

TRUTH SERIES

VOLUME 6



FORGIVENESS
&
RESTITUTION



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FORGIVENESS VERSUS RESTITUTION



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SÃO PAULO – SP – BRAZIL – 2009



Thanks to the one who is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine according to His power at work within us, and who is certainly a God of justice.



I dedicate this book to all who have suffered violence and theft through closer people and even having liberated forgiveness to them, continue to miss what was precious. Believe in the justice, restitution and reward from God.



“For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong has been done, and there is no partiality.” (Col. 3: 25)



Notes:

- Words or phrases enclosed in brackets [] or parenthesis (), in *italics*, were placed by me, in most cases, to explain the biblical text, although some verses already contain them [not in italics].
- The version used here is the New Revised Standard Version, NRSV – 1989 (1995)
- NIV = New International Version (it will be used in brackets in some verses to facilitate the readers' understanding).



The purpose of this book is not to question the word of Jesus about our duty to release forgiveness, but to make people think a bit about the fact of putting the constant burden of releasing forgiveness on the shoulders of their fellow men, simply because they don't want to correct themselves and take pleasure in provoking and hurting others with their attitudes and words. All of us should think about the consequences of our actions before hurting someone deliberately or say something, because our words have the power to build or destroy lives.

This book was guidance from God (after some particular experiences I had, especially with my ministry) to warn His church about certain attitudes that are being taken right there and causing confusion and destruction in the soul and spirit of innocent and unsuspecting members. With the excuse of spiritual authority, many leaders are abusing the power that the Lord has placed in their hands and let the flesh prevail, pruning the growth of valuable potentials for the kingdom of God. Later they will account to the Lord for the delay of His work with these lives.

The Church has spoken a lot about forgiveness, love, holiness and emotional release; however, does not act on these basic guidelines coming from the throne of God for His children. To have the anointing to minister emotional release it is not enough to have the Holy Spirit within oneself or to prepare to do two months of consecration to receive this gift. It is one of the most difficult gifts to achieve because it takes years to be perfected. It needs the continuous development of Agape (the love of God) in action in one's life, as well as the gift of revelation and one's own experience with pain and with the invisible wounds of the soul. In fact, the gift 'is born with the person', as people use to say, because we are talking about people with a different sensibility, precisely for feeling the spiritual world with more intensity (it is allied to the gift of discernment of spirits). They received from God, not from men, the ability to enter the spiritual world (the bible calls 'heavenly realms' or 'heavenly places'), where are angels and demons, curses and blessings; not the throne of God itself, as some like to be cheated, saying they are before it. Throne of God is something completely different, for it is above these mentioned regions, away from the impurities we struggle with. To reach it, as the prophets did, we have to cross the invisible barrier where there are: 1) the filth of the soul and spirit that bring confusion to thoughts and imbalance to feelings; 2) the barriers and traps of Satan using guilt, accusation and wrong ways to act, think and understand his dirty strategies; 3) the weight of sins (ours and others'). We can feel the anointing of God flowing in prayer but being truly before the throne is to experience the purity and the silence of God the Father. Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and John really attained the throne. Their visions didn't come from a human hallucination or a spiritual fantasy generated by the devil in the heavenly realms, but from the purity of the throne of God because their hearts were also pure.

Another comment that I think is important are the 'techniques' of emotional release (or inner healing) used by many ministries (learned from the world and its science, most of the time), and that are aggressive, causing pain and destruction in soul and spirit of many members. Healing ministers do not know, in large part, the physical formation of the Nervous System and psychological structure of the human being. In the attempt to help, they use the force of their own flesh like they use it to cast out demons (though they think they are using the force of the spirit). The result is broken personalities, destroyed, not freed (as they intended to) and with no brick to put in the place of the wall that collapsed. The anointing for healing doesn't come from night to

day, neither it is to who wants it, but to whom God gives. Driving out demons is one thing; healing wounds is for the ‘surgeons’ of God. The basic gift is love.

