

# *SOUL FOOD*

*September/October 2019*



## ***The practice of forgiveness*** by Rev. Chuck Blair

*Brother, sister, mother, father, husband, wife, son, daughter, friend, colleague, neighbour....our relationships contain many people with the potential to hurt us, very often in small ongoing ways. Sometimes in trying to be good people, we brush these hurts aside, thinking "I am not a vindictive or overly sensitive person, these things shouldn't bother me." But they do. They do because our egos are like magnets, and resentments are attracted to them.*

*What is the impact of holding onto these resentments?*

*Do we hold back in our lives?*

*Do we argue with people?*

*Do we gossip? What does the Bible teach about this?*

*Jesus taught the art of forgiveness. "**Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?**" Jesus answered, "**I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times**"*

*(Matthew 18:21-22.) Does this mean we are to forgive 539 times exactly? Yes. And more.*

*"By this [Matthew 18:21-22] He meant that they were to **forgive as often as he sinned. Their forgiveness was to know no limits**, that is, was to be **eternal and timeless, which is holy**" ([\*Secrets of Heaven 433\*](#)).*

### ***Patience with the process***

*The Lord promises that forgiveness is possible. Even when hurt seems too great to repair, God tells us "**I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh**" (Ezekiel 11:19).*

*We experience a heart of stone when we are too angry, too selfish, or too frozen by the pain others have caused us. A heart of flesh, while it may be vulnerable, it is compassionate. A heart of flesh sees that while we are feeling pain, the other person may also be hurting for that pain they caused us. We*

can get so caught up in ourselves that we do not even notice another is struggling from the offense. It is true that people need to be held accountable for their actions. But these people also need patience from us. As it was said: "Be patient with me" (Matthew 18:26). Practicing patience with another, holding onto the hope and vision for our relationship with them, is a true act of compassion. We need to invite the Lord into the journey and ask for the courage it takes for us to be patient with another and the understanding needed to see that they too are working through the pain that needs forgiveness.

### ***Resentments and a faulty worldview***

The idea that forgiveness means that sins are washed away is one of the reasons why we sometime shy away from forgiveness. We sometimes think that forgiveness means forgetting and that feels wrong. Sometimes we feel we need our resentments to educate us about the people in the world around us and guide us in the ways we should act towards them. We feel like we need our memory of past hurts so that we can maintain boundaries with people. But the Lord is all-knowing and mercy itself—therefore there must be a way for knowing and forgiveness to exist together, a clear-headed forgiveness that forgets nothing and forgives all. Here's one way of thinking about it: **how might it feel to look at someone who has hurt us and not feel anger?** Is this even possible? This is how the angels are described **"those who have charity hardly notice the evil in another person, but instead notice all the goods and truths that are his; and on his evils and falsities they place a good interpretation. Of such a nature are all angels, it being something they have from the Lord, who bends everything evil into good"** (*Secrets of Heaven* 1079).

Now this doesn't negate the fact that we do need to protect ourselves from people who make a habit of hurting us. The key is to invite the Lord in to the process. It is the Lord who will keep us separated from our resentments, if we let him. We must be rigorous and disciplined in our endeavours to forgive. We must get used to naming each hurt and then putting it away and asking the Lord to keep the resentment from us. He is the only one with the power to do this. And it must be done **70 x 7 times, which means all the time, without limit.**

### ***The power of forgiveness:***

***When we forgive others there is a freedom where we are no longer shackled by our own anger. It moves us from our selfish illusions to a***

*beautiful reality. It is hard work. But letting go of the fantasies that we can change the past, that we can change others, or even that we are the ones who can change ourselves opens room for God to help us ward off the resentment we feel. **Each time we forgive, it paves the way for the next time we need to forgive.** Practicing the courage and patience, and letting the Lord into the process of forgiveness **becomes like exercising a muscle**, it grows stronger and stronger. **Together with Him we can come to a point where forgiveness is intuitive, a blessed way to live!***

### ***Reflections for when you find yourself unwilling to forgive***

- *Do I believe that forgiving requires something of the other person first?*
- *Has this wrongdoing and resentment become part of my identity?*
- *What are the pleasures of this anger and resentment?*
- *Is there a part of me that wants to entertain the anger?*
- *Is withholding forgiveness about my ego?*
- *What would forgiveness look like?*
- *Is this where I want to stay?*

### ***When you notice anger and resentments:***

- *Name the wound.*
- *Name the trigger.*
- *Name the person.*
- *Prayerfully let it go.*

***Rev Todd Beiswenger*** is visiting Perth from 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> December  
*As this becomes a busy time of year please diarise these dates.*

*A visitor, **JODY EDMUNDS**, from the Westville Society, is also visiting from 1 st to 9<sup>th</sup> december .*

## ***Calendar for September and October***

<i>Sun 1 Sep</i>	<i>10:30am Worship</i>	<i>Environmental Centre, end of Groat St, N Beach</i>
<i>Sun 8 Sep</i>	<i>10:30 am Worship Godly Play</i>	<i>McDougall House Clydesdale Road Como</i>
<i>Sun 15 Sep</i>	<i>10:30am Worship</i>	<i>Environmental Centre, end of Groat St, N Beach</i>
<i>Sun 22 Sep</i>	<i>10:30 am Worship Godly Play</i>	<i>McDougall House Clydesdale Road Como</i>
<i>Sun 29 Sep</i>	<i>Home worship Off the left eye <a href="https://youtu.be/8iRi04ViVgk">https://youtu.be/8iRi04ViVgk</a></i>	
<i>Sun 6 Oct</i>	<i>10:30 am Worship</i>	<i>Environmental Centre, end of Groat St, N Beach</i>
<i>Sun 13 Oct</i>	<i>10:30 am Worship Godly Pay</i>	<i>McDougall House Clydesdale Road Como</i>
<i>Sun 20 Oct</i>	<i>10:30 am Worship</i>	<i>Environmental Centre, end of Groat St, N Beach</i>
<i>Sun 27 Oct</i>	<i>10:30 am Worship Godly Pay</i>	<i>McDougall House Clydesdale Road Como</i>

## ***Godly Play***

*Deb is following the stories of **Jacob** through to **Joseph** in Egypt.  
Those parents who are interested in the spiritual correspondences of  
the stories please refer to AC 3656 onwards.*



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