

Midnight Cry Messenger

'A True New Year'

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1. "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months, it shall be the First month of the year to you, Speak ye unto all the congregation of the children of Israel saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take them a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for a house; and if the household be little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb, Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year; ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats; and ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month I and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood and strike it upon the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw or sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing remain of it until morning; and that which remaineth of it until morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat in haste; it is the Lord's Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt and will smite all the first born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt will I execute judgment, I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." Exodus 12:1-13.

2. "And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, then they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." Luke 23:33-34.

"To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also; for if I forgive anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices." 2 Corinthians 2:10-11.

In Exodus 12 1-13, wherein we have read the story of the Passover, God has just given to his people, Israel, a New Year. It is most peculiar how he went about giving them that New Year. But the meaning of it is found in Luke 23:33-34, where the spotless Lamb of God, who is our Passover, cried out while dying upon Calvary 'Father forgive them. So the story of the little lamb being slain and his blood splashed upon the door posts and lintel is the story of God giving his people a New Year by means of the blood which speaks of forgiveness. God is saying to those people, "I am going to make a change for you. I am going to take you up out of bondage away from Egypt. I am going to lead you into a land of freedom and blessing. I am going to make you forget all the years that are behind: those unproductive years of slavery. I am going to do it by giving you a New Year, a New Start, a New Life; I am going to do it by forgiving you. I am forgiving you for all your past while you were there in Egypt. The blood is going to make an atonement for you." Your New Year begins in complete forgiveness."

3. Never forget that. It was forgiveness that made the New Year. Without forgiveness there never would have been a New Year. When God gave them that New Year, He gave them a new start, a victorious new start. Thus it was forgiveness that gave them that New Year and that new start. Today men and women approach the New Year with resolutions. They say, "We are going to make a change, not only of things, but in ourselves. We are going to make a new start. We will stop doing the things we ought not to have done. We are making a break with the past.

Now then, we will start doing the thing we ought to have done, and somehow never have gotten around to doing, even though we wanted to. We will be different and things will be different. This is a New Year. We are going to see that everything is new along with it. I have no doubt in my mind that ancient Israel was just exactly like moderns of today. When they heard of the New Year and a new beginning, they could well have reasoned within themselves, "We will be different. We will stop being a slave people who are under compulsion. We will do new things in a new place and we will dominate and not be dominated. We will be free to do as we ought to do.

4. But here is what God said, "The New year begins with forgiveness. It is either forgiveness or NO New Year. And right here is where 2 Corinthians. 2:10-11, comes in. Here is whether you will get a New Year or not. Here is where things will be different or you will go right on as you are, and perhaps even more confirmed in your way. Your New Year will depend on how thoroughly you forgive those who wronged you. Read those verses again. "For your sakes forgave I it in the Person of Christ, lest Satan get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices." See it. It is so simple. As you come to this, another New Year, you want to stop doing certain things but you cannot. Not only that, but you want to start doing certain things that you have known ought to be done, but you cannot for you are bound. You have a lot of ideas about why it is so in your case, but you have never really known the truth. The truth is, someone has an advantage over you. You are not your own free man as you ought to be. And that on who has the advantage over you and holds you is Satan. That is what the Word says. It declares that Satan's method of gaining an advantage, of getting hold of people, is to foster in them an unforgiving spirit, and from thereon everything is wrong, for you are no longer free, but bound. When people stop forgiving each other, they can make all the resolutions in the world, and they can pray and struggle and repent the best they know how, yet there is no deliverance. There cannot be deliverance until there is forgiveness. This is how it was with Israel. They could not be delivered until forgiveness shone forth. Every change begins in forgiveness. Your change from a sinner to a child of God began in forgiveness, for God forgave you of your sins. That is where you got your start with God. That is called justification which means that God called you righteous upon the grounds that He had a legal right to, through the shedding of Jesus Blood. As soon as He did that, you became a new creature in Christ. You were set free. You were delivered from the guilt and bondage and power of sin. You had a new start. That was your New Year at the time of your new birth. How good it was to be a new creation, to have a new start and above all, have a new birth.

5. Every dead formal church that receives a reviving breath of the Spirit of God does so only on the grounds that a spirit of conviction overcomes the members until they are overwhelmed their guilty actions toward each other, and forgive each other and make amends. It is this asking of forgiveness that melts hearts and brings revival. God has not, and cannot move in any way amongst His people until they forgive and come to unity. Where there is forgiveness, there is a new start, and things are different. Where there is no forgiveness, there is no revival, no new start, but bondage and Satan holds the advantage.

