

## Crossroads Community Church

God blessed us with a wonderful sunny morning as we returned to our customary place of worship. Bob Sibeon greeted everyone with joy, shared prayer requests and announcements inviting everyone to join us for a Birthday & Anniversary celebration next Sunday. Worship was filled with reverence and jubilee.

Bob shared a message on forgiveness and unforgiveness; ?As I was preparing this message in my prayer time God brought me to the Cross, when Jesus was on the cross He said;? Father forgive them for they know not what they do,? it made me think on why Jesus had to forgive from the cross.? God revealed that for Jesus to remain the perfect sacrifice without blemish or stain He even had to forgive His assailants, Jesus stay true and pure to His last human breath. I chose another exemplary public figure to show how forgiveness is the best way. Nelson Mandela from South Africa was brought up in the Wesleyan faith and His dream was to abolish apartheid in South Africa. Apartheid was one of the worst kinds of segregation ever committed against its own people the world had seen. In 1963, Nelson was accused of using violence in attempting to overthrow the government, he was unjustly imprisoned for 27 years, during which he was beaten and tortured. Years went by and eventually the world media in 1988 exposed these atrocities and many people rose up and wanted Nelson Mandela released. The African government were ready to release but only on certain conditions, Nelson refused, he wanted an unconditional release. It was granted on February 11th, 1990. At this point many felt Nelson had every right to seek vengeance and retribution, but Nelson chose to forgive. His mission was forgiveness and reconciliation, his aim was still to abolish apartheid but never used violence as a means to achieve it and he still did not. His forgiveness and faith served him well; the world noticed his powerful heart and mind, and apartheid was removed from South Africa in 1992.

The life of Jesus and the life of Nelson are great inspirations to follow. If such men were tortured and found forgiveness within them, we too should respond with forgiveness to those who hurt us and cause us pain. Many have said great things about forgiveness but what does God have to say? God says that when we don't forgive we remove ourselves from His presence, Isaiah 59:2. He also says that when we forgive and ask for forgiveness He hears us and forgives us and heals us, Proverbs 32:5. We should also pray deliverance and healing for others from unforgiveness, once they understand how much it hurts them they are set free and are able to forgive those who have wronged them. Resentment is like drinking a poison expecting the other person to suffer but when we drink the cup of forgiveness it releases the person and opens the door for God to bring healing and joy in that person's life, Proverbs 17:22, Proverbs 18:14. If our spirit is gracious and forgiving it will help us through ups and downs of life the opposite will bring us down.

When we struggle with forgiveness Jesus said to have faith and ask God for the grace, Mark 11:22-26. Now even the disciples struggled, look at Peter he approached Jesus and asked him how many times should he forgive his own brother, 7 times? And Jesus said not seven but seven times 70 times. Does this mean he didn't forgive the 491st time? Of course not, it meant forgive as many times as it takes, unconditionally. He told them a parable in Matthew 18:22-35, We see in this parable that we will be forgiven in the same measure that we forgive others. Bible says Forgiveness is sin and gives a foothold to the devil, ?Ephesians 4:25-27, ? Here a foothold is not a wrestling move, it means we leave the door open to the devil to attack and deceive us. Many marriages fail because of this, we are told to forgive and forget, the problem with that is that we focus on trying to forget thinking it will keep the peace, hoping the problem will go away but just because couples pretend that nothing is wrong and ignore it doesn't mean they have forgiven one another and it doesn't mean they have given up on thinking they were in the right. This inevitably breeds resentment stemming from unresolved anger. There was never any forgiveness because it was never addressed and resolved. On the other hand Forgiveness means you humble yourself and give up your self-entitlement behaviour of being right and chose to put your beloved's heart and happiness above your own, you chose to show love and mercy; when you do you will be filled with the love of Jesus and you will live a life of forgiveness. That takes strength of character.

The Bible in Colossians 3:13 also implies that Forgiveness is a command not a choice and failure to obey will forfeit our own forgiveness in Matthew 6:14- Beloved friends let us follow in the way of our Lord Jesus Christ that even on the cross he chose to forgive, let us bear with each other and forgive one another for His name sake, Asherey Shalom? to learn more visit our website <http://www.shelburnecrossroadschurch.ca>