

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG189 – Seek His Divine Nature of Forgiveness

Hi everyone, and welcome to this podcast. We are going to be doing something a little bit different today. I am going to be playing a message that I believe needs to be heard at this time. This is a message that was brought in a church congregational setting a while back. The name of this message is, *Seek His Divine Nature of Forgiveness*. It was recommended to me by someone who had recently re-heard the audio recording of that service and came to me, saying, "It just feels like something that would be good to review and study at this time, because of all the things that are transpiring right now in the world around us." After listening to it, I agree it should be studied, it should be heard once again.

This idea of forgiveness that is spoken of is truly a nature of God Himself, His divine nature. It is an aspect of God which is important for us as believers to appropriate – not just to have as a doctrinal concept, but literally to appropriate this divine nature from God in order that we have a capacity, a capability, of forgiving. On this level, I think that we as believers need to be able to walk in an effectiveness; and without the ability to forgive, I believe that our effectiveness in prayer, our effectiveness in speaking the Words of the Lord, is really thwarted.

So I am hoping that this will be a great blessing to you. I know I will listen to it and study it again, really seeking to appropriate it on a deeper level into my own life. But I want to bless it to each and every one of you. I hope that it is a great impartation, and I just want to pray, "Father, let this amazing attribute of Yours, this attribute of forgiveness, be something that all of Your children are able to walk in as we move forward in this life and in our walk with God." Amen.

Nelson Mandela to me is such an amazing man. I just want us to really honor him this morning in this service, and with all of our hearts in what God is speaking to us, recognize that this guy really tapped into a principle in God. Some of you may not remember the events that took place in South Africa, but we in the fellowship had a church in South Africa, and at the time we were very concerned, as everyone was, about the bloodbath that was ready to take place; actually, we had made plans to evacuate the members of the body from South Africa to Brazil for their protection. And so, this is something that is very alive and well to us. What Nelson Mandela did really was a miracle; he really stopped the bloodbath that was to take place. And even though members of his party begged him that there be 24 to 48 hours of revenge against all of the whites in the government and in the nation, he said, "No, that does not work. If we are going to forgive, and if we are going to be one, then we are never going to get there that way." And so, he literally put himself on the line, once again. As we know, he spent twenty-seven years in prison putting his life on the line for his country. But once he got out, he put his life on the line with his own people, and he literally was able to turn the tide of a bloodbath that would have been worse for the history of South Africa than was apartheid.

It is fantastic to think about one man really being able to accomplish so much, literally performing a miracle; and the way he performed that miracle was by tapping in to a principle of God. This idea of forgiveness is what we are going to focus on this morning, because this was the foundation of who and what Nelson Mandela was all about. Somehow, in the time he spent in prison, he got a hold of this

revelation, and it changed his life. As you know, he went into prison as almost a terrorist at the time. He was leaning more and more; that was the difference between him and Martin Luther King. Martin Luther King was always committed to non-violence in his protest against racism and against the separation of the races, but Mandela was not so. He was becoming very violent in his attacks against the white government that was there; and in fact, he was thankful, in his own words, that he was caught when he was, because he was in the process of getting ready to kill many people in the moves that they had planned. So he was taken to prison, and somehow in prison, this angry young man got a hold of probably the greatest revelation that there is about God, and that is the revelation of forgiveness.

I wish that somehow this morning we could really tap into this, because I feel like it goes over our heads how much of a key log this idea of forgiveness really is in our walk with God. I mean, here one man getting a hold of this revelation, and inculcating it to his own person, was able to change the direction of a nation. And that is part of what grips me about this, because I believe that we, as sons of God, are not just supposed to walk around through the earth as good Christians; I believe that we are supposed to change the course of nations. I believe that we are here in the earth at this time in order to see the Kingdom of God manifest, to see the binding of the kingdom of satan and wickedness, and to see manifest into this earth the Kingdom of God. We are literally to change the history of all the nations in our lifetimes. And to me, we have such a great example in Mandela, who, as one man, was able to change the history of a nation and to influence all of the nations. But I see the sons of God coming forth to influence the history of every nation, and to change the course that the nations are on.

I believe that in a very real way, the nations today are on a course of destruction. I believe that so many things are setting themselves up, that we see in the biblical prophecies, that end with terrible destruction. And I keep looking to see that what we are all about is not just having good services or worship. I am looking for the prophets, priests, and kings to come forth in this hour to mature as sons of God, the way that Ephesians 4 talks about, and the way that Romans 8 talks about; until there is a change that transpires for the nations, that this course of destruction the world is on is somehow pulled back from the very brink. And I think that for us, Mandela should be a figure of faith, saying, "If he could do that as one man, what could the body of Christ do if we would get a hold of this same revelation of forgiveness that he had?" It is not something he came up with; it is a deep principle in God.