The third comment is directly related to the title of this book and, unfortunately, has been preached in the wrong way in many ministries, making members think that forgiveness is the magic word for all miracles. It is and it is not, depends on the case. It depends on the severity of the wound that was made and its origin. I mean that there are spiritual wounds that go deeper than those generated only by words or human attitudes uncontrolled and transient. Who is an intercessor can better understand what I’m saying. Forgiveness, my brother (my sister), frees you from the chains of devil concerning to those who hurt you, that is, it closes the gap for destruction not to be greater, but does not break by itself, the curses of sentence that were released, neither gives back what has been stolen or devastated nor solve the retaliation suffered by the gaps of intercession. For example, a rape can be forgiven and the emotional and spiritual wounds healed (the inner sense of virginity and purity is renewed by God); yet, a physical hymen cannot be rebuilt (except for a deliberate miracle of the Most High, but is not common to happen).

A person can be materially stolen by the covetousness and greed of others, but what was taken from him is not rebuilt or restored by forgiveness to the thieves. The restitution comes after by other means, when God teaches him His strategies of war and with his own interior disposition of rebuilding, but not with forgiveness itself. The person forgives, he is free from the charges and from the spiritual and emotional oppression of the devil; however, he will have to break the curses of sentence that may be involved in the case and work materially to rebuild his walls. Somehow, his soul cries out for the restitution of what was unfairly stolen. This is human and real. It is very different from a voluntary delivery to the Lord of some emotional or material good that He asked us to give Him.

Another example: a true believer can have his ministry literally stopped by the curse of sentence or impediment uttered by a leader as spiritual authority over him. If such a leader under a so repressive and miserly and malign ‘anointing’ threatens this believer causing spiritual blockage in his life and separating this ‘sheep’ from the throne of God (the spiritual snares are subtle but strong) is it useful to release forgiveness for the ‘poor little thing’ (the leader)? Will this forgiveness give back the flowing of the anointing that this sheep had before? Will this return his free entry into the throne of God or break the wall raised in his financial area to make this believer lose everything? Let us remember something: the bible says that the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable (Rom. 11: 29), and by the blood of Jesus we can enter with confidence the Holy of Holies with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and help, with our hearts clean from an evil conscience (Heb. 4: 16; Heb. 10: 19; 22). Therefore, the anointing, in fact, is not lost, but the wound in the soul prevents it from flowing, and the very unconscious defense of the person who was hurt does not allow his heart to be touched so easily by the Spirit of God. Summing up, the wound of the soul aches, for the memory still keeps the remembrance of that situation. Hence, even having the rational conscience of what is happening, the emotional part needs divine healing. Forgiveness heals the wound of resentment related to the leader, but doesn’t break by itself the curse of the sentence that was released, giving Satan the legality to erect obstacles in the way of that person. If the leader didn’t realize the harm he did or if the two persons no longer met each other, it’s up to the victim to strive to break it alone, in the spiritual world, releasing an anointed word, sometimes even depending on the anointing of another leader; and with great personal effort in order to take practical actions that will truly break that curse and bring the dream back to reality. If the persons involved in these

examples have the Holy Spirit and are not so carnal beings it can be easier. However, when one is a believer and the other is a wicked rebel, things can be much more difficult.

When we talk about certain spiritual things, especially the sensitivity and the different gifts of the Holy Spirit given to some people, many may judge and think it is an exaggeration, a fantasy or, in fact, a true believer can not feel such a thing; that the gifts are being manipulated by the devil or that only those who serve him can have them. Do I need to be more explicit or one word to the wise is enough? How many abominations are committed within the House of God by prejudice or lack of preparation of the ministers of healing! Perhaps the Church has yet to experience lots of things to really be able to help God's children.



Let's read the word a little:

- *Matt. 5: 22-26*: “But I say to you that if you are angry [*some Manuscripts add: ARA-PT, 'without reason'; NIV, 'without cause'*] with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, ‘You fool’, you will be liable to the hell of fire. So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.”

