

Are You Willing to Let Go?

Mark Sappington

April 4, 2024

Many people in the world today have unfortunately endured traumatic experiences in their lives. Maybe that traumatic experience was past physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Maybe that traumatic experience was an accident that forever changed their lives. Maybe it was the end of a relationship or the end of a career. Maybe it was the death of a close family member. Maybe it was the breakup of a church or organization. Many times, these traumatic experiences leave people disillusioned, disappointed, depressed, cynical, bitter and negative in their outlook on life.

Many of us, as called-out ones, have endured traumatic experiences as well. But we cannot allow these experiences to rule our lives or dictate the outlook that we have on our lives and on the lives of others. We cannot allow these experiences to alter our relationship with our Heavenly Father and with His Son, Jesus.

My sermon this afternoon is entitled:

Are You Willing to Let Go?

In it I would like to explore the subject of letting go of these traumatic experiences, and instead, keeping our eyes focused on the goal of entering our Heavenly Father's Kingdom. I would like to explore this subject in four points.

The first point in letting go is:

1) We must forget the past and forgive others

One incredible and wonderful characteristic of our Heavenly Father is that he has perfect forgetfulness. In Jeremiah 31 we read about this perfect forgetfulness of our Heavenly Father.

Jeremiah 31:34 *And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (KJV)*

This wonderful forgetfulness of sin by our Heavenly Father is also quoted in Hebrews 8:12 and Hebrews 10:17. In Psalm 103, David wrote of the perfect forgetfulness of our sins by our Heavenly Father.

Psalm 103:10 *He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*

11) *For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.*

12) *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. (KJV)*

So, our Heavenly Father puts away our sins from His mind as far as *the east is from the west*. When we sincerely and humbly ask forgiveness of our sins, asking that our Heavenly Father wash them away with the blood of His Son, our Heavenly Father responds by forgiving those sins and putting them away for good, never to be brought up again. Do we truly believe that? What a wonderful blessing that our Heavenly Father has given us through His Son, Jesus. Do we have “perfect” forgetfulness when it comes to forgiving others? This is not something that is natural to man. Without the Holy Spirit, man naturally wants to cling to the hurt feelings and to the injustices of the past. But as called-out ones of our Heavenly Father, do we find ourselves doing the same thing? The Apostle Paul addresses this in his epistle to the called-out ones in Philippi.

Phil 3:12 *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*

13 *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,*

14 *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (KJV)*

Are we forgetting the things that are behind us? Or do we cling to them? Toward the end of Chapter 9, many people were giving excuses for delays in following Jesus, to whom Jesus gave this very important message and reply.

Luke 9:62 *And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God [God Our Father]. (KJV)*

We all know this verse very well, and we have always used it in the context of leaving behind our former way of life. But Jesus’ statement can include looking back on injustices and hurt feelings. Jesus preached a message of love and reconciliation with one another. Reconciliation of injustices and hurt feelings with others is considered by our Heavenly Father and Jesus to be so important that it was a prerequisite for coming to the temple to worship the Father.

Matthew 5:23 *Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember that thy brother hath ought against thee;*

24) *Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*

25) *Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.*

26) Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing. (KJV)

By extension, do we go and reconcile with others with whom we may be at odds before we worship our Heavenly Father? In Mark 11 Jesus discusses just how important, how critical, and how spiritually serious forgiving others actually is in our own spiritual lives.

Mark 11:25 *And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.*

26) But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses. (KJV)

So, if we do not forgive others their sins against us, our Heavenly Father will not forgive our sins against Him. That is actually life-threatening in our spiritual lives. In the model prayer that Jesus gave to His disciples, Jesus included that we should ask our Heavenly Father for forgiveness as we forgive others.

Matthew 6:9 *After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*

10) Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

11) Give us this day our daily bread.

12) And forgive us our debts [Luke 11:4 says "our sins"], as we forgive our debtors.

13) And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

14) For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15) But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (KJV)

In verse 12, the word *as* is the Greek adverb *hos*, Strong's #5613 meaning "as, like as, even as, according as, in the same manner as". So, Jesus commanded us to pray that our Heavenly Father would forgive us our sins in the same manner as we forgive others their sins against us. In verse 15, Jesus warns that, just like in Mark 11:26, if we do not forgive others their sins against us, then neither will our Heavenly Father forgive our sins against Him. Again, this is a very serious concept and truth which has significant ramifications and consequences on our present and future spiritual lives.

In 2 Corinthians 5 Paul exhorts us to forgive and put the past behind us and be new creatures in our relationship with our Heavenly Father and with Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

18) And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (KJV)

In Colossians 3 Paul exhorted the Colossian congregation to forgive others as Jesus forgave us.