I think it goes over our heads a lot of times how absolutely *aggro* God is about forgiveness. God is intense about this idea! He is driven about forgiveness, and I just think we kind of miss that. We know that Christ came and He offers to us salvation; but you have to kind of back up and follow the picture of the Scriptures and how absolutely driven that God is to execute this idea of forgiveness. I mean, His bringing forth Christ in the earth was a very intense, dramatic, proactive event. You know, we read that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son; but something about having repeated it so many times loses the absolute determination of it. God was determined to forgive us. God was determined to roll back our history and to change us, standing on the brink of destruction in our own lives and in our own beings. And I just want us to get this idea, because if we do not have this idea of how literally intense and violent God is in His Spirit and determination to bring forgiveness, then we are not going to have the determination in our own selves to get it, to understand it.

Everything that God did in Christ was about forgiveness, and forgiveness is something that is tremendously proactive. In the Greek, *aphiēmi* is the word that is used for forgiveness, especially in Luke 23:34. But the word in the Greek may mean something different than the way you think about the definition of forgiveness. It means *to remove the guilt that is resulting from the wrongdoing*; in other

words, you can see the drive that is necessary, God literally pulling off of us the guilt. To me, when we talk about forgiveness, it is such a passive thing. First of all, we wait for somebody to come up and say, "Well, I did this, I'm sorry." And then we just kind of go, "Oh, okay, I forgive you." That is not forgiveness. There is no emotion, there is no drive in that. There has to be something that literally, on our part as the forgiver, is able to reach out and rip off of that person the guilt of what they did – literally remove the guilt from the person.

It is interesting, because in the Greek, there is nothing about forgiveness that changes what happened. In other words, it is not reversing what the person did. And that is interesting, because Mandela had to live in that. I mean, what was done was done. What happened through apartheid happened – him forgiving did not roll back the fact that he spent twenty-seven years in prison. That still was true. And all of the blood that had been spilled during apartheid, all of that blood was spilled – it did not resurrect those that were killed through the process of apartheid by him forgiving. See, the history was the history. So, in forgiveness, it does not reverse the event. Forgiveness does not reverse the event. That is why, even after you are forgiven, there is still a place that you engage in repentance – it is our repentance that is able to reverse what has been done. But forgiveness itself is the power, the authority, to remove from the person who committed those acts the guilt of having committed them. That is really what forgiveness is. When we say we are forgiven through Christ for our sins, we are saying that the guilt of those actions is removed. It does not say that we never did those things; but the guilt from having committed those acts is taken from us. And that takes a lot of determination. It takes work. It takes planning, almost. It takes a calculation. God had to plan a whole enabling of, "How is He going to remove our guilt from us?" And so, following Scriptural principles and spiritual principles, and following the demands of righteousness, He was able to remove from us guilt.

I want you to see how much time God spent with this, how calculated He had to be. He had to figure it out, then He had to go execute it; then He had to make all of these things happen until there was a removing of our guilt. God is a forgiver. We have to see that it is part of His nature. It is the nature of God to forgive; it is literally part of His being. I know we say that God is love, but God is forgiveness. Without Him being that much forgiveness, it would never happen, because we have all violated way too much. The things that have gone on – we sometimes do not understand the patience of God, but the patience of God is out of His determination that He is going to pull the guilt off of us for whatever we have done and whatever things have happened.

So, I want us to get a hold of this, because one of the things that I am constantly doing is looking for the reasons why things do not happen the way they should happen. In other words, when we read about the authority we should have, you have to say, "Where is it?" When we read about the healings that we should have, you have to say, "Where are they?" When we look to the Word of God about that which was promised for us to move in, I feel like we have fantastic revelation and understanding about the things given to us by God; but the question is, "Why do they not seem to work many times?"

There is a Scripture in 2 Peter the first chapter, starting with verse 2: "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." See, there is something about knowledge. We have to know, we have to understand; that is what we are talking about this morning. I want you to understand the very nature of God and how determined He is to execute forgiveness. Verses 3-4:

Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these

He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

You can go on and keep reading, because it is very interesting. Peter is talking about the fact that we have these phenomenal promises that God has given, and the reason for those promises is that we might become a partaker of His divine nature. It is something that God has given us these words – He has spoken to us the things that are to take place, what we are to be, how we are to move, who we are in this earth, how the Word of God is to flow through us as a living Word to the world. All of these things God has made as a provision. But we, many times, look around and say, “Well, it just does not seem to work that way. We lay hands on the sick and they do not seem to recover the way they should. We prophesy with authority over the nations and things do not seem to change the way they should.” What is the gap between the promise and the provision, and the fulfillment and the execution of what we have? It is something we all contend with. And I am not sure that this idea of forgiveness is not one of the answers that we are looking for. I do not think we realize the dynamic of this idea of forgiveness, and what it means to God and what He is trying to work in us.

