called grace. It is very real. It's a power that flows in your life, that energises your body, energises your soul, energises you to do things you couldn't normally do. It also helps you in your relationships.

So grace, we need the grace of God and the Bible says grace is given to the humble. Now notice this man. He humbled himself and said I can't do it, please help me. The nature of this kingdom we're in, it's a kingdom of grace so those who humble themselves God is kind and loving and he pours out what we don't deserve. We don't try and earn it. We don't do anything. We don't go to services to get this. It's about a relationship from the heart, so that's what the key is. Grace is intended to be - it's the dynamic of heaven, it's the power of heaven. It's to enable us to walk with God. It comes out of walking with God, but here's the thing. It's intended to flow to people that you are in relationship with.

So now let's move on, have a look what happened to the guy. Now relationship conflicts reveal our heart attitude. Here's the thing you have to understand: it's

impossible for you to love God if you can't walk in love with the people around you. It's a deception to think because you have experiences with God you are walking with God. An experience with God is just that, it's an experience - came in, had a buzz and went out. Came in, had a good time and went out. I got in my prayer time, experienced the touch of God and then walked out - but listen. Having an experience with God is not a walk with God. Having an experience with God is just that. It's a momentary thing. It happens in a brief time and it's wonderful and it imparts to us, but it imparts grace to change how we live.

Now the real test of whether you're walking with God shows up in how you treat the family of God. You can say to me how spiritual you are. You may have seen miracles and done all kinds of things or experienced many kinds of experiences, but the evidence of your walk with God is seen in your walk with people. How do we treat people? Now God is lovely. You get alone with Him, He's loving and merciful and kind and talks the truth. We all love to be in the presence of God, it's wonderful. I love it. Cry and enjoy God and feel loved, hear words of encouragement, but you know the thing is then what happens when we go out to people.

See the family of God is actually Christ in body form, so when you meet another believer you are meeting a part of the expression of Christ in the earth. How you treat other believers really does reveal what's in your heart and whether you're walking with God, so our conflicts with people, our difficulties with people cause or they reveal what's really in our heart. Now notice this man was a servant of God. That means he's a Christian, a servant of God. You notice he has received forgiveness, he's received mercy and he needed it. He had a really bad lifestyle. He's the kind of person that really blew it. They really have messed up their life, done so many wrong things, bad things. They've come and God has just poured out His love and forgiveness. Now the key issue for them is will you walk and continue to abide in that favour of God, or will you just cancel it out? So you can come into an experience with God and the same day when you meet someone cancel out much of the blessing and life flow you've come in by how you respond to a person. This is exactly what this guy did and I'll show you in a moment how he did it.

So what happened was what happened to the person, so here it is. Another servant come up and the servant went out and he found one of the fellow servants, so this is a Christian dealing with another Christian and he owed him a hundred denarios which is less than a day's pay, maybe $100 compared with the

millions. Notice what he did; he laid hands on him, took him by the throat - ha! Pay what you owe! So the fellow servant fell at his feet and begged him. Notice he said the same thing that the other servant said to the king; have patience, I'll pay it all. But he would not and he threw him into prison until he should pay all the debt. So notice the things that come up in here. Now he had an opportunity having come into grace, when he met another Christian he had an opportunity to extend grace, so his choice was do I pass on and extend what I'm in or do I give the law? The law means I demand justice, I demand and insist on my rights - now notice this. He was right. He was totally right. That guy had failed, that guy had hurt him, that guy did owe him. That guy truly was in debt. He was right and legally it was with in his rights to demand the repayment. Legally it was right - however what needed to flow out of him was something different. He'd experienced the goodness, the grace, the mercy, the kindness of God. What was needed now was for him to extend it to another person, so instead of that something else came up in his heart.

He had a choice to demand what is right and demand and stand on that and he was quite right, legally right. He could put the guy in prison - notice, put him and his family in prison, or he could extend grace which means yield your right and allow the person what they didn't deserve. That was the choice. Now you notice here it's not what you give to the person who hurts you, not what you want to give to the person who hurts you. When someone hurts you you want to give them a poke in the eye, you want to retaliate. Oh you did this and you got this thing you want to do. Don't tell me you haven't felt that way. We've all felt that. We're all made of the same stuff - and you get flustering and puffing up and get all flamed and your nostrils flare and your eyes glare. You're starting to huff and puff and your veins are bulging. Next thing you know you're yelling or banging a door or doing something. You're standing on your rights that have been violated! Something's got to pay!