Colossians 3:12 *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;
13) Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. (KJV)*

Do we practice this command in our daily lives? Do we truly forgive and forget offenses against us, or do we keep bringing up the offenses again and again and again. Do we treat offenses against us almost like a badge of honor?

Do we continually bring up offenses, hurt feelings, and injustices from our past, especially from within the Church? Are we still talking about our former church associations and the offenses and hurt feelings from divisions which occurred decades ago? Are we continuing to bring up injustices by Church leadership, or by Church ministers, or by Church brethren? When are we going to let go of all this emotional, mental, and spiritual baggage that weighs us down?

In Hebrews 12, we read about this baggage that is weighing us down emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

Hebrews 12:1 *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
2) Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (KJV)*

The Greek noun for *weight* in verse 1 is *ógkos*, Strong's #3591 meaning an "encumbrance, a weight, a burden".

Focusing on past offenses, hurt feelings, and injustices by others is not a badge of courage, or a badge of honor, or a badge of distinction. Rather, in the end, it is a selfish, self-centered, self-focused continuation of an ungodly path which does not lead to righteousness. Why do we insist on tearing off these emotional scabs again and again and again, just to refresh the wounds that we continue to hold on to? When are we going to let them go by forgiving others? When Jesus was on the cross dying after having been tortured, beaten, mocked and crucified, was He tearing off emotional scabs? Was He digging up all the injustices brought upon Him by unrighteous people?

Luke 23:34 *Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. (KJV)*

After all the torture, the ridicule, the taunting, the shame, the pain and the suffering, Jesus asked His Father to forgive the people for the evil that they had done to Him. If we are going to live Christ-like lives and follow Jesus' example, where are we in forgiving others? We must forget the past and forgive others.

The second point in "letting go" is:

2) We must eradicate the root of bitterness

Concentrating on the past and the offenses, the hurt feelings, the disappointments, and the injustices encountered in our past produces an end result of bitterness toward people, toward organizations, toward groups, and toward life in general. In Hebrews 12, is the well-known verse about the root of bitterness.

Hebrews 12:14 *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:*

15) Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; (KJV)

The Greek phrase for *root of bitterness* in verse 15 of Hebrews 12 is *riza pikrias* (*riza*), Strong's #4491 meaning "a root, shoot, source" and *pikrias*, being the genitive form of *pikria*, Strong's #4088, meaning "bitterness, harshness, an embittered and resentful spirit or mindset".

Just like in English, the Greek word *riza* can be used to describe the literal root of a tree. We read its usage as such in Matthew 3:10.

Matthew 3:10 *And now also the axe is laid unto the root (riza) of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. (KJV)*

However, just like in English, the Greek word *riza* can also be used to describe the source of something. In English, we can say that something is a root cause of something else. We read the usage of *riza*, as such, in the well-known and often-quoted verse of 1 Timothy 6:10.

1 Timothy 6:10 *For the love of money is the root (riza) of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. (KJV)*

In this verse, the Greek word *riza* is used to describe that the love of money is the root cause or the source of all evil. With that in mind, let's return to Hebrews 12 and reread verse 15.

Hebrews 12:15 *Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; (KJV)*

Not forgiving others, not putting the past away in the past, but instead, rehearsing over and over and over again in our minds all the injustices done to us; keeping and guarding all the hurt feelings bottled up inside, and not showing any willingness to reconcile with others; These will be the source (the “riza” – the root) from which a deep, festering bitterness will grow and spring forth in our lives. In Ephesians 4 the Apostle Paul exhorts us to renew the spirit in our minds, to set a new righteous course toward the Kingdom, and to leave behind the bitterness and the anger that once ruled in our lives.

Ephesians 4:22 *That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;*

23) *And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;*

24) *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

25) *Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another.*

26) *Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:*

27) *Neither give place to the devil.*

28) *Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

29) *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

30) *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

31) *Let all bitterness [pikría], and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:*

32) *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (KJV)*

As Paul exhorted the brethren in Ephesus, are we putting away all bitterness and wrath and anger from us, and replacing those negative behaviors with kindness, tenderheartedness and forgiveness? Where are we in our spiritual lives in doing this? Are we eradicating the root of bitterness from our lives?

The third point in “letting go” is:

3) We must look to the future

Not only are we not to keep looking behind to the past, but instead, we also are to look forward to the future and to the things which lie before us.

Let's reread the verses in Philippians 3 we read earlier.

Philippians 3:12 *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*

13) Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14) I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (KJV)

As a runner in a race, are we truly reaching forward to the things ahead of us? We cannot effectively run if we are continually looking behind us. It throws us off our pace. Looking back over our shoulder interferes with our stride. An experienced runner focuses only on what is in front of him or her. Where is our focus in our race toward the Kingdom?