It is not sin to be angry, but have anger 'with no reason' [as written in brackets], leaving an unnecessary resentment in the heart of the brother. All religious rituals no longer have value when there is not a true reconciliation, because the two persons are caught in emotional and spiritual chains. It is necessary to acknowledge the mistake and ask for forgiveness. It is advisable to release it so that a real deliverance may occur.

Completing the explanation of these verses with the text from “The Sermon on the Mount”, when Jesus says: “But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister [without cause], you will be liable to judgment” – his brother means also a follower of Christ. One should not get angry with a brother, that is, for personal mistakes. This act can lead someone to judgment. Anger is only justified when God's honor is at stake or when someone is being wronged. ‘Angry’ in this text, in Greek, is *orgizó* (Strong #3710 – ὀργίζω), which means: to irritate, provoke, be angry; and comes from the verb ‘orge’; to provoke or enrage, i.e. (passively) become exasperated; be angry (wroth).

Then Jesus says: “and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council” – ‘Insult’, in Greek: *ῥακά* (*rhaka* – Strong #G4469) means: empty, foolish, ‘O empty one’, i.e. ‘Thou worthless’ (as a term of utter vilification). In Aramaic is *rōq*, ‘empty’ (of Chaldean origin ‘reyq 𐩨𐩪 – Strong #H7386), which means: empty, vain,

useless, properly, empty-headed, i.e. a ‘numbskull’ who acts presumptuously and thoughtlessly. It was a term of reproach used by the Jews in Jesus’ time, as a word of contempt and abuse. Jesus said that those who used that word were at risk of being tried by the Sanhedrin, the highest court in the country, for defamation.

Then, He continues saying: “and if you say, ‘You fool’, you will be liable to the hell of fire.” – ‘fool’ (móros, μωρός – Strong #G3474), which means: stupid, foolish (adj.), fool or foolishness (noun), probably originating from the Greek word ‘musterion’; dull or stupid (as if shut up), i.e. Heedless (showing a reckless lack of care or attention), (morally) blockhead, (apparently) absurd, stupid, ‘head-headed’. More than just a ‘stupid,’ ‘móros’ means a moral fool who should be dead, and expresses the wish that he were, which suggests a curse, as if asking God to deliver the cursed one to hell. So, Jesus said that whoever utters such a curse risks the fire of hell (geenna – γέεννα – Strong #1067, a place underneath the earth, a place of punishment for evil, a place or state of everlasting punishment).

Summarizing: Anger contains the seeds of murder, abusive language contains the spirit of murder, and cursing implies the very desire to kill. The progressive aggravation of the crimes requires three degrees of punishment: the judgment, the council (Sanhedrin) and the hell of fire. On the Day of Judgment, Jesus will deal with sins according to severity.



- *Matt. 18: 21-22*: “Then Peter came and said to him, ‘Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.’”

- *Lk. 17: 3-5*: “‘Be on your guard! If another disciple sins, you must rebuke the offender, and if there is repentance, you must forgive. And if the same person sins against you seven times a day, and turns back to you seven times and says, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive.’ The apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith!’”

- *Matt. 18: 15-20*: “If your brother sins against you, [Some manuscripts: do not have against you.] go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be [Or have been] bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be [Or have been] loosed in heaven. Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.” [NIV]

As I mentioned before, it is necessary to acknowledge the error and apologize. It is advisable to forgive so that a real liberation may occur. But... what if the brother never comes to ask for forgiveness because his pride does not allow him to see that he was wrong? (Here, I am not speaking of church disciplinary measures towards members who commit

serious sins against the doctrine of Christ, as some interpret this text, including excommunication. I am speaking of personal affairs between two brothers in Christ.) Unfortunately it is an incomplete liberation. Who forgives gets rid of evil, but who does not think that was wrong and does not want to ask for it, or receive it, remains trapped in the chains he himself has created. It is also incomplete in the emotional ambit because without recognizing the error and without verbal and direct request of apology to who was hurt, there is no true reconciliation, nor cure. Another comment here is that Jesus did not forbid us to ask somebody for an explanation by the wrong things that were done to us. He set us the example on how to take a practical attitude. The cowardly believer thinks that everything is solved in prayer, pretending to be holy, thinking that nothing happened and deceiving himself, accepting something that is not good. Who does not listen to the word of God and refuses to correct himself, has already demonstrated that he is a “pagan and a tax collector”, as Jesus said. This brings us to the next item:



- *1 The. 5: 14:* “And we urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them.”
- *1 Tim. 4: 12:* “Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.”
- *2 Tim. 4: 1-5:* “In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent [*NIV: prepared*] whether the time is favorable or unfavorable [*NIV: in season and out of season*]; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.”
- *Tit. 2: 15:* “Declare these things; exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one look down on you.”

The practice of exhortation, admonition, consolation, support and respect is still applied today. Even if we are younger than others in the faith, Jesus continues to correct His children. The pride of the elders or of certain leaders in not receiving God’s correction affects His Work. Why to keep hurting the brothers, always putting on them the burden of having to release forgiveness (alone, in prayer, of course)? Why not to correct oneself? Why do we think that only ‘the victim’ has to be treated by God and not also ‘the instrument of the wound?’ It is hypocrisy of believers to

think that they can do everything, not to respect each other and still live in a nice suit of good people, thinking they are able to forgive everyone, or they are immune to the emotional wounds unlike other mortals. Why does someone want to occupy a land that belongs to another, that is, to use a gift that he has not, instead of being humble and let those who are capable to do things?



- *Matt. 12: 33-37*: “Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers! How can you speak good things, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person brings good things out of a good treasure, and the evil person brings evil things out of an evil treasure. I tell you, on the day of judgment you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter; for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” [*Lk. 6: 45: The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.*]

- *Lk. 6: 37-38*: “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

- *Rom. 14: 10-12*: “Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, ‘As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God’. So then, each of us will be accountable to God.”

- *Gal. 6: 7-8*: “Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit.”

- *2 Cor. 5: 10*: “For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil” [*Let’s remember that tongue is part of the body*].

- *Jam. 3: 5-10*: “So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits. How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue – a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so.”

- *Heb. 7: 7*: “It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior.”

Here come the bad fruit of the flesh of those who think they are so spiritual that judge the life and the ministry of everybody and walk in pride of ‘the

activity for the kingdom of God' in order to build 'empires'. They depreciate the weakest, humiliating them, rejecting them, shaming them, and with a single word, locking the doors for those who wish to grow. What kind of sowing is this? Is it a Christian attitude to put an obstacle in the way of someone? Does anyone who is a stumbling block in the way of others have God's approval? Is it an attitude of a spiritual leader? Will the pardon of the brother in the secrecy of his room, crying to God, rebuild the hope and the faith that were destroyed? Does the attitude of competing for the approval of men give empowerment to do what God wants? Are people really prepared to be where they are?



- *Lk. 12: 49-53*: “I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism [*He spoke of the cross*] with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

Is not Jesus the Prince of Peace? Why, then, He says He came to bring division? He came to bring peace to those who want it, for all who are willing to be in harmony with His project. Unfortunately, many are not; that's why families are divided. His own family on Earth is divided by discussions, power struggle and prejudice, pride of thinking that one can do everything, knows everything and is self-sufficient. Simply because they have more money and human support, is this by itself a sign of exclusive blessing of the Most High? One preaches a lot, prophesies a lot, speaks a lot and denies this truth a lot, because the current behavior of the believer, in general, testifies the lack of true communion with Jesus.



- *Matt. 27: 24-25*: “So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, ‘I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves’. Then the people as a whole answered, ‘His blood be on us and on our children!’”

- *Lk. 23: 33-38*: “When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. [Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing’.] And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at

him, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!' The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!' There was also an inscription over him, 'This is the King of the Jews.'"

• *Jn. 20: 19-23*: "When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you'. After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you'. When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained [NIV: If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven].'"

