TODAY'S MESSAGE:

HAPPILY EVER AFTER?

"Not Your Parents' Marriage"

Sunday September 30, 2012   Matthew 18:21-35

I. 3 Ways My Parent's Marriage Can Negatively **IMPACT**:

1. The Damage of **COMPARISON**:

    a. POSITIVE Comparison: "You don't STACK UP so well to my Mom or my Dad."

    b. NEGATIVE Comparison: "At least I'm not as BAD as my Mom or my Dad."

2. The Damage of **WITHELD BLESSING**.

Truth: Only your Heavenly Father can give you what you lack.

3. The Damage of **ABUSE**.

Truth: Whatever damage you have experienced impacts the way you relate to your spouse.

II. In Response to Hurt, We Look For **REVENGE**.

1. Our response can be **OVERT** or **SUBTLE**

III. Responding with **FORGIVENESS**:

1. Unforgiveness is **SELF-DESTRUCTIVE**.

"See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many." (Hebrews 12:15)

2. The **FORGIVEN** Forgive. (Matt. 18:21-35)

"For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." (Matthew 6:14-15)

3. How do I Forgive?
a. **PRAY** for those who have hurt me.

But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (Matthew 5:44)

b. **SURRENDER** your desire for vengeance to God.

"Do not repay anyone evil for evil. … Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord." (Romans 12:17, 19)

For Reflection / Action: How do you view your parents' marriage/relationship? In what ways was it strong? How was it weak? What do you want to "copy" of your parents' relationship? What do you not want to duplicate? Did your parents "bless" you in many ways? If you have experienced abuse of any kind in your past, get help. Who do you need to forgive? How does failing to forgive continue to hurt you? Pray. Surrender.

Message uses materials by Rod Stafford (Fairfax Community Church). All Scripture, unless otherwise noted, is taken from the "New International Version" (NIV84).