

Forgiveness

Introduction

1. Story of a woman bitten by a dog with rabies:

A woman was bitten by a stray dog. Tests were made on the health of the dog. "I'm sorry to inform you," the doctor said, "but you have been bitten by a rabid dog."

She sat down and instantly began to write. She wrote furiously for some time. When the doctor noticed what the woman was doing he said, "It won't be necessary for you to write your will. I'm going to give you a shot which will cure you."

"I'm not writing my will," the woman said. "I'm making a list of all the people I want to bite before I get the shot."

A. Many people live and die with that kind of list, written in their minds, if not on paper.

2. At the root of destroyed marriages, divided families, ruined friendships, and church splits is an unforgiving spirit

A. A refusal to let go a wrong suffered that locks an individual into a prison of his own making, where resentment, bitterness, and anger become one's constant companion.

3. C. S. Lewis put it so well: "Forgiveness is a beautiful word, until you have something to forgive".

4. S.I. McMillen observed in the book None of these diseases, "The moment I start hating a man I become his slave. He even controls my thoughts. I can't escape his tyrannical grasp on my mind. When the waiter serves me steak it might as well be stale bread and water. The man I hate will not permit me to enjoy it."

5. **Jesus spent his entire life teaching lessons about forgiveness and a provision for it.**
6. **What is forgiveness?**
 - A. **To hold one as though no offense had been given; stop being angry with; pardon, to cancel or remit (as a debt); interested in as though nothing had happened.**

Ephesians 4:32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

Colossians 3:13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

Forgiveness Is Necessary

1. **Because man is a transgressor of the law of God.**

- A. **All have sinned!**

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

- B. **We not only sin against God, but we sin against our fellow man.**

Matthew 5:22-24

Luke 15:18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you,

2. **Forgiveness is necessary for man's physical good and welfare.**

- A. **We have enough burdens to bear!**

God's Forgiveness

1. Man is lost for eternity without it!

Revelation 21:27 But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

2. It is only when we are IN Christ that we have forgiveness of sins. **Ephesians 1:6-7**

A. We can only get IN Christ through baptism.

Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

B. We are only saved through obedience to God's word.

- 1) **Hear**
Romans 10:17
- 2) **Belief**
Mark 16:16
- 3) **Repentance**
Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30
- 4) **Confession**
Matthew 10:32
- 5) **Baptism**
Romans 6:3-4

a. It is baptism that saves us.

1 Peter 3:21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: (KJV)

b. If we love Jesus we will keep His commandments and obey Him **John 14:15**

3. God is always ready to forgive.

Romans 10:21 But to Israel he says: "All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people."

A. God wants everyone to be saved.

1 Timothy 2:4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

B. We are fortunate to have a patient, loving Father!

Psalms 103:1-22

4. God's kindness leads us to repentance:

Romans 2:4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

Man's Forgiveness

1. Man sins against his fellow man - it began with Cain.

Genesis 4:4-8

2. Brethren in the Lord's church sin against each other and their Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 8:12 But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.

Luke 17:3 Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

3. All strife, and division is the result of sin and a failure to forgive on the part of man — not GOD!

4. A lack of a forgiving spirit hinders our spiritual progress.

5. Man **must forgive or be lost.**

Matthew 6:14-15 "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

STORY OF THE SLAVE

Matthew 18:23-35

Observations:

1. Owes the king ten thousand talents.

A. A talent is a weight of money equal to 5-6 thousand denarii.

B. Since a working man received one denarius a day, one talent was the equivalent to about fifteen years' wages.

- C. This man owed ten thousand of these!**
- 2. Why does the Lord use such astronomical figures?**
 - A. To remind us of our debt before a holy God!**
- 3. We need to be mindful that in this parable that it is the character of the king, not the servant, that produces the release from debt.**
 - A. Only the king can forgive the debt and he does so by paying it himself.**
 - B. The debt sinners owe to God is paid for by the debt-holder Himself, God the Son, through His death on the cross for US!**
- 4. After forgiven, a fellow servant that owes him money is met.**
 - A. He owes one hundred pence. Much less than the man had been forgiven of and allowed to keep.**
 - B. Notice the debtor's response. He does exactly the same thing this servant had done before the king - He begs for patience.**
- 5. A key point here is this: Although he has a legal right to demand payment, he has no moral right.**
 - A. It is impossible to receive forgiveness gratefully from one and to refuse it vengefully to another.**
 - 1) When I choose to receive forgiveness, I obligate myself to practice forgiveness!**

Christ Is Our Standard

1. The apostle Paul taught this to the brethren in Ephesus, Colossae, and in Rome.

Ephesians 4:31-32 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

Colossians 3:12-13 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

Romans 4:7-8 "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin."

2. Once one goes to God and asks forgiveness of sin - God remembers it NO MORE!

Hebrews 10:17 ..."Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

A. Why then do we hesitate to forgive others when we ourselves sin?

Matthew 18:15

B. How often should we forgive our brother?

Matthew 18:21-22

1) We must come to grips with forgiveness in our lives. We must realize:

- a. Forgiveness deals with real sin, with the inexcusable, the unforgettable, and the unacceptable.**
- b. Forgiveness means erasing the act, letting go of the wrong.**

c. Forgiveness is granted not earned! I choose to forgive. I am not to wait until I am no longer hurt by what was done.

2) Forgiveness is not easy: It may in fact be the hardest thing we ever do. But there is no option. Forgiveness is the WILL OF GOD.

C. We **MUST be forgiving as God is forgiving toward us!**

1 Peter 3:8 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;

Conclusion

1. Let us all remember these principles of forgiveness:

A. The source of forgiveness is God's forgiveness.

1) I do not and cannot deserve forgiveness, but I can enjoy it because God is the kind of God He is.

B. The refusal to forgive is costly.

1) To accept God's forgiveness and to refuse to forgive another is not just unfortunate, it is wicked.

C. The secret to forgiveness is grace.

1) Grace received means grace must be displayed. The duty to forgive is grounded in Calvary. What the Lord did shows what we must do.