Our Heavenly Father has given us so much to look forward to. One amazing event that we all look forward to and have hope in, is the First Resurrection or the resurrection of the Firstfruits, an event pictured by the upcoming Holy Day of Pentecost. With our understanding of who God Our Father is in the Bible, 1 Thessalonians 4 reads differently than how we have read it for decades.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*

14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God [God Our Father] bring with him.

15) For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord [Kyrios without the definite article "the" – God Our Father], that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord [ho Kyrios with the definite article "the" – Jesus Christ] shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16) For the Lord [ho Kyrios with the definite article "the" – Jesus Christ] himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God [ho theos – God Our Father]: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17) Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord [ho Kyrios Jesus Christ] in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord [Kyrios – God Our Father]. (KJV)

1 Thessalonians 4:13 (with substitutions) *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*

14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God Our Father bring with him.

15) For this we say unto you by the word of God Our Father, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of Jesus Christ shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16) For Jesus Christ himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the

voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God Our Father: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17) Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet Jesus Christ in the air: and so shall we ever be with God Our Father. (KJV)

Do we realize that on the day of the resurrection of the Firstfruits, we will see Jesus for the first time? Do we realize that on that day, we will see our Heavenly Father for the first time on His throne? How glorious and exciting will that be? We will read a small portion of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:11 *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.*

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. (KJV)

Our reward is in heaven and not on this earth in this physical life. Jesus proclaimed that our reward will come at His return.

Matthew 16:24 *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

25) For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

26) For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (KJV)

27) For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. (KJV)

But what is that reward? In Revelation 5 our Heavenly Father and Jesus have something very special in store for the saints and Firstfruits.

Revelation 5:9 *And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;*

10) And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. (KJV)

As kings and priests, we will assist Jesus in administering His government on the earth.

Revelation 20:4 *And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (KJV)*

A question to ask is this: Why do we reign with Jesus for one thousand years? Does Jesus need our help? Does He need our help to administer His government on the earth? No, Jesus does not need us. He, as an Elohim, is very capable of doing that Himself. The key is that He willingly gives us rulership with Him in His Kingdom because that is part of our reward for our faithfulness to Him and to our Heavenly Father in this lifetime today. Jesus told His disciples that our Heavenly Father will reward us openly.

Matthew 6:1 *Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.*

2) *Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.*

3) *But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:*

4) *That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.*

5) *And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.*

6) *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. (KJV)*

Continuing in verse 16)

16) *Moreover, when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.*

17) *But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;*

18) *That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. (KJV)*

We will be rewarded openly in front of everyone on earth by being part of the rulership headed by Jesus over the entire world. This will not be done in secret. We will be rewarded and honored very openly by our Heavenly Father and by Jesus for all to see and witness and show respect. People will come and prostrate themselves before us.

Revelation 3:9 *Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. (KJV)*

The Greek verb for *worship* is *proskunéo*, Strong's #4352 – meaning “to kiss the ground while prostrating yourself before a superior”. Again, this is part of our reward. Jesus will willingly and gladly share His honor and glory with us. And as such, people will come and bow before us just like Joseph’s brothers came and bowed before him when they

came to Egypt. Paul put our current lives of suffering, trials, injustice, pain, anguish, deprivation, and unpleasantness into perspective.

Romans 8:18 *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (KJV)*

Our future glory begins at the resurrection of the firstfruits, pictured by the upcoming day of Pentecost. Brethren, is our future glory as an eternal spiritual being, full of power and energy and perfection, real to us today? Do we focus on that incredible future life during our daily lives? If we are focusing on that future, it is much harder to be offended with others, much harder to harbor resentment and bitterness toward others, and much harder to seek vengeance on others. We must be looking to and focusing on the future.

This leads us to the fourth and final point in “letting go”, which is:

4) We must let go and let God

In the end, we must turn injustices done to us, our hurt feelings, our anger, our desire for vengeance over to our Heavenly Father.

During the seven years that I lived in Houston before I married my wife in 1991, I was a single man who rented a two-bedroom apartment. During these seven years, I would take in other young single men who were needing help. Some of those single young men were recovering alcoholics. During the time that they stayed with me, I learned a lot about alcoholism. The dysfunctionality that it brings into people’s lives and the dysfunctionality that it brings to their family members as well.

I learned a lot about Alcoholics Anonymous and the Twelve-Step process to overcome the dysfunctionality due to alcohol and its detrimental grip on the lives of alcoholics. Recovering alcoholics come to realize and accept that they themselves are powerless to overcome their physical, emotional, and mental sickness and that they need a higher power to overcome and to conquer their alcoholism. It is a very difficult process to undergo.