Jesus forgave those who put Him on the cross, but they themselves (His own people) rejected His forgiveness, so they are still under the curse ["Then the people as a whole answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children!'"] He also reaffirmed to the apostles: "if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." We can release forgiveness to those who hurt us, but it is up to them to receive it to break their own chains. If they receive Jesus as their Lord, they too will receive God's forgiveness.

Here I would like to explain that certain phrases spoken by Jesus refer to forgiving banal and earthly things that people do to us, and others that refer to more serious things that people do to us and that are involved with the infraction of God's law and the salvation of souls. In the Lord's Prayer (*Matt. 6: 9-15*) and in John's text written above (*Jn. 20: 23*), when Jesus appears to His disciples after His resurrection, we can see interesting teachings.

In the Lord's Prayer Jesus teaches us to ask for our material needs ("Give us this day our daily bread"), in addition to speak about forgiveness ("And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" – debts or trespasses or offense in some translations).

Jesus reminds us that we must ask the Father to forgive our debts or trespasses (the word trespass or transgression doesn't only mean sin, but also offense, insult, affront), because when we disobey His commandments, we hurt and offend Him by our sin, what creates a debt in the spiritual world and this is the open gap by where Satan can touch us. Therefore, when we ask Him to forgive our trespasses, His blood covers us and our debts are paid, closing our gaps. In *Matt. 6: 12b* ("And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors") the word debts in Greek, *opheilemata* or *opheiléma* (*ὀφείλημα*, Strong #g3783), is the word that describes our sins as those things that make us guilty and load us with debts before God and that we can never pay off, but only His Son. *Opheiléma* means: a debt, offense, sin; something owed, i.e. (figuratively) due morally, a fault. As seen above, debt or trespass means: transgression, sin, offense, insult or affront. And in *Jn. 20: 23* ('sins', in our bible versions) the Greek word is *hamartias* (*ἁμαρτία*, Strong #g266), which has the primary meaning of "to err the target", "missing the mark"; hence: (a) guilt, sin, (b) a fault, failure (in an ethical sense),

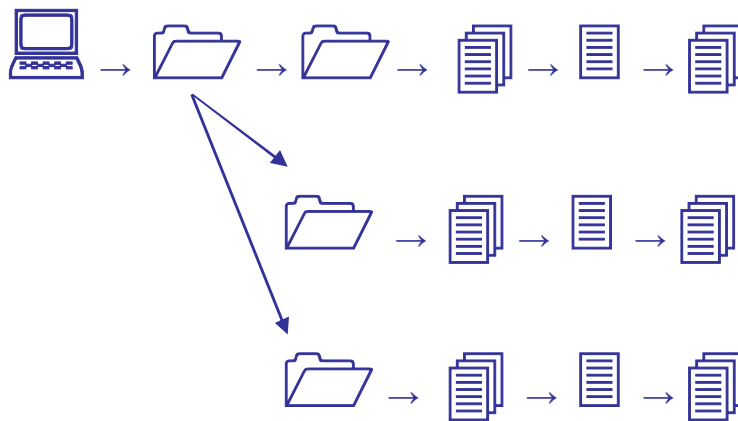
sinful deed; and therefore “to act wrongly” and “to break the law of God.” In *Matt. 6: 14-15* (“For if you forgive others their trespasses [NIV, sins], your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses [NIV, sins]”), the Greek word translated as trespasses is *paraptomata* or *paraptóma* (*paraptōmata*, *παραπτώματα* or *paraptóma παράπτωμα* Strong #g3900 = a falling away, lapse, slip, false step, trespass, sin; therefore: fall, fault, offence, sin, transgression, trespass).

