

HOW TO RESPOND TO HURTS - (FORGIVENESS)

(Kaitaia Abundant Life Centre - 16/11/97 - EKB)

Reading: *Mat 18:21-35*

1. There is a great worldwide outpouring of God's Spirit today.
2. There is general agreement among major mission organizations that 120,000 people are coming to Christ each day. (43.8 million each year.)
3. With the outpouring of God's Spirit, He is requiring of us a new, and higher level of obedience.
4. One example of this is responding in the right way when we are upset, hurt or offended by somebody else.
5. Perhaps we have been lied about, or someone has criticized us unfairly. Maybe we have been physically hurt, or our belongings have been taken. For others it may be that a loved one has been attacked and hurt. On the other hand, perhaps a person has failed to do what was expected of them, failed to keep a promise, return what they borrowed, or give a helping hand in time of need.
6. Jesus is our example to follow. He had more evil attacks upon Him than anyone. He took the full force of every evil attack, upon Himself, as He bore our sins, and the sins of the whole world, *1Pet 2:24, 2Cor 5:21, Is 53:5*.
Heb 12:3 – "Consider Him.....lest you become discouraged."
His prayer was, "Father forgive them...." *Lk 23:34*.
7. What happens when we are wronged, or sinned against? We suffer pain, upset, turmoil, mental stress, agony, hurt and so on.
8. At this point we can do one of two things:
 - a. We can bear the pain and hurt, as Jesus told us to, forgiving and releasing from our judgment those who have hurt us, and grow spiritually in God's blessing and strength by it. *Mat 18:21-35, Mat 5:43,44, Mk 11:25,26, Mat 7:1,2*.

For example, there was a period of 18 months in my life, some years ago, when I was under great pressure from another person, who I felt was treating me in an unfair and unjust way. It was like being crushed. My response, by God's grace, was to forgive and bless from day to day, and refuse all feelings of bitterness, hate and revenge. At night, when fast asleep, my spirit would wake everyone else up, by shouting the praises of God and speaking in tongues.
 - or
 - b. We can respond to being wronged by rising up in pride and judgment against the one who has hurt us with unforgiveness, hate, criticism, bitterness and hard feelings.
9. The problem with pride and unforgiveness is that God withholds forgiveness for our sins too, *Mk 11:25,26*. We walk around with an evergrowing load of unforgiven sins on our shoulders which cut us off from God's grace, mercy and peace, *Is 59:1,2*. Moreover God hands us over to the "tormentors" of *Mat 18:34* to "bring us to our senses," and to obey Him.
10. Our choice is:
 - a. forgive and become better or
 - b. refuse to forgive and become bitter.

11. One time we visited a school where the authorities were dismissing the Principal who had laboured long and hard to build the school to what it was. Each time, as we sat down together, he and his wife would just sit and weep. The counsel they received from a friend (not us) was, "You have the choice to become better or bitter." They became "better," praise God!
12. John had a few weeks to live, and as I read to him the Lord's prayer, he said to me, "That's the bit I don't like, where it says, 'forgive us our sins as we forgive others their sins against us.' There are some people that have hurt me so badly, I could never forgive them." So I explained to him that forgiveness is not pretending that the offender has not done you wrong, but it is simply releasing them from our judgment and handing the problem over to God to sort out. He willingly did this and opened his heart to receive Jesus in a wonderful way.
13. *James 4:10,11,12* is a powerful word about refusing to judge one another.
14. *Lk 18:9-14* is Jesus' parable telling us not to lift ourselves up in pride or despise others.
15. Some years ago, I realised I was holding judgmental thoughts about another family member whenever they did not please me. By confessing this, and refusing to hold any judgments against this person, but rather give thanks and bless, there came a whole new release of relationship and peace. (For details see No 143 in our notes.)
16. Lastly what is "LOVE"?
 - L Love lets go. It releases others and gives the problem to God.
 - O Love overlooks. It refuses to look at shortcomings, but praises God for working in others.
 - V Love volunteers. It reaches out to bless others and help them.
 - E Love expects. It expects the power of God to turn things around to His glory.