Recovering alcoholics live by a mantra which summarizes the Twelve-Step process. This mantra is a simple five-word phrase which is “Let go and let God.” This simple mantra is so hard to truly implement in life.

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous are as follows:

- 1.** We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable.
- 2.** We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- 3.** We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongdoings.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Again, these twelve steps are summarized by “Let go and let God.” These twelve steps apply to us in our spiritual lives. Just substitute “sin” in for “alcohol” in the twelve steps, and we wind up with a recipe for repentance and conversion.

Just substitute “past injustices” or “hurt feelings” or “past abuse” or “anything that brings dysfunctionality to our lives”, and you have a recipe for overcoming the personal inner struggles and battles that we are continually fighting in our physical and spiritual lives.

Are there sins in our lives that we have not overcome? Are there sins which we continue to do even after decades of trying to overcome them? Are there sins in our lives that we just seem powerless to overcome? Does it seem that no matter how hard we try, we still fail?

The Apostle Paul wrote of a continual dichotomy in our spiritual lives.

Romans 7:14 *We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.*

15) *I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.*

16) *And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.*

17) *For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.*

19) *For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I*

keep on doing.

20) Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

21) So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me.

22) For in my inner being I delight in God's law;

23) but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me.

24) What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?

25) Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin. (NIV)

Do we read these verses and think, "Wow! That describes me too!"?

In Luke 18, we will read the end result of the story of the young rich man, who sadly left from following Jesus because he did not want to give up his riches and his rich lifestyle. Jesus responded to His disciples by stating the difficulty of rich men in entering the Kingdom of our Heavenly Father.

Luke 18:26 *And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved?*

27) And he [Jesus] said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God [our Father] (KJV)

In Matthew 19:26 in the parallel account that Matthew wrote, we read that Jesus said,

With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. (KJV)

In Mark 10:27 the parallel account that Mark wrote, Jesus said,

With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible. (KJV)

This contrast is at the heart of "Let go and let God." We cannot do it by ourselves, but we can with our Heavenly Father's help. With Him, *all things are possible*. The Apostle Paul discusses the righteous behavior that is at the heart of letting go and let God.

Romans 12:17 *Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.*

18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

19) Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

20) Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

21) Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. (KJV)

Jesus commanded us to do something that is totally opposite of human nature. This incredible command can only be performed if we use our Heavenly Father's Spirit and love and if we let go and turn the situation over to our Heavenly Father.

Matthew 5:43 *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love [agapáo – have Godly love] thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.*

44) But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; (KJV)

Where are we in loving and not hating our enemies, not seeking revenge on others when we are hurt by them, praying for others who hurt us emotionally and physically? In today's unjust world so full of injustices, cruelty, hypocrisy, and evil, it is so easy to fall into the attitude of wanting immediate vengeance and justice on so many evil acts. Instead, do we look upon that evil and injustice with sadness as Jesus did on the cross, asking our Heavenly Father for forgiveness upon them because of their ignorance of our Heavenly Father's love? When we get to that point, then we have truly begun *to let go and let God*.

In today's message, we have explored in four points concerning "letting go".

- 1) *We must forget the past and forgive others.* Are we still bringing up the injustices and the hurt feelings again and again from our past? Is our outlook changing so that we are forgetting the past and forgiving the injustices done to us? Are we willing to forgive and make amends?
- 2) *We must eradicate the root of bitterness.* In continuing to perform our own personal examination that we started before Passover, are we finding that we are bitter? Are we working daily to remove anything that would cause bitterness to spring up in our lives? Bitterness can cause deep spiritual problems in our lives if it is not effectively rooted out.
- 3) *We must look to the future.* Are we continually looking back or are we looking forward always toward the future, our future in our Heavenly Father's Kingdom? Is that Kingdom and all the glory and honor that we will receive from our Heavenly Father actually real to us?
- 4) *We must let go and let God.* We cannot let go of the injustices, the bad experiences, the hurt feelings, and the pain in our lives by ourselves. We just cannot accomplish that by ourselves. Only our Heavenly Father and Jesus can ultimately do that through Their Spirit and power. It is not within ourselves to forgive and forget. That takes letting go and letting God.

With every day that passes, we are one day closer to our entry into our Heavenly Father's Kingdom. We have so much to look forward to. We have so much to be excited about. We have so much to motivate us to do better, to be better, to be stronger, to be kinder, to be more fervent, to be more forgiving, to be more loving, to be more obedient.

To be more willing to follow and adopt our Heavenly Father's will as our will. That act of turning our will over to Him is at the heart of letting go.

Are you willing to let go?