

**Receive the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins you remit, they are remitted unto them; whose soever sins you retain, they are retained. John 20:22 & 23**

Elaine McLachlan

These words are very powerful. They are some of the first words Jesus said when He rose from the dead, having paid the price for the sins of the whole world, and it is good to understand what he is saying here.

People all over the world have been abused, physically and verbally, which has had a very big spiritual effect. All sorts of worldly advice and tactics have been tried but actually none of these have worked. In some places they might have thrown off the shackles of oppression but have thrown faith out too. In some places they have hung onto their belief in God but have become emotionally crippled, full of fear and shame, which nullifies the power of God in their lives.

Jesus had just gone through the worst abuse anyone could imagine so He is imparting a very important secret here for those who really want to hear. He had taught a lot on forgiveness. Most people think of this as ceasing to feel angry or of excusing an offender. **Remitting sins is far stronger.** This means wiping out as if they had never been done. **This is what God has done for us because of Jesus.** He assures us that as far as the east is from the west, thus far are our sins from us, and even into the depths of the sea. God sees only the righteousness of Jesus when He looks at us and He loves us as He loves His dear Son. We think of other people's sins that they have dumped on us as mud which should be washed off. **This can only be done by repentance,** ie, turning away from the sin that has attached itself to me. This is why Jesus had to say "Father forgive them". He remitted their sins unto them.

**Retaining sins,** then, is not remitting them but keeping them in and on ourselves. This effectively means that we are answerable for the sins that someone else did to us, which obviously is not right, but this is God's reason for asking us to forgive. When there has been gross sin committed against us and there is serious damage it is very hard to do what Jesus commands, but **obedience is a demonstration of faith** that God's grace will enable, and God is faithful to His promises.

The very hard part is to understand why such abuse could have happened in the first place, since all abuse has its root in Satan himself. The trouble is that he can only attack us where we are weaker. He loves the smell of fear as this shows we are not perfected in Love. We know we have angels waiting to do our bidding when we are under attack and we also have a full armour supplied by the Holy Spirit. We also know that we are "speaking spirits", created in God's image. If we have not used these "tools" that God has given us we have been at fault, and need to repent for these things.

There are testimonies of how effective these tools are when used appropriately so we have no excuse. It took this writer a long time to learn the lesson outlined, but we pray the reader will embrace this lesson quickly, so that they will not suffer any more pain than they have already done. **Be filled with the Holy Spirit and repent from every evil thing that has ever come near.**