

# Triple Catch to Moving Mountains

## Episode 4

We are now on our 4th episode of five on the **Triple Catch to Moving Mountains**.

We have been exploring what Jesus wanted us to understand when it comes to our harboring unforgiveness and how that impacts our ability to move mountains and to wither the fruitless tress in our lives.

And keep in mind, we are still exploring the **TRIPLE CATCH** in order to find out what it takes for God to give us a heart that does not doubt, so we can pray without doubting, and by faith say to this mountain, “be removed” and it be lift up and cast into the sea.

In our last episode we studied what it means to take communion in an unworthy manner. The Spirit said that many (not a few, but many) are **weak, sick, and a number dead** all because they have harbored unforgiveness towards others and towards their own sin and failings.

*Let us Pick up with the Science of Unforgiveness*

I want to spend a few moments considering what it means that **many are weak, sick, and a number dead**. Modern psychological studies have confirmed that unforgiveness is a huge problem inflicting our physical and mental well-being. Consider this excerpt:

“There is an enormous physical burden to being hurt and disappointed,” says Karen Swartz, M.D, director of the Mood Disorders Adult Consultation Clinic at The Johns Hopkins Hospital. Chronic anger puts you into a fight-or-flight mode, which results in numerous changes in heart rate, blood pressure and immune response. Those changes, then, increase the risk of depression, heart disease and diabetes, among other conditions. Forgiveness, however, calms stress levels, leading to improved health. Forgiveness is not just about saying the words. **“It is an active process in which you make a conscious decision to let go of negative feelings whether the person deserves it or not,”** Swartz says. As you release the anger, resentment and hostility, you begin to feel empathy, compassion and sometimes even affection for the person who wronged you. Studies have found that some people are just naturally more forgiving. Consequently, they tend to be more satisfied with their lives and to have less

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depression, anxiety, stress, anger and hostility. People who hang on to grudges, however, are more likely to experience severe depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as other health conditions.”

Or this one specifically regarding cancer:

“Unforgiveness is classified in medical books as a disease. According to Dr. Steven Standiford, chief of surgery at the Cancer Treatment Centers of America, refusing to forgive makes people sick and keeps them that way. With that in mind, forgiveness therapy is now being used to help treat diseases, such as cancer. ‘It’s important to treat emotional wounds or disorders because they really can hinder someone’s reactions to the treatments, even someone’s willingness to pursue treatment,’ Standiford explained. Of all cancer patients, 61 percent have forgiveness issues, and of those, more than half are severe, according to research by Dr. Michael Barry, a pastor and the author of the book, *The Forgiveness Project*. ‘Harboring these negative emotions, this anger and hatred, creates a state of chronic anxiety,’ he said. ‘Chronic anxiety very predictably produces excess adrenaline and cortisol, which deplete the production of natural killer cells, which is your body’s foot soldier in the fight against cancer,’ he explained. Whether it’s a simple spat with your spouse or long-held resentment toward a family member or friend, unresolved conflict can go deeper than you may realize—it may be affecting your physical health. The good news: Studies have found that the act of forgiveness can reap huge rewards for your health, lowering the risk of heart attack; improving cholesterol levels and sleep; and reducing pain, blood pressure, and levels of anxiety, depression and stress. And research points to an increase in the forgiveness-health connection as you age.”

It is sad that science is now finally catching up to what the Holy Spirit told us over 2,000 years ago. It is even more tragic, and embarrassing, that we, as believers, as those who confess that we now and continually believe in the finished work of Jesus Christ, need to catch up to both the Word of God and to science.

**If we harbor unforgiveness we will be handed over to the tormentors and we will experience**

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**physical, emotional, and mental death.**

### *The Pathway of Forgiveness*

I stated before that practically all the deeds of the *flesh* (malice and all deceit, and hypocrisy and envy, and all slander, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, gossip, arrogance, and disturbances)<sup>1</sup> are rooted in unforgiveness. These “deeds” derive from our unwillingness to accept that God intentionally uses people in our lives as tools to get to those deep layers of religious deception in our soul, all that prevents us from knowing Him for who He is and from trusting His name.

