



Welcome to Unity's Interactive Worship Service

**Today's Topic: The Door To
Wholeness**

Power Point notes available at:
www.unityofbakersfield.org

The Door To Wholeness

Last week I talked about connecting to the essence of our being, the Christ, through six action steps and by affirming: *The Christ in you, your hope of glory.*

However, we also discovered that affirming a statement will not make it so because we affirm it; it is an effective means of synchronizing our consciousness with God.

The Door To Wholeness

And Jesus taught us how to synchronize our consciousness with God by going into our room, into our closet, and close the door so that we may pray in secret.

It is in that sacred place that we commune with the Lord of our being, a place where we find wholeness as we connect with Spirit by walking hand in hand with Divine Love through the activity of forgiveness.

The Door To Wholeness



Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not just seven times, but seventy times seven."

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Within that statement made to Peter, Jesus was showing him that forgiveness is an ongoing process. That if anyone is to express compassion toward another, then part of that compassion is the forgiveness of sins, trespasses, wrongs, hurts or any grievance one might have against another.

He taught us that to develop the Christ consciousness, forgiveness would be the door to wholeness of mind, body, and spirit with God.

The Door To Wholeness

The true spirit of Jesus's teachings is about the continuous forgiveness we must give. People may say, "Oh, how beautiful; Oh, how true," but knowing human nature as Jesus did, what is the big hang up here? What is the big stumbling block in this idea where spirit is willing but flesh is weak.

The key to the dilemma is in the word continuous. An activity that is always active, unending, steady, and perpetual.

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An example:

Peter is taught to forgive seven times and that's it. "Ok, I'll forgive you seven times but don't do that ever again."

There is logic behind that. Every person has a right to decide his own limits, that is your right, your choice. If you avail yourself of the privilege of limiting the amount of forgiving you are going to do, there is a consequence for that privilege.

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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, and running over will be poured into your lap. For the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. Luke 6:37-38

The Door To Wholeness

Jesus to Peter, "Not just seven times, by seven times seventy." This statement from Jesus is saying, "*If you want the consciousness of God's love, then you must do unlimited forgiving, there is no other way.*"

The lesson Jesus is teaching is, when you limit any kind of spiritual act or expression of God toward others, to that degree you limit yourself from attaining a wholeness relationship with God.

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So how can we start to put into practice the "seventy times seven" type of forgiveness so we too can have the relationship with God as Jesus did?

Writer, Mark Matousek gives us seven ways in which we can start the process. He writes:

We begin by acknowledging — right off the bat — how difficult it can be to forgive someone who has wounded us deeply.

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There are as many ways to forgive as there are people needing to be forgiven. Still, here are seven simple things to remember when you really do want to let bygones be bygones.

1. Take your time. Forgiveness does not require a stopwatch. The part of us that requires amends generally refuses to be rushed. Healing has its own timetable, which sometimes can require a lifetime.

The Door To Wholeness

2. Tell the truth. Authenticity is everything when it comes to forgiveness. Nothing but whole truth (so help you God) is potent enough to unlock serious grudges. This usually requires a leap of faith (we so rarely tell the *whole* truth), and the willingness to lose the relationship if the truth is too much for your unforgiven party to hear. You can't be dishonest and move forward emotionally at the same time.

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3. Own your part. Telling the truth means taking responsibility for your part in the bad way things went down. It's all too tempting for the injured party to play the victim (how else could we manage to be so self righteous?). But the truth cuts both ways and you need to get real about your behavior. Are you guilty of miscommunication? Did you misrepresent your needs or desires? Are you wearing your offense like a crown of thorns, acting high or mighty?

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4. Open your heart. As Daniel Goleman writes in *Social Intelligence*, "Empathy is the prime inhibitor to human cruelty." Only when we see our enemies as individuals deserving empathy can "the war between Us and Them ever stop." We tend to demonize those who hurt us. But when we work at understanding our foes to be struggling, imperfect people — just like us — capable of making mistakes, we make room for empathy to be stirred in our shut down hearts.

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5. And open your eyes. Trust is a delicate creature, however. We're smart to remain vigilant, savvy and history-smart in re-establishing trust with someone who has hurt us. Remember, forgiveness contains a degree of wisdom (otherwise, it's not forgiveness). As someone once said, "If you are hurt by someone you love, forgive them for they taught you the lesson when it comes to sharing or giving your trust to people."

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6. Turn it over. Wisdom, by definition, means relinquishing control over final outcomes. Would-be forgivers are often blocked by the fine print of their own expectations ("I will forgive only if this happens..."). But that is not how forgiveness works. Surrendering a measure of personal will (in the sense of Thy will be done, whether the Doer is a divine entity or fate itself) allows both parties to regroup and begin anew.

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7. Stay strong. Just as we cannot move forward and be dishonest at the same time, we cannot remain petty and hope to expand beyond the level of personal grievance. Mired down by the letter of the law, we may lose the spirit of forgiveness. This spirit derives from a desire for justice but also from a pull toward personal happiness. Held hostage to rigid ideas about right and wrong, or should and shouldn't, we cannot hope to resolve our conflicts with an open mind.

The Door To Wholeness

As a survivor of the Holocaust wrote, "You must be strong to forgive. Forgiveness is not about condoning or excusing. Forgiveness has nothing to do with justice. Forgiving is a selfish act to free yourself from being controlled by your past."

The door to wholeness can be opened at anytime, as some once said, "Forgiveness is a reflection of loving yourself enough to move on."