

Forgiveness

Colossians 3:12-13 says;

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering:

Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”

A man sentenced to death sits in the electric chair ready to be executed. When asked does he have any last words, the telephone rings. It's the governor. The governor grants this man a full pardon. The man knows that if he doesn't pay for the crime he committed, someone else would have to. Overjoyed the man asked, “who was going to be punished for the crime”, and the governor replied, “I told the people during the elections, that if I'm voted into office I would do my very best for every single person. To do my best for you, I'm going to have to take your place, Your Forgiven.”

This is similar to the Christian story. God Himself, in the person of Jesus Christ did His very best for us by taking the penalty for our crimes (sin), while he pardoned or forgave us. If He gave all to us, shouldn't we do the same for others? Before we can truly forgive we must first understand forgiveness.

What is forgiveness?

It means to cease feeling resentment against an offender: pardon or to grant relief of payment. In the Bible the Word remission also means forgiveness.

Why is it necessary for us to be forgiven?

Because we owed a debt that we did not have the ability to pay, except through eternal death. Without God's grant of relief of payment through Jesus Christ, we would face eternal damnation. Sin separated us from God, and forgiveness gives us the ability to establish a proper relationship with God. We are forgiven for Christ's sake (Ephesians 4:32).

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”

Because of Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross we have the ability to be forgiven, that is to say, for Christ's sake.

Every sin that man has ever committed, or ever will think of committing, can be forgiven except one, blaspheming against the Holy Ghost. We as Christians must understand that no

matter how vile an act or atrocity a person may have committed, God can, and will forgive them, if they ask Him. We as Christians must stop trying to measure or weigh sins. Some look down at the adulterers, homosexuals, and murderers, by saying that if they keep that up they're going to Hell, while all along they keep up their much gossiping, which also can send someone to Hell. God gives the same penalty for all sin, and that is eternal death, but through the grace of God all sins can be forgiven, no matter the magnitude, except blaspheming the Holy Ghost. Mark 3: 28-30 states;

“Verily I say unto you, all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith so ever they shall blaspheme:

But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:

Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.”

Forgiving in seemingly unforgivable situations.

Often people commit acts against us that we might believe do not deserve forgiveness, ever. Some people knowingly try to hurt and injure us, which can cause deep wounds within our hearts, but, we yet must forgive them. Jesus is our example of forgiveness. Luke 23:24 states what our Savior said about those who were in the act of crucifying Him.

“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do...”

In the process of being crucified, Jesus yet knew the need to forgive them. Jesus knew that un-forgiveness was sin. We are always willing to be on the receiving side of forgiveness, but we must learn how to be on the giving side of forgiveness.

Un-forgiveness is a direct ticket to hell.

Over, and over again we have prayed the Lord's Prayer, in which we ask God to forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Sometimes I wonder do we really understand the seriousness of the Word of God. When we ask God to forgive us, and we don't forgive others, **He Will Not Forgive Us**. We think that when it comes to us, surely God will give us a break. God's Word stands firm; if you don't forgive, neither will you be forgiven. Matthew 6:15 speaks of this truth. **“But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”**

Without forgiving our neighbors we are on a one-way train to Hell. If God does not forgive us, then we are still in our sins; which means we're going to Hell. Mark 11:25-26 and Luke 6:37 also support this fact. Un-forgiveness can send you to Hell, even if we claim to be

Christians. Christian means Christ like, or little Christ, and surely forgiveness is one of the greatest attributes that describe our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

True Forgiveness is from the Heart.

It is very easy to say “I forgive you” with our lips while our hearts are saying different words. When we do this we think that we have fulfilled the law of forgiveness, but we are absolutely wrong. We may be able to make people believe that we have forgiven them, but God measures the heart. Although our mouths are speaking forgiveness to men, our hearts are speaking un-forgiveness even louder to God. The scriptures tell us plainly in Matthew. 18:35 how we should forgive.

“So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother his trespasses.”

1 Samuel 16:7 tells us that God looks not on the outward appearance, but looks at the heart.

“But the Lord said unto Samuel, look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth: for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.”

If your heart is not right you need to get it right and truly forgive, even those you know hate you.

True Forgiveness is easier with Spiritual maturity and insight.

The mature Christian forgives because they understand the spiritual side of things. We must understand that there are spiritual forces at work, trying to cause people to be offended, so that un-forgiveness can build up in their hearts, and condemn them to hell. When we begin to understand that it is not the person who said something about us at fault, but the demonic influence that they gave way to, we can better deal with the situation. The Love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, gives us the ability to Love and forgive the person as Romans 5:5 says. Jesus told us plainly that those who often do evil things, don't always realize what they are doing. Why is that? Because spiritual or demonic forces are leading them. Once again Luke 23:34 states;

“Then said Jesus, Father forgive them: for they know not what they do.”

Their minds were so influenced by the enemy, that it clouded their reasoning. We should not, and cannot allow the enemy to do that to us, if we desire to walk in the higher realms of heavens power.

How often should you forgive?

Matthew 18:21-22 gives us the answer.

“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?”

Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times: but, until seventy times seven.”

Jesus was trying to get a point across to him that as often as a person sins against you, you should forgive them every single time. We must remember, again, in the Lord’s Prayer we recite **“Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.”** As often as you like to be forgiven, you should forgive that much.

Forgetting after forgiving

We often hear people say, that they forgave someone, but they will never forget. Not forgetting after forgiving always hinders you. If you knew that God kept all the wrong you did in the fore front of His mind, how would that affect your relationship with Him? It would be unhealthy, because you would know that every time you made a mistake, God would perhaps say, “I knew that I should never have forgiven them last time, because they keep on messing up.” God forgives and forgets, and so should we. Hebrews 8:12 says:

“For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” (Also Isaiah 43:25 supports this.)

Many people would respond to this by saying, “they’re not God”. We must remember, that all who are saved have the Spirit of God living in them, which enables them to do what God would do in those circumstances, if they yield their will.

Forgiving Ourselves

The hardest person for us to sometimes forgive is ourselves. When you love God, you just want to do everything right, and when you make a mistake, forgiveness doesn’t come easy. We must realize that the moment we ask God to forgive us, he does. We shouldn’t allow the devil, or ourselves to put guilt and condemnation on our backs. We must forget and move on as Philippians 3:13-14 says:

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do forgetting those things which are behind, reaching forth unto those things which are before;

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

We must understand that un-forgiveness in us hinders our progress in our Christian walk. We often miss out on the blessings God has for us, because we are not ready to receive it, due to un-forgiveness. Un-forgiveness grows in us, and if we keep nurturing it, it becomes a monster that can lead into sin, and destroy our testimony. Un-forgiveness causes deep bitterness, which will steal your joy. If we don't learn how to forgive we cannot go forward in God.

You cannot move into the greater things in God without first emptying your hearts of un-forgiveness.

From: Bishop Tony Owens
House Of David Ministries Inc. 1(877) 35-JESUS