Therefore, when we have been hurt, betrayed, deceived, mocked, abused, violated, or any such other terrible thing, we tend to blame people and hold them responsible until somehow or someday they make it right, or until enough time passes that we are not as angry as we once were. But as many of us know, people move on, they die, they do not even know what they have done, many do not care what they have done, and they simply do not make it right. And even if we did get a grand ole apology, I guarantee it will not be enough to undo the entanglement of pain and self-protection that was produced by their wounds. Sure, it might make it easier for us to look at them and to deal with them as part of our lives, but it does not bring healing, and therefore will be an absolute bar to our producing *agape* love.

Jesus is Yahweh Rapha; He is the only one who can heal the very wounds which He inflicted.<sup>2</sup> And denying the offense will never lead to healing. It is critical that we confront the offense and the One who caused the offense—Yahweh. It is a part of how we live in truth and not in delusion. It is time we take people out of the equation, take the devil out of the equation, and deal only with God.

### ***Deuteronomy 32:39***

See now that I, I am He, and there is no god besides Me; it is I who put to death and give life.

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<sup>1</sup> ***1 Peter 2:1; Galatians 5:20; 2 Corinthians 12:20***

<sup>2</sup> ***Isaiah 30:26; Jeremiah 33:6***

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I have wounded and it is I who heal, and there is no one who can deliver from My hand.

### ***Job 5:18***

For He inflicts pain, and gives relief; He wounds, and His hands also heal.

### ***Hosea 6:1***

Come, let us return to the Lord. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us.

Jesus not only is willing to heal our wounds—the wounds He inflicted—**but I believe this is the pathway to our receiving that heart which does not doubt.** Why? Because living in forgiveness requires us to finally stand in the truth about ourselves, about others, and about Christ. And with this alignment, we will be in sync with the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the barriers will be lifted, and will know, with confidence, how He wants us to pray. But for our part, first we must choose forgiveness.

### *Forgiving from the Heart*

Honestly, I struggled with the concept of our having to first choose forgiveness as a way of life, as I have wrestled with many deep and destructive wounds, those which have been given to me and those which I have given to others. It is apparent to me now that for so long I did not understand what it meant to forgive from the heart. In my religious delusion, I thought I had forgiven; after all, I have said “I forgive you” many times. Yet, if I am honest, somewhere deep inside my heart I have also said “**BUT**” I won’t trust you, and I will put up my barriers against you until you prove yourself over, and over again. I am fairly confident that is not forgiving from the heart, for is it dealing with someone as if they were NOT a clean slate and that my sovereign God didn’t purpose to use them to teach me something.

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By the way, my battle with forgiveness also extended to myself and the enormous weight which I carried for my own failings due to the deep wounds I know I have caused others. Again, I am confident forgiveness from the heart is something quite different.

Similar to the idea of the scapegoat, forgiveness from the heart must involve a total exchange of the deeds of the *flesh* (malice and all deceit, and hypocrisy and envy, and all slander, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, gossip, arrogance, and disturbances) and all the emotions surrounding such deeds for freedom, the total release of others and ourselves.

This is the freedom to choose kindness, compassion, mercy, tender-heartedness, all of which can be summed up in love—God’s *agape* love. Clearly, this is a needed exchange for most of us, but it is not a natural exchange nor is it something we can muster up, it must be a work of the Spirit. But like most things of the Spirit, we also have our part.

### *What do you Believe?*

Largely, people are unaware that our emotional and mental constructs, no matter how strong, flow from our deep internal psychological beliefs, many of which we are not even aware. For instance, if at the very center of our being, resulting from the wounds we have incurred, we believe we are not safe and we are at risk, this belief will play itself out practically in how we live and how we conduct our relationships. As such, we will always exhibit signs of control, self-protection, and we will keep people at a certain distance limiting our experience with intimacy. And depending upon how intense the belief, the intensity of the emotion and the resulting behavior will follow in kind.

