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## UNFORGIVENESS – A PRISON OF CHOICE

The most valuable gift we have ever received from Father God is forgiveness of our sins which comes through His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus made the choice to die for our sins. He was an innocent man, put to death for you and me. He took the punishment, and we received the pardon.

Jesus spoke a lot about forgiving in scripture. Peter asked him if he was supposed to forgive seven times in a day, and Jesus said, no, seventy times seven, which is 490 times in one day. Now if you divide that out by hours and minutes it comes out to twenty times an hour, or once every three minutes. There is no room for not forgiving others in a person's life.

So, why would we call unforgiveness a prison of choice? Jesus told Peter about the seventy times seven then tells a story of a man that had a great debt. He could not possibly pay it. He was brought in before his creditor and the man demanded that he pay the debt. He asked for mercy and the creditor forgave him of the entire debt. He could have put him in jail.

Then, this man that owed the debt saw another man that owed him a small debt. He demanded that he pay the debt. Like himself, the man could not pay it. Instead of forgiving him for that debt he threw him in prison. When the first man's creditor heard what happened we see the results in Matthew 18:33-34 where it says, ***“33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? 34 And his lord (the creditor) was wrath, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.”***

The word tormentors in this verse means torturer. This would be someone that oversees prisoners and torments or tortures them. This person represents Satan, who is the greatest tormentor of all.

Jesus used this illustration to show us that we have been forgiven our sins when we didn't deserve to be forgiven. We should likewise forgive others their sins without expecting anything in return. If not, we, like that first man will live a life of torment, controlled by Satan. We are in a prison that we chose because we did not forgive.

Is it worth not forgiving others? I would say no. We should always live a life of instant forgiveness and instant repentance. There should never be any place for not forgiving others in our lives. If we make the choice to not forgive then we face the ultimate consequences like that first man did.

Remember, forgiveness frees others, but it also frees you. Now, you have the choice to either stay in that prison of unforgiveness or to forgive and be set free.