And when Jesus taught His disciples to pray, he said, "And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." And as He concluded teaching them to pray, He elaborated upon the words just quoted, saying, "For if we forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." So here we have the sacred pronouncement, "Forgive or you will be in bondage to your sins. Forgive, or there will be no deliverance and consequently no new start and no new year for you. If you forgive, you will be in a position to stop doing the things you hate doing, and begin to do all the right things you have not been doing. Your adversary will no longer have the advantage over you. You will have that wonderful new start to do all things well. It will be the beginning of months, months of the power and glory of God.

6. Now, lest we know not what it means to forgive as we ought, we would do well to study and determine exactly what it does mean. It so happens that the word 'forgive' is derived from three basic thoughts.

1. To remove away from, in the sense of time, place or relation. Suffer. Yield up. Remit.
2. Grant gratuitously, a favour; pardon; rescue.
3. Urgent, or smearing (taken from the same root that we get the word 'anointing' in relation to the Holy Spirit.

From this we can formulate an exact definition. To forgive is; "To suffer the guilt, to be removed from the wrong doer, by disassociating him from the wrong action, and not only pardoning him, but healing the breach."

For one to forgive is to have all guilt removed from the guilty one, and not only remove the guilt as to penalty, but indeed disassociate him from the crime as though he had never done it and therewith yet not rest until the breach had been healed and love restored and care established as though none of this had ever been removed. Is that not to forgive even as Christ also forgave? That is how He forgave us

Now, in order that one will forgive as completely as did Christ, and so rid himself of the snare of Satan, he must begin through the directive of Christ who knew the only way that this could be done. In Matthew 18; 35, we read, "From the heart forgive everyone his brother." This, of course, means that forgiveness must come from the inside. This is not simply an apology, a doing of penance, making restitution or repenting as though any of these were sufficient in themselves. It must come from the HEART, for herein the seat of the emotions lie, all the rankles of life. Here is where we are hurt and disturbed. Here is where envy, jealousy, malice, revenge and resentment plague us as living coals that with a bit of fanning, burst into violent flames. Unless we go deep within the heart, and cast out the unforgiving spirit, there is no true forgiveness, perhaps a word or a deed, but that is all.

7. But you say, "A wrong is a wrong and it is only natural that one rises up, so how will I be able to cast out this 'avenging spirit?'" And there, my friends, you have begun to answer your own question, or you would have answered it, had you sought. and found the answer about what you call a "wrong." For, indeed, the Word is very careful to say, "Woe unto them by whom offences come. Never once does it say "Woe unto them to whom offences come." Indeed it does say "Offences must come" but blessed is he who is persecuted, blessed is he against whom any manner of evil is perpetrated. Count it all joy when your faith is tried.

These light afflictions are working for you and not against you, and certainly all things will work for your good while you look unto Jesus. The whole word of God stresses continuously that nothing can in any wise be evil to us unless we let it become evil to us. Nothing can, by any means harm us when we stay in the attitude of faith. Thus rejoice, for great is your joy that you have been counted worthy to suffer while the poor guilty miscreant, who could have been the object of God's grace even as you, is now the mark of the just judgment of God. For "judgment is mine, saith the Lord and I will repay." With such an attitude toward Him (and believe me this is truth) we now sorrow for such a one. He is the (object of prayer and pity, and we sigh in intercession that God may pass over his sin by way of mercy and forgiveness. And not only do we forgive him, but should we be called upon to witness in judgment against him, we would plead, "I refuse to lay a charge, or as far as I am concerned, he has done nothing to harm me. I, like Paul, have not at all been injured. Indeed, than him that he has helped me to become a partaker of the grace of God and the Spirit of Christ. I have not been wronged. It is he who is now wronged by wronging himself. I consider myself to be blessed."

8. And if such meditation did not move your heart to forgive and sorrow for the sin of another, then let me further remind you that the integrity of the Almighty is at stake, for He has commanded that we forgive. If, then, you will not be moved by love and gentle mercy, knowing that the wrath of God is toward the offender, hear it and fear, "Wilt thou then not fear to rise up against the holy command of God and fearlessly refuse to obey the one who has commanded you to forgive, knowing that, if you forgive not, you in your own wrong doing will not receive the outpouring of mercy and grace that you will so badly need in your sore time of having sinned against another?" Here is not simply a case of man involved with man, but God has spoken, and He has handed down the decree that we suffer and forgive. Can the creature cry out against the Creator? Can the thing formed rebel against his maker? Can the vessel cry out against the potter? Here is not the matter of a choice. Here is a command, and with this command, hee is the very person of Christ within, admonishing us to forgive and be compassionate, even as He has done so to us. Or, further, have you not faith in God? Surely, you do have faith in God, for by grace were you saved through faith. But perhaps you have become a little like the apostle, who when they heard they ought to forgive seventy times seven said, "Lord increase our faith, for why should a man forgive a breach against him, and turn the other cheek in love if a Holy God will not reward him above all he can ask or think for doing so. Surely God will avenge and reward the elect. Then, if you are not at this time desirous of receiving the grace of God, surely you must desire a full recompense of reward in the eternal kingdom of God, by way of rewards for doing the will of the Father in heaven. This ought to make us take gladly the spoiling of our goods, knowing that in heaven we have substance enduring through eternal life.

