

new FORGIVENESS

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34)

Some of the last words Jesus spoke, were words asking God to extend His forgiveness to those who were crucifying Him. Instead of cursing them, promising vengeance, Jesus looked on them with pity because they didn't know who they were crucifying and even in those moments Jesus' heart was for reconciliation between God's kids and himself. Words that have echoed through the generations, “Father, forgive them...”

Perhaps Jesus had the ability to not only see those who stood before him in that moment, but He could also see each of us. And perhaps the cry of His heart He saw you and said, “them...I am doing this for them because they are worth it, Father, forgive them...” On the cross Jesus showed us what forgiveness needs to look like. A forgiveness that is radical, unfair, and sacrificial. A blueprint for what forgiveness needs to look like for us.

Forgiveness is not a word we slap on a situation that excuses pain others have caused us, extending forgiveness also doesn't mean we allow hurtful people back into our lives. Forgiveness means we release others from the debt we believe they owe us by removing the power they hold over us. Forgiveness actually means taking back our authority. Unforgiveness becomes a poison to our souls, it eats away at our peace, it causes us to become fearful or paranoid, it keeps us captive to what has been done to us and we become a slave to it.

This new level of forgiveness will require a level of emotional and spiritual maturity we have never had before and it will only come through Jesus. This new level of forgiveness we will need to look through the eyes of Jesus and say, “Father, forgive them...even if they knew what they were doing, forgive them. May they find salvation,

may they find peace, may they find wholeness.” This new level of forgiveness removes any power the enemy had to try and steal, kill and destroy our purpose.

Our hearts need to transition to see those the way Jesus does and our hearts break for them like His does. May we desire to see even those who hurt us, to be reconciled with the Father because the alternative is not something we should want for anybody. May this be a practice we continue throughout the year, that we make peace with the discomfort of it and by doing so we become more like Christ and less like the world.

PRAYER

FATHER, GIVE ME THE GRACE TO FORGIVE THOSE WHO HAVE HURT ME. I ASK THAT YOU WOULD MOVE ANY AND ALL CHAINS OF BONDAGE THAT HAVE COME FROM UNFORGIVENESS. GIVE ME EYES TO SEE THE WAY YOU DO AND THE COURAGE TO CHOOSE FORGIVENESS DAILY. I ASK THAT BY FORGIVING YOU WOULD NOT ONLY SET ME FREE BUT ALSO SET THEM FREE. YOU ARE THE JUDGE I AM NOT, I RELEASE THE WEIGHT OF JUDGEMENT INTO YOUR HANDS AND ASK THAT YOUR WILL WOULD BE DONE IN THEIR LIVES. HELP ME TO WALK THIS OUT DAILY, HELP ME TO NOT PICK IT BACK UP AND WHEN THEY WORLD DEMANDS I NOT FORGIVE, REMIND ME OF THE CROSS AND THE FORGIVENESS YOU HAVE EXTENDED TO ME. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.