I want to go to Matthew the sixth chapter, and we will start with verse 14. The verses preceding this are what we call the Lord’s Prayer. So we are talking about the Lord’s Prayer; and of course, part of the Lord’s Prayer is, “Forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors.” Part of this prayer that we are praying, the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples to pray – it really is the Disciples’ prayer, not the Lord’s Prayer; this is for us to pray – part of it is we are saying, “Forgive me, as I have already forgiven others.” That part of it is in past tense. You are asking, present tense, “Forgive me”; but you are saying, “Forgive me now in this moment, because I have already executed forgiveness on those who have offended me or sinned against me.” That is a huge dynamic in this prayer.

Verses 14-15 follow up the Lord’s Prayer: “For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.” That is a heavy concept; because, again, we know how determined God is to forgive. He has done all this work and energy to forgive us, and yet all of a sudden He throws this right in the middle of it, and He does not hide it. You say, “Why haven’t we gotten this before?” I don’t know, it cannot be in more plain sight than it is. But He has thrown this provision in there, that His forgiving us is based on us forgiving. Wow!

In Matthew 18, there is a story about a slave; do you remember that story? He comes to the master and he wants to be forgiven of all his debt, so the master forgives him. Then he goes out to one of his fellow slaves, who owes him a little bit of money, and he starts choking the guy to death, you know, saying, “Give me my money!” The master hears about this and he comes back and grabs the guy by the scruff of the neck, and he does not just throw him in prison, he has him tortured. So you have to ask the question, theologically, can you lose your forgiveness? Well, it would appear from that Scripture that God can recall His forgiving you. It is a parable; it is right there! He said this guy was forgiven his debt, and then all of a sudden, the Lord said, “No, now you are going to have to pay it all. And I am going to torture you, by the way.” So it seems like the guy lost his state of grace, or lost his state of forgiveness, because of his lack of forgiveness.

God is determined; and the reason is because what God is really after for us is us putting on this divine nature. That is what Peter said – we have these great and precious promises, we have all these things that we are supposed to do and move in and have, not just so that we can move in the gifts and the ministries of the Holy Spirit; it is because God ultimately wants us to partake in His divine nature. That is

what Peter is saying – God wants you to take on His nature. He wants you to have His nature. What is His nature? His nature is forgiveness. See, that is His divine nature. Is He love? Yes, He is love. But He is forgiveness. He is all about that. That is part of His nature, and He wants you to have that; and that is the tricky part of this. I do not know if you have tried this, but try working at forgiving somebody – I mean to the root, like God is forgiving you in Christ. What I have found in trying to do that is that I can't. I am not able. Because, obviously, if you are forgiving somebody, they have hurt you. They have offended you. They have wronged you. They have done something against you. So, when you go to forgive somebody, it brings up this whole reality in you of what they have done to you, and what has transpired. Of course, you know God has to face that, because we violated Him – going back to the Garden, starting there, and faithfully continuing in offending Him for thousands of years. So don't think that it is easy for God. He is hurt. He is wounded. He is affected by what we have done in violating His laws and His covenants and His commandments. So for Him to forgive us takes a lot.

When you start to think about forgiving somebody, things are going to come up. And I think a lot of times, what people finally end up with is that they come to the place where they say, "Well, I am going to forgive you," but it does not really go away. It does not really go away; and that is the sign, or the symbol, that you have not really forgiven. When God forgives, He forgets. When we forgive, many times we do it almost by faith, you could say, but we are not really able to forget what happened. We are not really able to be completely reconciled. Remember, Christ came to reconcile us to the Father. That is a relationship issue, isn't it? To be reconciled to God, we are supposed to have this close oneness; we are supposed to come into a oneness with God. Well, think about those people you have forgiven – are you one with them? Are you really able to just literally melt into that person with no walls, no thought, for you have forgotten, even, what happened, as though for you, it never happened; because you have removed the guilt in your forgiveness, so the person literally is free from the guilt of what happened? For us to do that, it has to be real.