9. Now, though I have spoken in this tone of voice, I know that every redeemed child of God would dearly love to forgive. And though we would do so, we often feel that somehow we cannot. That one would forgive so thoroughly and completely with all of the heart pure and clean from any resentment is a most wondrous prospect. And if there be the will for it, why is there not the doing and finishing of it? The answer can be found in Matthew 5:23-26. "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar; and there rememberest that thy brother has ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. 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. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out hence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."

Herein is Christ speaking of reconciliation and forgiveness. In v22-24 we find that most of us make the very common mistake of by-passing the necessary obedience to the Word, by prayer or works, apart from an actual reconciliation. But no prayer and no work short of actual reconciliation can take the place of obedience. Now our communion with God is perfect through Jesus Christ, as set forth in Hebrews 10:19-22. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh: and having an high priest over the house of God: let us draw near with a true heart of full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." I want you to see how this perfect communion was established for it sets the example whereby we are to establish perfect communion amongst the saints.

10. When we were in sin and rebellion against God, doing wickedly by sinning against him, he was the one who sought us but and spoke reassurance to us. He made it evident that he forgave us. He did it because he wanted to do it. He knew that only thereby would the guilty, vile sinner be made to conform to his will and his desires for him. Only if he came to us and forgave us and let us know it, would we be reconciled to him. So, see him as he comes in the flesh. There upon the cross he dies for us. Hebrews 10:19, before we loved him or even knew him he died for us.

Therein was the lost sheep brought into the fold, on the ground that he healed the breach? There was the outcast made one with the great and eternal God. Our perverted soul and mind has so much against him. His way we had hated, his love we had resisted. There were none of us righteous, no not one. But he came and made peace. By becoming he brought us into unity with the Father, and now he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit. But it could not have been done at all, if when the cry had come "Who will go?" and he had simply said, "I will pray," or "I will show them my love by blessings and good works." He had to come to the one who was out of harmony or there never would have been harmony. That is what we must do too. We must go to that one and make reconciliation. It matters not on whose part the blame is, it matters only that we go. You may pray before you go, but do not be fooled that; prayer alone will do it. You may make overtures by works of grace, but that is not enough. It is only enough when we go and make reconciliation with our brethren. We must go and make peace with them, and when necessary, make peace for them.

11. And then in verses 25, 26, we see that which is also often our error. Here is an example of actual trouble. Here is what is fast tuning to a prolonged battle. And here it is we learn "STOP." Stop fighting now, in the midst of it (while thou art in the way) before you have become entrenched, stop before you get too deep. No matter who is wrong, you take your place as the offender. Apologize ask for forgiveness, because no matter what the issue, whether it be a question, a deed, money, or goods, is not the life more than meat and the body more than raiment? What does it matter? A sword will but bring a sword, peace alone begets peace. How can it be worthwhile to fill the heart with the poison of anger, and distrust and hate? But note what saith the Lord, If you will not agree and cease from strife, and forgive and forget and heal the breach, you will be mastered by your passions and they will hold you until they have run their course in your life and it will cost you vastly more, than had you humbled yourself and simply taken that lowly part, even as did Jesus, who agreed with his adversaries, and forgave them, and went the way of the cross. But when he had gone the way of the cross, he arose again, leading captivity, captive. Death could not hold him. There was no prison or prison keeper that could keep him barred in. There was no judge that could sentence him. He had humbled himself and God made him the victor.

And just to carry the point of these verses 25-26 a little further, did you notice that when two became involved in a scene it wasn't long until there were many more brought into it? There were three more soon brought into this thing, judge, officer, keeper, as many more as might be required. Isn't that exactly like Hebrews 12.15?

"Looking diligently lest any of you may fail the grace of God (refuse to take the trial of life, not realizing that they will do you good and not harm you) lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." See, no man liveth unto himself. We affect those around us. The body of Christ is rent by factious people. Let us learn, therefore, to be reconciled with our brethren immediately when there is any difference between us. Let us be offended by all, but let us never take offense. Since we have, in many respects, set forth how we should forgive and when we ought to do it, most certainly we would be benefited were we to get an enlarged insight into the necessity of forgiving those who try us. Here we shall endeavour to see of what benefit it is to us who would obey the command of God, and forgive.

