

VOW Walk the talk.

Good evening, ladies of worth.

You know how you feel when you're asked to teach Secondary School Students and you remember you used to give your teachers tough times when you were in Secondary School? Lol

That's how I feel right now. I mean, I've been different things here at different times.

...but hey! God used notorious Saul turned Paul, He'll definitely use naughty Owunni

Let's pray, please:

Father, we thank You for yet another privilege to learn tonight but beyond learning, please empower us by Your Spirit to do because You know a lot more than we do that of our own selves, we can do nothing.

...and as for me, please give me the right words so I can boldly explain all you'd have me do.

Thank You because You always hear us.

It's in Jesus' name we've prayed.

I must say this is a set up fa.

I tried my best to follow through the series from the beginning and as at yesterday, I didn't know what or how else to explain forgiveness anymore- those two spiritual sisters had done justice. Thank you Mas

I'll be looking at forgiveness from a preventive angle, partly because I like preventive measures a lot.

You can as well tag this teaching:

Preventing Unforgiveness

Luke 17:1a- Then said He unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come.

In essence, Jesus was saying we are bound to be offended in this life. Only the dead don't get offended. As long as you have breath in your nostrils, you will be offended, that's a given!

That's why He continued in the proceeding verse that we should forgive over and over again, up to 490 times *in a day.*

...so I tried to imagine, even the devil can't offend you that many times in one day.

No one can! Unless you're "Makan"

(Makan means 'don't touch').

Brings me to my first point:

1. *Acknowledge forgiveness as your choice.*

It's a choice of the wise.

See, Unforgiveness steals your joy because when you're holding someone down, you're being held down yourself.

...and the bible makes it's clear that it is with *joy* that we draw waters from the wells of salvation.

Look at it this way, there's a lot you have access to once you're saved. Salvation is likened to a well filled with uncountable blessings (Revelation 5:12- Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.) and we access these virtues with joy.

Joy is the fetcher we throw into the well.

How dare you allow something as minute as unforgiveness to deprive you of all that Christ died for?

You choose to forgive, not because it's convenient but because you're wiser than the devil who is only trying to steal your joy.

2. *Give excuses for people's misdeeds*

I smile as I type this because I remember I used to work in an office where I was nicknamed something like "excuse mistress" or something.

Uncle Lekan might remember clearly- he was one of the people who nicknamed me.

Then, I was just learning to forgive in advance so I'd make excuses for anyone.

For instance, if you slapped me, I could give an excuse as silly as saying your hand probably did a fast forward, lol

I was the wrong person to meet if you wanted to fan your anger or form a pity party but it helped me a lot.

I still do it. I remember my friend recently accused me of always saying I'm sorry even if I wasn't the one at fault.

I don't mind so long as it makes life easier for everyone. See, this life is not as hard as we take it.

Jesus did nothing yet they hated on Him Who are you?

This same Jesus asked the Father to forgive them...the way I see it, He already forgave them He was praying for God to forgive them

He didn't say, "I forgive you...". He already did! In advance.

(Hebrews 4:15- For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; *but was in all points tempted like as we are*, yet without sin.)

I once read that forgiving is for giving. In other words, you give it, not hoard it.

Imagine locking up a pipe meant to carry water; not only would the water in it begin to stink, the pipe itself would begin to harbour spirogyra and the likes of other organisms.

That's what happens when we do not forgive, we harbour other vices like anger, bitterness and

jealousy.

Haha! Where will the Holy Spirit dwell abeg?

3. *Deal with the issue and not just the person*

...so I've learnt that there's no one the devil cannot use if they allow themselves to be used because I've been terribly hurt in this my one life.

If we did an experiment now and every one here listed their most painful hurts, I'm sure I've experienced up to 80 percent of the total hurts that would be gathered.

Just name it: From assault to abuse to betrayal...

Issues, if properly dealt with make us stronger.

What was meant to break you could end up making you, your reaction is the deciding factor.

Let me share a story, it's not so deep though:

I was in year 2 and one day, on our way back from Church, one Sister needed assistance with Tfare. She claimed her credit card was swallowed by the machine, etc.

I should have kept my mouth shut but I explained that I had 1k which was all I had besides my Tfare to manage for the week because I don't call my parents for money. When they had, they sent and when they didn't have, I survived.

She promised to get the money across to me the next day unfailingly, that was Monday.

Monday came and went.

Tuesday, at fellowship, she apologised.

Wednesday to Saturday rolled past, Aunty said nothing. I even called her, she didn't pick.

The next week, she'd walk past me and flash my side.

Ah! I was upset.

I was drinking garri everyday and sometimes had to trek back home.

I became so bitter that whenever I saw her at prayer meetings, I couldn't pray.

One night, about 8 days later, my parents still hadn't sent money so I was trekking home, weeping profusely on the road and talking to God.

I can't remember all I said but I remember asking God to take the bitterness away.

I got home and felt better.

The next day, I realised I didn't feel an iota of anger towards her anymore.

God took it

I met her afterwards and told her not to bother paying me back and that was when she broke down in tears, explaining all she was going through.

What if I'd held a grudge against her or waited for her to come and apologise which might never have happened?

I'd have deprived myself the privilege of learning that God takes off what we can't, among other things.

4. *Allow the Holy Spirit*

The reason we sometimes find it difficult to forgive is because we believe the person or people took something valuable to us.

...but I've come to a conclusion: the only thing I may never forgive you of is if you take Jesus away from me and the truth is, no one has that much power over me save myself.

I picture a plantain tree (because I love plantains).

If someone steals my ripe plantain from the tree, I'll be upset but not so bothered because I

have the tree!

Given time, I'll get another set of plants.

(And the way God works, He makes sure they come bigger and sweeter).

You have the tree that no man can cut down in you!

Why are you sulking over just one fruit?

In conclusion

(Romans 13:8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.)

...and love keeps no record of wrongs.

Forgiving in advance saves you the whole stress that comes with unforgiveness.

It is what God commands.

It's walking the talk.

It's our escape route from unforgiveness.

I pray God helps us to walk in the light of His word in Jesus' name.