In this vein of thought, I have surmised that everything within us that does not flow from God and His love is rooted in a **wrong belief** or the flat-out **unbelief** of the truth, whether we are aware of it or not. Moreover, it should not surprise us that much of our wrong belief and unbelief is hidden away in the deepest recesses of our reactive brain and quite inaccessible to our conscious mind. We can only observe the reaction, feel the emotion, but not necessarily understand the true cause of our responses or identify the actual wrong belief or unbelief.

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For example, I have an extreme claustrophobic response when I am put in a situation where I feel I am physically controlled by others, even if I can freely get out of the situation. For instance, sitting in the middle or window seat of an airplane or the back seat of a 2-door car. I do not have this same intense reaction in small spaces, for instance in the bathroom of an airplane or an elevator. But if a person blocks me in my seat, even if I know I can get out, I will freak out with a panic that is so primal that it has no restraint. I have practically exhausted my attempts to remedy this, but again the reaction is so primal that I know it stems from the fight or flight mechanism in my reactive brain, a place over which I have no conscious control.

The trauma I endured as a child wounded me in such a way that I came to believe (unknowingly) in the deepest part of my being that I am not safe, either with God or with people. And if a situation arises that pushes on that place in my soul, my reactive brain bursts through like an unstoppable force of aggression and violence. Even when I think about the situation, prepare for it, and try to convince myself that I am ok, the panic is too much to bear.

And though at first, I could not connect this reaction to a specific belief, the Spirit showed me clearly that I do not believe I am safe, believing that what happened to me in the past was simply too much to bear. And since God did not practically protect me from the damage, I still harbor a doubt that He will protect me in the future. Honestly, that scares me to death (hence the primal reaction) which plays itself out in my ability to trust Him in other areas of my life. I hope that makes sense.

This was just an illustration of how deep our wounds can go and how they can form in us a wrong belief or unbelief which the Spirit must reach before He can bring healing into our being. Thus, in this instance, I believe God is going to have to help me believe that He is, and has always been, my Yahweh Nissi, my shelter of protection, and therefore I am always safe and have always been safe, no matter what I endure or what level of betrayal I encounter. I can think and speak about this truth, but the Spirit of God is going to have to imbed this truth in my subconscious mind for me to live free.

However, for my part, I must be willing to forgive those who hurt me and even forgive God for all that He had to do to me in order to acquire me as His own. I will need to believe, by the power

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of the Holy Spirit, that it was all, in every detail, necessary and the only pathway to freedom, safety, blessing, and love. I will need to believe that I was always in the palm of His hand and safe,<sup>3</sup> even though it did not feel safe. He only caused to happen what was absolutely necessary to accomplish His purposes.

Remember, “Whether for correction, or for His word, or for *lovingkindness*, He causes it to happen.”<sup>4</sup> And “**But by means of their suffering, he rescues those who suffer. For he gets their attention through adversity.** *God is leading you away from danger, ..., to a place free from distress. He is setting your table with the best food.*”<sup>5</sup>

It is important to understand that Yahweh Mekoddishkem and Yahweh Qanna did not like what they had to do, but again, it was, without question, necessary. When God addressed the wounds (the absolute destruction) He caused Israel, He said, “For I am sorry about all the evil (Hebrew “Ra”) I had to bring upon you.”<sup>6</sup>

I truly believe that God takes no pleasure in hurting us, but due to the generational sin and rebellion we have inherited from our forefathers, and the sin and rebellion we added to that mess, it was all necessary to redeem us unto Himself and to get us to even be aware of our need for Him. It was all an expression of His great love for us and necessary in order to lead us away from danger to a place free from distress, a place of peace, rest, and safety—where he is setting for us a table with the best food.

Most of us have an awfully hard time letting that truth sink into our being. But this truth is intended to help us hold to the perspective that our fight is not with others (those who hurt us) and we are definitely not victims; rather, all things came from Him who loves us in order to set us free so we can love with His *agape* love.

In the same way that God used the Assyrians and the Babylonians to wound His people in order that He might free a remnant and preserve them unto Himself, He used others to free us

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<sup>3</sup> *John 10:27-30*

<sup>4</sup> *Job 37:13*

<sup>5</sup> *Job 36:15-16*

<sup>6</sup> *Jeremiah 42:10*

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and preserve us unto Himself. This is what I call the **Heavenly Perspective**.