So I mean we've all been there and done those kinds of things - more often than we'd like to admit isn't it really? [Laughs] There you were, driving to church and someone cut you off! Grrrr! We were just going to worship God, you know? ... [Laughter] ... We somehow got it all separate. Someone cuts you off in the car park going out and the lovely sweet face that was saying I love you Jesus, I am blessed - Grrrr - and you're cursing just like that. Move from grace and blessing to cursing just in a moment. That's the problem.

James wrote and he said it shouldn't be like this. One minute we're blessing, then

we're cursing them. Shaking our fist and roaring in anger and bellowing or some kind of thing, or a more subtle form of it with snappy little words that are like a little sword that go straight into the heart and down inside, leaves the person wounded deeply as they walk away. Or we just get [sniffs as if offended] cold ... [Laughter] ... and we freeze them out! It's all the same stuff - demanding your rights and not be gracious. So it's not what you want to give to the person who hurt you. We all know what you want to give them, poke in the eye or a slap on the face. It's what you want to receive in your future relationships that counts, so when someone upsets you make a decision whether you give them what you want to give them or whether you decide about what you want it to be like for you in the future.

You can move in blessing and prepare blessing for your future; you can flow in cursing, you'll reap it as well. Many people can't understand why they have so much repeated difficulties in their relationships, because they respond to injustice with wanting to be right. I'm right, you're wrong, you've got to pay. See wanting to be right is a problem - yeah, but I want to be right! Of course you do, that's pride, just want to be right. The heart of the kingdom is about relationships. You notice the king was entitled to throw the guy in prison, but rather than hold onto that right he yielded to the right and gave him grace.

Now let's see what happens now. So what happened, this was what was exposed. Firstly, hardness of heart. In spite of his experience with God he was hard in his heart. His experience of grace and the blessing or the encounter with God did not change his heart. That's the first thing you see - he was hard in his heart. The second thing you notice was he was angry, grabbed the guy by the throat, so he had anger uncontrolled operating in his life. He'd had an experience with God, that still didn't change his anger. His anger was still his anger to be dealt with.

Notice the next thing that you see about him is he had absolutely no value on this other person whatsoever, totally dishonoured another believer in the house of God by the way he treated him. Then the final thing you see is actually what was in his heart was pride. There was a deep root of pride in his heart. Now whatever experience - I've been around for years, you know. We've walked through all kinds of moves of God and seen many kinds of things and the thing that I have seen that's very, very common in it all, whether it's a revelation of doctrine or it's a revelation of an experience of God or some kinds of encounters, this is what I have noticed over years without exception; that you can have all of that but pride can lie deep in the heart and it's reflected in how you treat people.

Jesus came to show us loving God also means loving the people that He created, not in a mushy way but in a way that releases blessing to their lives. So pride in our heart is always revealed in how we're able to be. So if I ask if you've got pride in your heart, you say no, of course not. You've got humility in your heart - oh well, nice of you to notice. ... [Laughter] ... The one sin people can hardly bear to admit to is pride and yet the one thing that really is insidious and is at the heart of the kingdom of Satan is pride, so pride reveals itself in a number of ways. See, pride always notices the wrongs others have done - can't see what it's done. It always notices what others have done. Did you notice? Pride will always notice what everyone else did wrong. Pride never identifies or empathises with the person who's had a failure, thinking they maybe a broken, hurt person and haven't got a clue what they're doing.

I've gone through my life and there's been areas of wounding and pain and brokenness that I had no idea were there, and in not being aware of it I've actually hurt people over the course of my life, hurt my wife, hurt my children, hurt people around me that I love, people that have stood with me and not even known, not even known. See, so we've got to realise that sometimes a person who hurts us, there's actually issues in the heart that they're not even aware of. Notice what Jesus said; He said Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing. Hurt people hurt others. That's the nature of it. If someone's hurt they'll hurt you and often when you try and talk to them they can't see it, because they've got pain and brokenness in their life. They need the restoration and one of the things they need to do is to get what you got, which is receive grace. Grace, the goodness of God, leads a person to become changed in their life.

