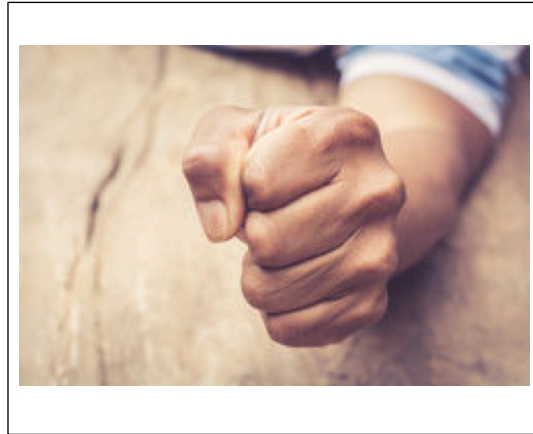


Cross Words

An Inspirational Message

Matthew 18: 23-35



Freedom In Forgiveness

The only thing harder on us than forgiving, is not forgiving. It is an ulcer that is fed by bitterness and hatred, and it robs us of our happiness. Not forgiving is the fastest way to suck the joy from your life.

Forgiving someone doesn't mean we have to pretend like nothing ever happened, nor does it mean we will instantly forget the pain we have inside. But we can never even begin the forgetting if we don't go through the process of forgiving. And what WILL happen instantly is that our memory will stop feeding acid to the ulcer.

If you are holding on to a grudge, if you have been violated by another, or been so deeply hurt that it is eating away at your soul, you are only torturing yourself.

There are ways to end this cycle of self-destruction.

First: Unclench your fist.

Second: Imagine holding the anger in your open hand.

Third: Identify what it would take to heal the pain. Now admit to yourself that the apology or reparation will probably never happen.

Fourth: Release it to God.

Fifth: Take the same grace that you have been shown by Jesus Christ and pass it on to the one who sinned against you.

Do this as often as you hope God will grant it to you.

Not for their sake.

But for yours.

Come visit us at First Christian Church, we talk about things like that.