### *Cooperation in Death*

Armed with the **Heavenly Perspective**, by the power of the Spirit,<sup>7</sup> we can begin to choose to be kind and compassionate to others and to legitimately express God's *agape* love toward them because we now realize how terrible it is to be used as a destructive tool to accomplish God's purposes. After all, each of us, in our own way, no matter how good we think we are, have been used as this terrible tool in the lives of others.

Therefore, if we are willing to adopt the **Heavenly Perspective**, and show compassion to others (and to ourselves), I believe God will start healing the very wounds He inflicted, even those that are hidden away in the deepest recesses of our reactive mind. After all, it was for freedom sake that Christ set us free;<sup>8</sup> therefore, I believe He wants us to experientially know this freedom in its fullness.

### *Living with the Heavenly Perspective*

Let us return to the passage in **Romans 8** where it says that if we **now** put to death the deeds of the *flesh* we will **now** live or Colossians 3 which says that we are to "set aside" or Ephesians 4 which says we are to let them be "put away" from us.<sup>9</sup> This begs the very practical question, how do we "put to death," "set aside," or "put away, malice and all deceit, and hypocrisy and envy, and all slander, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, gossip, arrogance, and disturbances"?

Clearly, this is not something with which we can just muster up our determination to accomplish; rather, it is an extreme work of our cooperation with the Spirit in our lives. Let me explain. The phrases, "put to death," "set aside," and "put away" lead us down a pathway of intense cooperation, which I believe is anchored in the **Heavenly Perspective**.

First, "put to death" is rendered in the *present active indicative*. Thus, it is to be our now

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<sup>7</sup> **Romans 8:13**

<sup>8</sup> **Galatians 5:1**

<sup>9</sup> **Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:8; Ephesians 4:31**



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experience, and something we are to found doing in our now. This sets the **expectation**. Second, “set aside” is rendered in the *aorist middle imperative*. Thus, it is a command for us to dig down deep in our soul and make the choice to live without these terrible deeds of the *flesh*—that which has corrupted our ability to abide in *life versus death*. This seals our **agreement** with God. Third, “put away” is in the *aorist passive imperative*. Thus, it is likewise a command, but it is a command for us to let God put it all away, such that our lifestyle comes to be defined by God always putting away these terrible deeds from our lives. This captures our **submission** or our practical **willingness** to cooperate with the Spirit.

In the Greek, this word translated “put away” comes from the notion of pulling up anchor and setting sail, i.e., letting the wind fill the sails on this filthy ship of *fleshly* deeds and lifting, or sailing, them away from our life. This is how the Spirit brings true freedom into our lives. Understanding the expectation and agreeing with God is the first step. Then we must decide if we will be willing and submit to His work. If so, the Spirit will lift these deeds from our lives and like the wind, sail them away to a faraway land.

And why does God set us free? That we might be free to live in absolute forgiveness for then, and only then, will we be able to love one another with God’s *agape* love—to love those who have hurt us. By the way, the Spirit says over, and over again that this kind of love is the definitive proof, **in fact the only proof**, that we abide in Christ and are not living in a religious delusion.<sup>10</sup>

### ***Galatians 5:13-15***

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, **but through love serve one another**. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

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<sup>10</sup> ***John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:14, 4:20***

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In our pain, in our belief that we are not safe and must protect ourselves, we naturally bite and devour one another when wrong has been done to us. But that sort of vengeful unforgiveness (whether expressed externally or harbored internally) literally consumes us or uses us up and destroys us. Please understand that the grace which God has given us is not to be misconstrued as to give us room to freely indulge in the deeds of the *flesh*; especially since we are not bound to obey the *flesh*.<sup>11</sup> Yes, it is true that we are free to do anything, as all things are lawful for us (even biting and devouring others), but given the tormentors, we can now understand why not all things are profitable for us.<sup>12</sup>

**In reality, the grace of God (which is the power that effects our transformation) has been given to us so we might now serve one another in love.**

### *The Example*

The night before Jesus' death (when He was on the cusp of being betrayed by a friend, being denied multiple times by one of his closest friends, who said he would die for Him, and left by the remainder of those who said they loved Him and would follow Him to death), He did something amazing which few, even today, fully understand. He washed the disciples' feet.