Okay, so what we see here is pride, can never empathise with people. Pride cannot admit wrong. The hardest thing to say is I was wrong, I'm sorry. Now a lot of men can't say that and I'm sorry but it's a deep root of pride in your heart that stops it. It just chokes rather than say I'm sorry. It's the hardest thing, but it's the thing that brings life. We humble ourself when we can say I am so sorry, I was wrong.

We were at a good marriage course with Bob and Audrey Meisner and one of the things they got us to do which was very powerful, hold your wife's hands and look in her eyes and say I'm so sorry, I was wrong, will you forgive me? That was really good for us to do that. We both did it, but I felt something happen as

we did and so God has started a work then and just continuing that work. I think that there's a lot that I need to do to put right, but you see pride can never admit that it's wrong you see. Pride would rather be right and stand on the rights than have a heart relationship, so the thing that'll be preventing you from entering into better relationships - there's a number of things. One of them is the wounding in the heart and the pride that won't actually deal with the darkness and then the skills needed to actually be able to put the relationships differently.

We hope this year and pray this year that God will really shift our church in this area of relationships, really grow in relationship, that the heart of God as a Father will begin to flow in the church. People will begin to be recovered and healed and restored and begin to learn how to walk in kingdom life, value relationships - so of course pride will always justify, you know, well I'm right, you're wrong and there it is, that's the end of it. So pride always excuses the fact that it's harsh and condemning and judgemental, so we're not going to be held accountable for what anyone else did, but God will call us to account for what we do and how we handle the injustices.

So I want you to see here's the thing. It says the Bible's making it clear, if you sow judgement you reap judgement. Now notice what happened to the guy. Look what it says. First of all it says his fellow servants saw what he'd done. They were grieved and told the master and the master came and said to him you wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt because you asked me, begged me. Shouldn't you have compassion on your fellow servant as I had compassion upon you? Now notice the things there; what the master calls him. Now this is a kingdom parable. He calls him a wicked servant. Can you imagine being part of the family of God and God calls you wicked? It's almost unthinkable isn't it? The word wicked doesn't mean intrinsically evil. It means this - having a negative influence in the family, putting a burden and grief and sorrows over the lives of others that makes their life harder. So when he says you're a wicked servant, he says you are making life harder for everyone around you instead of having received abundance of grace, releasing grace.

You notice the second thing is the servants around were grieved. That meant they were saddened, they were burdened. It is true that when someone in the church, someone in our family walks with unforgiveness in their heart it is hurtful to everyone around. You know it stops the flow of life. There's invisible walls. No matter how nice you are you can feel the wall, you feel the lack of flow, you feel the lack of the grace flowing. You meet and it's polite and nice but there's no

flow from the heart because the heart is walled up. That's not how God intended us to be, living separated and isolated and our hearts walled up. God created us for dynamic and living and heart-felt relationships, but we have to deal with the pride and the offences and stuff that gets in our heart and grace is meant to do that.

The more grace you receive, the more you're able to give to others; more God forgives you through humbling yourself, coming to Him, the more you can give to others. Now notice what happens here. Notice carefully what happens; this man had received an abundance of grace. Here's the thing that just is stunning. He was at one place in a position where he was going to be thrown into jail and his family for all that he had done, then he was moved and came into a position of grace and blessing. He and his family were in a flow of blessing and life.

Then he came and faced a fellow servant. When he faced the fellow servant this is what he chose. He did not choose to continue in grace. He chose to despise the spirit of grace, so when he despised the spirit of grace there's only one place you can be now, you're back under the law. He put himself under the law when he judged, found fault and stood on his rights and made demands. He put himself under the law. That meant if he's put himself under the law he's no longer under grace and notice what happens, notice carefully in the passage what happens. All the debt that he had been forgiven now legally stands again and becomes operative. He's no longer walking in the grace of forgiveness. Not only that, now it says the Father, he was put in prison, delivered over to tormentors. So now demonic spirits have free access into his life. Is he still saved? I think he is, but here's the problem. He's not living in blessing, he's living in cursing and why is he living in cursing? Because he refused to live and walk in the grace of God and extend grace to others. What he chose to do instead was to hold to his rights, place a demand, hold anger in his heart, stand on his rights and put someone - which he was legally entitled to do - put them into jail to pay the price. That's a person who holds unforgiveness in their heart, judges the other person and has a demand on them to do something to put it right.

