

**FORGIVENESS**  
(Luke 15:11-24)

**(PART 2)**

“My son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found”! In every sense of the word forgiveness is resurrection from death to life; as a light it guides us to eternal happiness from being lost to being found.

In the story of the Prodigal Son, two people are of importance in his life: His father and his brother. At his decision to leave home and waste all he had with the pleasures of the world, he became impoverished and desperately need to be forgiven. Walking up to the reality of what he had done, he did two most important things: repented, and returned home. He said, I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants. He started his journey home and when at the distance his father saw him, moved with pity and tenderness, ran to meet him with the welcome of forgiveness. He said to his father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son. His father responded by sending his servants to bring him the best robe, a ring and sandals, and bring out also the fattened calf to be killed in celebration. Let's be merry, for my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. At that tremendous act of forgiveness, he doubly must have felt clean, and free. The brother however held him guilty and took no part in the celebration.

Blessed is he who forgives, for he will be blessed with forgiveness. David, when persecuted by King Saul, forsook the idea of killing him, when it was in his power to do so. Instead he said, The Lord forbid that I should do this to my master, the Lord's anointed. Saul left the cave and went his way, unharmed and when he hearing of David's action said, You, David, are more upright in God's eyes than I, for you have repaid me good, but I have rewarded you evil (I Samuel 24:5-6, 17). While Job was going through his ordeal, his best friends added to his suffering by their accusations and the pointing of their fingers with their useless words of counsel. Even though we read of how frustrated Job was with them, at the end when God told him to pray for them, he obeyed and while he was praying, God turned his captivity and restored his fortunes, when he prayed for his friends; also the Lord gave him twice as much as he had before (Job 42:10).

Paul admonishes us with these words, Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is honest and proper and noble in the sight of everyone. If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone, beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave the way open for [God's] wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay says the Lord. But if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head; do not let yourself be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (Romans 12:17-21). We don't call those who have hurt us enemies, but in essence they are in our minds. Our responsibility towards them will be of showing forgiveness by helping them in their time of need. No doubt, they will be overwhelmed and bothered by their consciences- the heap burning coal, in the memory of what they have done to us. That will show them that our God is real, and that He lives in us, and who knows if someone in the course of time will not

accept Him as a result? Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, said Yahshua, to show that you are the children of your Father Who is in heaven; for He makes the sun rise on the wicked and on the good, and makes the rain fall upon the upright and the wrongdoers. You, therefore, must be perfect [growing into complete maturity of godliness in mind and character, having reached the proper height of virtue and integrity], as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:44-48).

In our unforgiveness, we come short of showing the world that we are God's children, for isn't love and forgiveness that which distinguishes us from the the world? Unforgiveness calls for vengeance; love, however, calls for forgiveness. So for our benefit, let's forgive even when we are not asked, for it could happen that the person we are upset with didn't intend to hurt us, and is not aware of the need to ask for forgiveness. We are holding him/her guilty of things they don't know, and at the same time, we are in bondage to the demands of the spirit of bitterness. The writer of the book of Hebrews has this to say to us, Strive to live in peace with everybody and pursue that consecration and holiness without which no one will [ever] see the Lord; **exercise foresight ( the power to foresee, looking forward) and be on the watch to look to see that no one falls back from and fails to secure God's grace, in order that no root of resentment shoots forth and causes trouble and bitter torment, and the many become contaminated and defiled by it** (Hebrews 12:15).

When our first parents sinned in the garden of Eden, God showed them His forgiveness by dressing them with long coats of skins, which cost the animals their blood; God promised salvation to the world in verse fifteen of chapter three, And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her Offspring; (Yahshua), He will bruise and tread your head underfoot, and you will lie in wait and bruise His heel. The Offspring of the woman was Yahshua, Who came and died in our instead paying the debts of our sins and freed us from the power of Satan. He also showed forgiveness when He moved them out of the garden so they would not eat from the tree of life and live forever in that state of sin and condemnation.

We are only "free indeed", when we are able to forgive; free indeed to run the race of our faith; free indeed to fight the spiritual fight before us and be victorious, as Paul was at the end of his life, I have fought the good fight; I have finished the race, I have kept the faith (II Timothy 4:7). Let's rid of all bitterness that entangles us keeping us from running the race, always looking forward to Yahshua, the author of forgiveness. Unforgiveness looks back, forgiveness looks forward; it is heaven bound.