12. "Then Peter came to him and saith, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times: but, until seventy times seven. Therefore, is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king which would take account of his servants? And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents. But, forasmuch as he had not to pay his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant, therefore, fell down and worshipped him saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

But the same servant went out and found one of his fellow servants which owed him a hundred pence, and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me, that thou owest. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him saying, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me; shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." Matthew 18:21-35.

13. In this parable of the wicked servant, we see that the master has extended an unmerited cancellation of debt. He has most heartily forgiven the debt. That it was an act of grace is indisputable for it was freely given, and on no other grounds than that the man could not meet the debt. The servant pled that he is willing to pay the debt when he is able to. One thing he desires is the patience of the Lord until such time. But, no, the master will go beyond all that, He will forgive him the debt, simply because he has compassion on the inability of the poor man to meet the requirements. Such grace of God is here, indeed. But now, this servant will not in turn forgive one who is beholden to him, but rather he does very wickedly by him and refuses the very grace that saved him from a debtor's prison. Then the Lord is very angry, and withdraws the grace that he had extended. It is very evident to us from this parable that he who will not forgive another, denies the grace of God, and that to himself. The law of the harvest is portrayed. If one wants the grace of God in his behalf at all times, he must sow in such a manner as to be, receiving constantly a harvest of it. What a pity we have never learned this lesson as well as we ought to have. Freely have you received, freely give. Dam up the river of grace and be selfish and the river will turn to a stagnant pond, that will in time dry up. To witness in your spirits the constant flowing God's grace, we must forgive all, even as God has forgiven us. The grace is there for you but you will not know. it experimentally until you compassionate another.

And notice in verse 28 that this unforgiving man not only wanted his so-called due but he became violent. He took him by the throat. He was not only powerless to do good because of his unforgiving spirit, but he was moved by passion to destroy. Just as John says; "He that hateth his brother (won't forgive real or fancied wrongs) is a murderer. Let us beware lest all the good we could and would do be withheld from us because we will not forgive our brethren. But when we forgive, we are enabled to do good for our passions turn to compassion. But when we forgive not, try as we might, we cannot do the good that we would. Forgive then, lest the fruit of your hands be destroyed and you be found in an evil way.

14. And then asked the master, "Shouldst thou not have had compassion?" But how can one with an unforgiving spirit have compassion on anyone in need? How we have sought and prayed to God that we might have compassion on the lost, and be so stirred that we might intercede greatly for all manner of needs and all who are needy. But the divine compassion is missing and there is a brittleness and a hardness that is not at all becoming to the Christian. Why? The answer to our problem is right here. We have hardened our hearts in an unrelenting, unforgiving spirit. Can a fountain give forth bitter and sweet water in the same place? So then, be careful lest you destroy your compassion, and your life be wasted, all because you would not forgive.

And now the master delivers him over to the prison. Thus, he that would not forgive is destitute of help. He is in bondage. Thus will an unforgiving spirit do to the man who will not forgive? God cannot help him, for he has rebelled against God. He is working against God and not with him.

He is in chains to himself. He has made himself a captive, and only he has the power to open his own prison. And until he forgives he will be in torment for an unforgiving spirit will bind the mind and spirit, and beyond that, it will break down the body, for many are the ailments of the body and many are the diseases of the mind that come from an unforgiving heart. Emotionally aroused in a wrong way the cancer of hate eats on until the unforgiving one is destroyed. O, thou soul, wilt thou remain a captive to thyself and thy hardness of heart, or wilt thou forgive and restore, and thyself be restored? The grace of God is not just God to man but it is also man to man. It was at first God to man that it may indeed be the grace of God in man and toward man. Thus, repent of thy hardness of heart, and seek thy brother and humble thyself and receive and be received, so that Satan no longer will have an advantage of thee, disquieting thy soul, robbing thee of thy peace of mind, destroying thy body, and in all oppose the saint as to leave him an unworthy member of the body of Christ, even though he is indeed an object of God's love.

15. Thus, beloved, we come to the threshold of a New Year. And all of us long for a truly New Year, new in the amplified service and blessing of God. Hungry for his ever deepening revelation of Himself; crying that we might feed more and more upon Him, resolving piteously to obey and serve. Then forgive even as He has forgiven, and indeed this will truly be your New Year, and hasten, now, while you are reading and moved by the truth. Make amends, so that every disadvantage being gone, you are free to become, and to do, what the Spirit of God is crying in your heart.