He took himself out of grace and put himself under law and listen, Jesus works with grace. Grace and truth came by Jesus. The one who works with the law is the devil. The devil is the fault-finder. The devil is the accuser. The devil is the judge. When you don't extend grace to others you remove yourself from grace and you come directly under demonic judgement over your life. They are then able to find every fault that you have, every failure you have. They're able to

come in the courts of heaven and say we have a right to get into this guy's life and mess him up - and heaven says you have, because he's no longer under grace. He's under the law and he removed himself from grace of God when he mistreated the fellow Christian. Now in case you think it doesn't apply to you, Jesus applies it; so also shall my Heavenly Father do to each one of you if from your heart you don't forgive each one his brother their trespasses.

So God has forgiven each of us so much. He has put us in a place where we have access to a throne of grace. Did someone upset you? You can come to God, find the grace to overcome your attitudes and to impart grace to the person, instead of jumping up and down on your rights and being angry which is holding onto your rights; yield your rights and say God, he didn't understand what he was doing. I just forgive. I release blessing. I'm going to flow into blessing. I choose to stay in blessing, not to stay in judgement and cursing. Or you can choose to stand on your rights - I'm right, that person needs to put it right. We can put ourselves in a place we're demanding the person puts it right, we're finding fault, we're holding judgement over them and then we ourselves are open and exposed to demonic powers. What does that mean?

I'll tell you. I'll just give it to you briefly and I'll show you quickly how to get out. This is what it means; what it means is you don't enjoy the flow of grace from God. Your life is burdensome. What does it mean? It means demonic spirits have direct access to your mind. What will they do? They'll keep you angry. They'll keep you stirred up in anger, they'll keep you stirred up for every little injustice that takes place. They'll stir it up and you'll hear someone and someone will be talking and they'll share an injustice and something will rise up and you'll be angry and it was nothing even to do with you! You're tormented. You're actually in a spiritual prison house with tormentors. You can't walk in liberty, joy, love and grace and freedom. Why? You put yourself there! When you chose, when someone failed you - who knows why they did? Who knows what's in their heart? You just know that they did something that hurt you. Instead of judging, finding fault, demanding they pay, shutting them out, paying them back, retaliating in some way, avoiding them, all that kind of thing, extend grace. Why? So you can reap grace in your future. This is a classic example of if you judge, you yourself are judged. What you sow is what you reap. That man had a choice having come out of his experience with God, his encounter with God and the goodness of God. He had an experience when he came out and he had to choose whether he was going to keep his experience or lose it. How did that happen? When he faced a hurtful situation with another believer. At that point

you choose whether you stay in the life flow of God, or whether you take yourself out from it and open yourself to demonic harassment, which often includes arthritis, pains in the body, various spirits of infirmity, all kinds of things.

Listen, I've seen it too many times and prayed for too many people, life-changing sicknesses and it was all due to roots of bitterness in their heart. They'd come into grace but would not extend it and they were open to a spirit of infirmity. God wants us to walk in blessing, wants us to walk in grace, so if you've got in the prison - if you're in the prison, you once started out so good but here you are, you walked as a Christian for a few years and now you find I don't know why, it's just not fair but somehow I'm in torment! Somehow - I mean it's not right what's going on to me! Now you've got to find someone to blame. There'll be a pastor, there'll be a leader, there'll be a this, there'll be that. It was the last church, it was the - you'll find someone to blame instead of saying God, what is going on in my heart? What do I need to face?

The way out is one, is you want more of God in your life and you say God, whatever it takes show me what's in my heart. Show me what I need to face - then you come with a heart that's truly repentant. A repentant heart forgets the faults and failures. It starts to see people as broken and damaged and no longer says well I'm going to hold a thing against them. It says God, I don't want to pay them back. I don't want to do anything like that. Father, I repent of that attitude, repent of my pride, the judgements, the bitterness, the things I've held in my heart. I repent of it and let it all go. Then it begins to sow kind - then you receive forgiveness. We've got to receive forgiveness from God - God, forgive me. Now I forgive and release them and I start to bless them. Simple desire to be in the presence of God and live and walk in the presence of God, that nothing breaks the flow with Him.

