

UNFORGIVENESS IS HELL

Some people leave the church, the cell group, the company, the neighbourhood, the state, the country and even the world because of unforgiveness. Someone may have hurt them and they cannot stand to be around that person, so they relocate as far as they can go to avoid the person.

Wouldn't it be funny if they ended up in Heaven and found that their mansion is right next to the person whom they could not stand on Earth? Now they would have to live in eternity next to him. Wouldn't that be Hell?

In the news earlier this year, Coptic Christians have come out and been publicly forgiving their tormentors. This has sent shock waves throughout millions in Egypt, who are amazed that the Christians still forgive in spite of all that has happened to them.

Amr Adeeb, perhaps the most prominent talk show host in Egypt, leaned forward as he searched for a response.

"The Copts of Egypt ... are made of ... steel!" he finally uttered.

Moments earlier, Adeeb was watching a colleague in a simple home in Alexandria speak with the widow of Naseem Faheem, the guard at St. Mark's Cathedral in the seaside Mediterranean city.

On Palm Sunday, the guard had redirected a suicide bomber through the perimeter metal detector, where the terrorist detonated. Likely the first to die in the blast, Faheem saved the lives of dozens inside the church.

"I'm not angry at the one who did this," said his wife, children by her side. "I'm telling him, 'May God forgive you, and we also forgive you. Believe me, we forgive you.'

"How great is this forgiveness you have!" his voice cracked. "If it were my father, I could never say this. But this is their faith and religious conviction."

Joyce Meyer said:

Many people ruin their health and their lives by taking the poison of bitterness, resentment and unforgiveness.

Forgive the person who badly hurt you. Forgive quickly. The quicker you do it, the easier it is.

When you forgive, you must cancel the debt. Do not spend your life paying and collecting debts. Hebrews 10:30 says that vengeance belongs to the Lord; He'll repay and settle the cases of His people. Let God pay you for past injustices. Do not try to collect from the people who hurt you, because the people who hurt you can't pay you.

Debra had a very difficult customer who came up to her near closing time one day to ask many frustrating questions delaying her until she reached home at nearly 11 pm that night. She managed to keep her cool. The next day, she was told that she was being awarded a gold service award.

It is almost like ***Undercover Boss***, a television franchise series that features the experiences of senior executives working undercover in their own companies to investigate how their employees really work.

Could God be testing you when you are faced with people you cannot stand? Can you forgive them and pass the test and enjoy the rewards of Heaven?

Some advise from Romans 12:

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

16 Live in harmony with one another.

17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil.

18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends,

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Saint Paul had to remind the Romans 6 times to live at peace with everyone. Bible teachers like to mention that if a word appears a number of times in the chapter, then it must be important. Of course, he did not use the same words 6 times but mentioned the same point 6 times in various ways. Read these verses 6 times over and perhaps you can overcome and be victorious.

Corrie ten Boom says forgiveness is letting go of the bell rope. It is just that simple, but when you do so, the bell keeps ringing. Momentum is still at work. However, if you keep your hands off the rope, the bell will begin to slow and eventually stop.

It is like that with forgiveness. When you decide to forgive, the old feelings of unforgiveness may continue to assert themselves. After all, they have lots of momentum. But if you affirm your decision to forgive, that unforgiving spirit will begin to slow and will eventually be still. Forgiveness is letting go of the "rope" of retribution.

Martin Cheah