Don't you want God's forgiveness of you to be real? I do not want to walk around here going, "Oh great, I am forgiven, in Christ I am forgiven," and all of a sudden go to heaven and have Him say, "Well, I know I forgave you, but remember when you did that? I still remember." That is not exactly the reception I want at the throne. I want it to be gone in Christ. I want it to be expunged, as though it never happened, to stand before God and He will never remember all that I have done. That is forgiveness. I question whether this is really possible in the human nature. And I am just saying that for me, I am not saying this is a Word from the Lord. I am saying that in my experience, I do not know that I have the ability in me to forgive that way, as God forgives. I do not know that it is within me to do it. All I can come to is somewhere in between, where I forgive, but I do not think that I forgot. It comes up again at night when you are laying there, or when some event reminds you of it and you know it is still there, and you know there is still some aught between you and that person that exists, and it is not gone; and no matter how much they apologize or even repent on their own, it is still in you. I do not know that it is in the nature of the human to be able to do this. That is why Peter says, "He has given us these promises and provisions that we might become partakers of His divine nature."

I think the way you begin true forgiveness is by asking God for His nature of forgiveness. I think you have to knock, and keep on knocking. We have to ask, and keep on asking. Because the ultimate thing, you see, that God is really after with you, is He is after you having His nature. If you say, "What is the purpose and the ultimate plan of everything in God?" In His mind and heart, it is that you have His nature, that we take on His nature. So, in a sense, when God brings up this idea of forgiveness, He is almost throwing something at us that is impossible for us. It is impossible for us in our human natures to

do this; and therefore, He is baiting us to try to press in to something that is beyond our ability, and the only way I can get it is by getting a hold of Him. The only way I can have this is by having Him and His nature become my nature. But according to Peter, we have the provision, we have the promise that we are going to take on the nature of God; but this forces it. This becomes a daily issue in our lives, it really does. It becomes a daily issue. And I wonder how much we try to accomplish that we can never accomplish, because we do not really have that power of God moving with us. We do not really have the fullness to overflowing of the Holy Spirit. They are withholding as much as we are; that is really what this is saying. He is saying, "I will forgive you as you have forgiven everybody else." So, if that is the state of my being in the Spirit, that all I can have of God, all I can have of Christ, all I can have of the Holy Spirit, is to the level and the depth that I have been able to perform this act of forgiving, then, boy, that almost becomes measurable, doesn't it? Our lack becomes measurable.

I think this is something that we go after. I know we are in a time of hungering after the Lord. I know that we are in a time of really aggressive prophecy, and prayer, and intercession; and I do not think that this takes away from it. What I am trying to do is add to it, so that what we are doing is really effective.

I want to look at Mark the eleventh chapter, starting at verse 20. This is a cool story. Remember when Jesus cursed the fig tree? Alright, this is that story. He curses the fig tree, and the fig tree withers. After that, He and the disciples are passing back by the same place and they see the fig tree. Verses 20-22: "As they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up. Being reminded, Peter said to Him, 'Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has withered.' And Jesus answered saying to them, 'Have faith in God.'" We talk about faith a lot. So, He is saying, "Have faith in God" – does that mean that our faith can be affected by this whole issue of repentance? Look at all the things that Jesus is telling them that they should be able to do. Verses 22-25:

"Have faith in God. Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him. Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you [and here we go]. Whenever you stand praying, forgive."

Have you ever wondered why you could never cast that mountain into the sea? Where is the power of our intercession? Where is the power of our prayer and our prophetic proclamation? Where is the power that we should move in as true sons of God? Is it possible that it is tied up in this whole thing of forgiveness? If we are supposed to be granted everything we pray for, how many times have you repeated that? "Whatever I ask for, Lord, You are going to give me." Did you get it? Many times not. Why not? If He so blatantly says, "If you ask this, you are going to get it," either God is a liar, or there is something else at work here, beyond what we have been able to comprehend. "Have faith in God"; "Speak to the mountain, 'Be cast into the sea'"; "Whatever you ask for, believe in your heart that you have it, and it will be granted to you." Verse 24: "Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you." All. See, in that part of the verse there are no loopholes. "All things that you ask." There is nothing restraining the fulfillment of that verse, until you get to the next one.

Verses 25-26: "Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone..." Damn, couldn't He have just limited that down a little bit? Anything against anyone? Come on, Lord! Who doesn't have something against somebody? Why couldn't He have limited it, you know, to your second cousin on your mother's side? And then you could go, "Well, I know I don't have a problem with that

person, so I guess I'm okay with this." No, "...if you have **anything** against **anyone**, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.'" How can we stand in transgression and pretend that we can pray for anything? How do you talk to God when you are standing with no grace, with no forgiveness yourself? How is He going to ever do anything for us, if we still remain in our sin? If we still remain in the guilt of our sin, there is no way we expect fulfillment, being in that condition. But the truth is, we are in that condition, more than we want to admit to ourselves. And when we try to begin to get ourselves out of that condition, we come to this great conclusion, "I don't think I can. I think I have to approach this from another way." But God keeps beating this into us, going, "You forgive, and I will forgive. I will forgive, and if you do not forgive, I will take it back."