See some people think if I just have another experience I'll have more of God. I'm sorry, I've seen too many people have experiences and they don't have more of God. It doesn't show in their life. The way you have more of God is when you walk in love. Jesus said if you keep my commandments which is to love one another, then My Father will love you, we will come and abide with you. Walking in love is the key to reflect the kingdom of God. It means we're compassionate on people and we show mercy to people when they don't deserve it. We release them.

There's other aspects of it but this story primarily today is just about one aspect, the issue of unforgiveness. How do I get out of the prison? I need to want to be near God and walk with God more. Then I've got to realise that walking with God is connected to my relationships with others, so I need to humble myself. When God shows me wrong attitudes of heart I may be completely right but wrong in my heart attitude. God doesn't care if you're right. He's interested in your heart and whether your heart desires relationship. You may be completely right, you may be completely justified, but if you'll stand on it you'll stay in misery. If you just say God, I just want a connection. I want this thing to come right, then you can repent of judging and all those things, receive forgiveness and then start to show kindness into the person that created the hurt and offence. Very simple, very practical.

The key is this; these things are going to happen. You choose whether you'll find yourself in prison, or whether you'll find yourself growing into grace. Jesus - interesting about Jesus. Jesus was able to wash the feet of Judas knowing he'd already sold Him out. That's called grace. Did he deserve it? No. What did he deserve? Someone to take out a sword and stick him - but he never got that. He didn't get what he deserved. He got grace. What about Joseph, betrayed. He said it wasn't you guys. God sent me because He had a plan for my life and I've had to grow through these difficulties. Now I'm in the grace of God so strongly, I'm the mentor to the leader of Egypt. I'm actually running the country now. People want to be great and they think an experience will do it. No, it's walking with God and it's reflected in our relationships.

Let's close our eyes right now. Father, we thank You. We know You want us to walk in love. We know You want us to walk in grace. Father, I just ask right now for each person in here that Lord, where we've grieved Your Holy Spirit by judgemental attitudes, by attitudes of criticism - and we were right probably - but they were more concerned with being right than with having a relationship and a heart for that person. Father, forgive us for the pride and the rigidity that would cause that. Help us to walk in humility and strength, humility that can actually just own our stuff and put our stuff right, that we can actually have no problem in saying I was wrong, I'm so sorry. Lord, rid our hearts of this need to be right, such a need to be right that we'd rather give up a relationship so we could say that we were right than to pursue the relationship. Father, help us as a church and as individuals to grow in the grace of God.

Just I wonder while our eyes are closed and heads are bowed, perhaps there's someone here today and you don't know Jesus Christ personally. To know Him means to receive Him as your saviour, to trust what He did. It's not about going to church or what you've done in church or anything good. It's actually about trusting that when Jesus died on the cross, what He did was totally sufficient for you to be forgiven and saved. Jesus said to everyone who received Him and believed in Him, He gave power to become a child of God. I wonder today if that's you? Do you want to just realise I'm right at that point I need to give my life to Christ.

Jesus said to everyone who received Him He gave power, the right to become a child of God. Is there anyone here today and God's been speaking to you about your heart attitudes and you realise there's a part of your life is in prison because when you faced injustice, when you faced pain and hurt and difficulty, you chose to judge and find fault. You wanted to prove I'm right and so you shut your heart down against other members in the body of Christ. If you could have the courage to say God is speaking to me, that's my heart, I need to repent today - would you raise your hand if that's you? God bless, God bless, hands up all over. God bless. I've got my hand up too.

I know God's speaking very deeply in my heart about many of these issues. Your next step would be to just come before the Lord and let Him show you exactly where and how it's taken place and repent of that thing, ask His forgiveness, forgive the person and then start to sow kindness to that person, just sow. Don't expect anything to come back. The sowing means you've passed from death to life because you're now communicating love. That's your part.

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