### ***John 13:5-16***

Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter." Peter said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all

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<sup>11</sup> ***Romans 8:12***

<sup>12</sup> ***1 Corinthians 6:12, 10:23***

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of you are clean." So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, "**Do you know what I have done to you?**" "You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you."

This is simply sublime. Even before they had the opportunity to betray, deny, and abandon Jesus, He literally washed their sin from their eyes and the eyes of others. Their feet were dirty and needed to be cleansed. Do not be mistaken, this was not a lesson in "servitude," as it is usually taught, but a lesson in what we are to do when others betray, deny, and abandon us. We are to wash away the filth and the grime from their feet, so they do not need to stare at their failings, we do not stare at their failings, and no one else can either.

Armed with the **Heavenly Perspective**, we do not wait for someone else to do it, and we do not leave people to be consumed by their sin and failings; rather, we choose to wash their feet because we have been freed to love one another and not to bite and devour each another.

Did you notice that Peter did not even think He needed it? We are much like him. The point being is that we need to wash the feet of others whether they know they did wrong or not. And since "ought" in the phrase "out to wash" is rendered in the *present active indicative*, this is to definitively describe our relationships with one another. This is not to be something that happens here-and-there. It is to **now** define ALL our relationships, not just with those that have yet to blow it with us.

This is the practical example of what it means when we are instructed to love. "Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins."<sup>13</sup> The towel literally covers the sins as the water washes it away.

**Above all**, this is how we must treat one another. **Above all! Above** our duties in ministry (which often keeps us blind to what really matters); **above** our religious excuses which we use to

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<sup>13</sup> **1 Peter 4:8-9**

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divide and separate from those who hurt us; **above** our fear of vulnerability; **above** our fear of being hurt again; **above** our pain; **above** our wisdom which builds walls and boundaries; **above** our feelings of self-protection; **above** taking care of ourselves; **above** our pride; and **above** our arrogance that we MUST be the one to teach the offender a lesson. **Yes, Above All!**

**Above all** we must be fervent, or burning hot, in our love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Love literally keeps us from staring at, or even observing, the sins of others. And it helps keeps the offender from indulging in some sort of religious flagellation for their failings, and more importantly, it keeps others from doing the same—from flagellating the offender for their failures. Love covers a multitude of sins by taking the towel and covering up the transgression and then taking the water and wiping it all away as if it were never there in the first place.

**“If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.”**

It is in making this choice to now wash the feet of those who have failed us, and will fail us, that we can fulfill the command: “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”<sup>14</sup>

The choice to do as Christ did and to wash the feet of others simply makes God happy beyond our understanding. The words “kind” and “tender-hearted” are very emotional words and capture the fact that *agape* love is peaceable, very patient, gentle, kind, good, and abounding in faithfulness.<sup>15</sup> We all want this from others, but we have to choose let God use us as His living fountain of love, His vessel of mercy, even in the midst of betrayal, denial, and abandonment. This is our sacrifice, which means it is beyond difficult, but it is how we follow the example our master set for us.

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<sup>14</sup> *Ephesians 4:32-5:2*

<sup>15</sup> *Galatians 5:22-23*

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### ***Colossians 3:12-16***

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, **put on** a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

**And with that, let's take a break until the next episode.** These matters are intense, they are deep, and they address things that few have considered. I say that because unfortunately, *agape* love is not big on our list of qualities that others recognize, especially when compared to our self-protection and the fear upon which we have built a big portion of our lives.

So, let's meditate on this truth and what it means to wash the feet of others and be Jesus' living fountain of love, His vessel of mercy, even in the midst of betrayal, denial, and abandonment. And in our next and final episode on the **Triple Catch to Moving Mountains**, we will pick up with more on how we can live in forgiveness.