The great covenant that we walk in, in Jeremiah 31:31, is all about the fact that God is going to forgive our sin and our iniquity, and He is going to remember it no more. That is repeated again when we get to Hebrews the tenth chapter. Let's look at that, Hebrews 10:16-18:

"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, and upon their mind I will write them [see, we have to become partakers of His divine nature]," He then says, "and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.

There is nothing else necessary, once forgiveness transpires. And how does it transpire? When we forgive, that is how it transpires. That is when it transpires. But the whole covenant that we walk in, the covenant that is Christ, is all about this reality that we must be forgivers. Jesus hung on the cross, and one of the last things He said was, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." See, we know this about Jesus, but it is obvious He Himself had taken on the divine nature. You do not go through what Jesus went through and in your human nature forgive everybody. You do not go through the beating and the scourging and the whipping, and being dragged through town and being spat upon, and having your garments stolen from you, your outer garment ripped apart, your clothing cast lots for; you do not watch people rob you blind, injure you in that kind of way, and then hanging there, still in the midst of it, say, "Father, forgive them." He had taken on the nature of the Father. He had that same divine nature in Himself. And Christ is here to impart it to us. He has given us these promises. He has given us the enabling to take on His nature; and by taking on His nature, we can forgive. Don't start by trying to forgive. Start by seeking His nature. Hunger after His nature. Begin to ask and knock and seek, until that nature of God is imparted to us, because then forgiveness will flow from us.

We can see that, number one, how can God use the body of Christ to prophesy the things that are going to transpire in the earth if we are unforgiving? We would cross up the entire history of His plan, because everything about the plan of God surrounds one thing: His ability to forgive, His determination to forgive. I think that as we get further into the things of God moving, it is going to blow our minds what happens for people. And we have such an illustration through Nelson Mandela and what happened in South Africa. Anybody who would have studied what was going on and been familiar with the surroundings would have bet all of their livelihood that a bloodbath would ensue. It was impossible for the history to go any other way – except for one man who learned forgiveness. And it had to be real. It had to be real. And with him, it was. You say, "How did he do it?" He tapped in to the divine nature of God. He took upon himself that divine nature. It is a provision for us. Don't look at it and say, "Oh, that is impossible!" No, it is what God is looking for. God wants us to become partakers of His divine nature.

In Hebrews 12, it talks about how we are disciplined. It talks about the discipline of God on our lives. What is the ultimate purpose of discipline, according to that Scripture? That we might be a partaker of His nature – that is what it is all about. Everything we are going through has one ultimate purpose in God's heart, that we would take on His nature. And so, He puts us between this rock and a hard place, and He says, "If you are going to move, if you are going to be effective, if you are going to be the sons of God, if you are going to pray, if you are going to prophesy, if you are going to lay hands on the sick and expect them to recover..."; if we by prophetic proclamation are going to have faith to change the tide that this earth is on right now, that this world is going into, we are going to have to know what forgiveness is all about. We are going to have to forgive. We are going to have to have that divine nature quality in us.

God has put us in a wonderful place. What does the Scripture say? "To man it is impossible, but with God, all things are possible." This is possible. It is possible for us to reach in this morning and begin to appropriate His divine nature into our lives, and we are going to leave this place with the same determination that He has had. Remember, He had to work His plan. He had to plan to bring Christ. He had to plan the cross. All of these things were planned in the heart of God. Remember what Christ said? "Nobody takes My life, I lay it down." It was all part of the plan. He stood in the garden and said, "If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me." It wasn't possible. He had to go through the plan in order for forgiveness to come upon the earth. Alright, you can make a plan. You can begin to plan to take on the divine nature of God in this area of forgiveness, until we are able to turn and absolutely forgive and forget.

Who is going to minister this great new covenant to the world? The body of Christ. The Church should be doing that. But how can we minister that great new covenant if we are unable to forgive and forget? Lord, help us with this. We believe for it. We believe it is going to happen. We believe that we have put our finger this morning on something that is a block in our lives, not just individually, but collectively. It blocks our authority, our power, our enabling to move as the sons of God. Today, Lord, we ask that that be removed, and that we pray, forgiving. We move into this. Your nature that is able to forgive and forget, we take that upon ourselves this morning by faith, in the name of the Lord.

Amen.