One interesting thing is that Jesus makes a connection directly proportional between being forgiven by God and also release forgiveness to those who owe us something. “As we also have forgiven our debtors” or “for we also forgive [verb in present tense] whoever owe us” does not mean that we should ask for forgiveness on the basis of forgiveness with that we had forgiven others, i.e., in the same quantity or quality that we can forgive someone. We can only receive forgiveness by grace. But in order to pray to God for forgiveness, sincerely and without any hypocrisy, we must be free from any feeling of hatred and revenge. Only when God gives us the grace to truly forgive our debtors is that we will be prepared to make a true prayer. Forgiveness here is not connected to feeling, but to our willingness to obey the commandment of the Lord and use the power of our words to open the paths to each other (Having been already forgiven by Him); only then His action of blessing will be completed: “For if you forgive others their trespasses [NIV, sins], your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses [NIV, sins]”. In other words, the willingness to forgive within us brings us closer to God’s character, so we can also feel His forgiveness when we come to Him with our problems and sins. On the other hand, without the willingness to forgive others, access to the Father in prayer is blocked. If God forgave us for much bigger things on the cross, why not forgive our brothers for simpler things? (*Matt. 18: 15; 21-22*). If we release forgiveness, lives will be released, but if we withhold them, not only will others no longer have the chance to be forgiven by God, but we will also not have the release of our lives, spiritually speaking.

There is an important comment here. In *Jn. 20: 23* He said to His disciples: “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” In NIV it is written: “If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.” The disciples knew that Jesus’ words did not give them power to forgive sins (*Acts 8: 22*), for only God can do that (*Mk. 2: 7; Lk. 5: 21*). Neither the apostles nor the Church have power to forgive any sin whatsoever or to deny forgiveness to any individual; in other words: judging whether someone will be saved or not by the sins he has committed. What Jesus was talking about was the responsibility He was giving His Church to spread the gospel throughout the world, so that whoever believes in Him may find God’s forgiveness (cf. *Matt. 16: 19* – the keys of the kingdom of heaven – open the door of evangelization), as John the Baptist came to prepare hearts for salvation. However, we can see, both in the OT and in the NT, some passages where servants of God, under a strong anointing of the Holy Spirit, uttered strong words of God’s judgment: Jeremiah, for example, prophesying the death of the false prophet Hananiah (*Jer. 28: 15-17*); Ezekiel against Israel’s leaders (*Ezek. 11: 1-13*), and the death of Pelatiah, while he was prophesying; Peter, with Ananias and Sapphira (*Acts 5: 1-11*); Paul, with Elymas the sorcerer (*Acts 13: 4-12*).



I want to finish by explaining one of the strategies most used by Satan to return to touch the wounds. It is the same one that the Spirit of God uses to heal them. The easier parallelism to understand is with a computer. Suppose there is a folder with your name, and within it there are other folders with different areas of your life. Within each, there are several files. By touching one of them, many need to be worked; so, it gives the impression that everything comes up again (the ‘old self’ comes back to manifest). This means that while the defective files are not repaired and tidied up by the Spirit of God, we must continue working in that area. When everything is right, the folder can be opened without problems, because it is clean of rubbish and of inconvenient temporary files.



Now that you are aware of all this, release forgiveness but know this: if you can no longer talk to those people because they are gone or because they remain in a so deplorable carnal level that not even know they are being used by the devil, release forgiveness even so, with the consciousness that is God who forgives through His blood shed on the Cross, not you; you are only a channel for letting the forgiveness released for these lives on earth. It is up to them to catch it or not. Then, even if you have suffered under the curses of the sentence (‘pests’) thrown by some figure of authority or under hereditary curses due to errors of your ancestors, remember what was said: break them aloud in the name of Jesus and cast them out to the abyss in His name. The mouths of the lions will be shut with fire forever. Jesus has already freed us of them. After this step, ask His forgiveness too and His comfort, and understand that certain things, especially the material ones that were lost will not be back anymore, at least the same way. They will be given back in another way in God’s time. Even if you are physically, emotionally and spiritually struggling to break down barriers that were not raised by you, keep yourself strong, because the splendor of the latter house will be greater than the former. No one can take away your throne

and your crown, nor imitate your gift. Your restitution will be doubled, like Job's. It is Jesus who will do justice and it is the power of His Spirit that will repay you. May the peace and the blessing of the Lord be upon you!

