

LIGHTEN THE LOAD BY REPAIRING THE PAST

MATTHEW 18:21-35 – ERIC SIMPSON – AUGUST 12, 2018

resilience = getting stronger as you grow older

A resilient life is built by...

- Living in the light of the large arc of life (decades vs. days)
- Listening for, and responding to, God's calling (*Ephesians 2:10* purpose)
- Lightening the load by repairing the past

The way of Lamech – revenge, bitterness, resentment

Genesis 4:23-24

²³ Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and Zillah, listen to me; wives of Lamech, hear my words. I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me. ²⁴ If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times."

vs.

The way of Jesus

Matthew 18:21-22

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."

"If a brother sins against you once, forgive him; a second time, forgive him; a third time, forgive him; but a fourth time, do not forgive him." – Jewish Rabbinical Saying

The journey from *bitterness* to *forgiveness*...

- Reflect on the \$12,000,000 debt God has cancelled on your behalf

- Prepare yourself for unmet expectations

"We will be landing in 30 minutes", the pilot suddenly announced, intruding on my dark reverie. And I knew at once that I could not enter the weekend with such a toxic spirit. If I could have gotten on my knees, I would have. But planes don't have kneelers, so I sat, belted in, begging God for relief. And the message came: Forgive! Impossible! Another message perhaps? But the word returned again and again until, in a burst of almost embarrassing emotion, I begged God (out loud) to provide me the power to forgive. In an experience I reluctantly describe, I had a vision of God cutting a hole in my chest. Inky, thick fluid began to ooze from my heart. And it bled until we landed. When I got off the plane I felt spiritual weight loss—the bitterness was gone." – Gordon MacDonald

- Failure to forgive is costly

"God commands us to forgive whenever we're hurt, and reconcile whenever we can, because life is too short not to do so. We do not have another shot at it. If you don't forgive—if you let pride, resentment, stubbornness and defensiveness stand in your way—you become a hard and bitter person. You carry a burden that will crush the humanity out of your spirit. You will grow a little colder every day. You will die." – John Ortberg