

Key Text: Ephesians 4:32

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

Forgiveness is the pardon of all sin. See *Psalms 32:1* “**Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.**” The forgiveness of sins is a central feature of the Christian message and witness, it stands at the heart of the gospel. The fact that Christ took the initiative to forgive our sin creates a forgiving attitude in the life of true Christians. As Christ forgave us, we should forgive others. (*Col. 3:13; Mt. 5:38–48; Rom. 12:19–21*). Christians are the most “forgiven” people in the world. Therefore Christians should be the most forgiving people in the world. Forgiveness of sins is also a key-component in the teaching on “**Justification**”. When God absolves the sinner from the condemnation of the law he is made “**righteous**”, which is on account of the individuals’ faith in the finished-work of Christ, this is when Christ’s blood erases the sinner’s need to suffer eternal wrath on account of sin. This is when a sinner becomes Justified in God’s eyes. (*Acts 5:31; 13:38; 1 John 1:6-9*). The sinner is by this act of God’s grace, forever freed from the guilt and penalty of his sins. Simply put, Jesus paid for the sins of the world. This was something God did because He willed it. (*Ps. 130:4; Mark 2:5*). **Now forgiveness is offered to all in the gospel message.** Remember that if no-one ever sinned, there would be nothing to forgive and forgiveness would not have been needed. So, what is **SIN**?

“I CAN FORGIVE THEM BUT I DON’T HAVE TO LOVE THEM...IS THAT HOW YOU WANT GOD TO FORGIVE YOU?”

Sin is a failure to conform to God’s law and the souls rebellion against it. (*1 John 3:4; Rom. 4:15*) **SIN IS LAWLESSNESS.** Where did sin come from? Sin came from Satan and then sin entered humanity through Adam.

The Bible does refer to sin as a mystery (*2 Thess. 2:7*) which means that it may never be fully understood by mankind...but Sin is still a reality that must be dealt with. This means that you will continue to experience offenses and people will continue to fall short of God’s law and hurt you. This is a condition mankind is born into and it is directly offensive to the Holy nature of God. (*Psa. 51:5; 2 Cor. 6:19*) Until sin is dealt with through forgiveness, the soul continues to suffer from death & separation. (See *John 3:36*) Two additional problems stem from sin and they are... **Guilt & Corruption.** This explains why a person will “**feel dirty**” until experiencing forgiveness from God and it explains why a person doesn’t feel relief by just forgiving themselves or through behaving better! The situation is similar to how you don’t have the authority to pardon yourself from your own speeding ticket and you don’t have the authority to forgive yourself of your own sin. **The stain of sin must be washed away or forgiven by God alone because He is the final authority.** (See *Isaiah 1:18 & Hebrews 9:22; Ephesians 1:7*)

A POPULAR MYTH:
“I CAN FORGIVE MYSELF”

PREPARE TO BE OFFENDED....BETTER YET...PREPARE TO FORGIVE!

Know that you will be hurt again by someone who sins. What will you do? Talk about how you will prepare to forgive the next time you are offended and hurt by someone.

1. Don’t be surprised when people offend you. **Luke 17:1-4; 2 Tim. 3:1**
2. Keep your eyes on the best example of forgiveness...CHRIST! **Heb. 12:27**
3. Make a choice to forgive anything from anyone before it happens. **Romans 12:18; Matt 5:39**

The Ultimate Story of Forgiveness - "Jesus On the Cross"

Jesus was innocent of all crimes and literally free of all sin! Jesus had also been betrayed by his own people including his closest of disciples. During His crucifixion, which was probably the most horrible of torture methods...He cried out, "Father, Forgive Them..." See **Luke 23:34**

LEARN TO DEVELOP AN ATTITUDE OF FORGIVENESS

LEARN WHAT JESUS TEACHES PETER ABOUT FORGIVENESS:

This verse, "**Matt. 18:21** Then Peter came and said to Him, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?'" reveals at least two faulty concepts we might have regarding the topic of forgiveness:

First faulty concept is: **It's must be the "other" guy who is to blame for the problem not me!**
Second faulty concept: **There is a limit to forgiveness. How many times should I forgive?**

As a result of Peters' questions on forgiveness, Jesus taught these 5 truths in a parable about the "**Unmerciful Servant**" found in Matthew 18: 21-35. Here are five things that Jesus teaches about forgiveness:

- Everyone is in need of forgiveness. Vs 23.
- We make the mistake of thinking we can pay off our debt. Vs 26.
- Other people's sin far outweighs our own sin, and is much worse in our own eyes. Vs 28.
- If we do not forgive, we cannot be forgiven. Vs 35.
- Much torment comes from refusing to forgive. Vs 34.

"PARDON ...just as in Christ God pardoned you."

FREELY GIVE/CHARIZOMAI - "Charis" is the root word here and it is usually translated into English as the word grace. But there are 8 times in the New Testament where this same Greek root is interpreted as "FORGIVE". This shifts the emphasis onto another aspect of forgiveness. Forgiveness is intended to be a GIFT of LOVE that we can give to one another. The basis for this kind of forgiveness is definitely "LOVE" and it should share the same qualities of Grace. **FORGIVENESS IS A GIFT OF GRACE**

THAT IS NOT DESERVED! See how we should give forgiveness as a gift to one another in Colossians 3:13. God gives grace to the humble, so can you imagine what it would be like to DEMAND the gift of forgiveness? Instead, we become open to the gift of forgiveness through being humble. (James 4:6)

FREEDOM/APOLOO - "To Release or give freedom". This word is used only two times and you can see it used in **Luke 6:37,38**. You can tell that generosity is somehow intertwined into the understanding of forgiveness. Can you give a little or a lot? Freedom or release must be measured out by you to the one who has offended you. The question is how generous will you be or what standard of measurement will you use in your forgiveness of sin? **FREELY YOU HAVE RECEIVED SO FREELY GIVE!!!** Imagine the difference between a prison cell and a wide open field. This is the feel of forgiveness in the "APOLOO" sense. (See Romans 5:20,21; Ephesians 1:7.)

PARDON/AFFEAHME - "To Let Go, Send away". This word is used most when we see the word forgive. It is a direct illustration of the Old Testament practice of the "Scapegoat". (Lev. 16:8-26) That is the name given to the goat which was taken away into the wilderness on the day of Atonement (Lev.16:20-22). The priest made atonement over the scapegoat, laying Israel's guilt upon it, and then sent it away, the goat bearing "upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited." What is important here is the idea that forgiveness is not at the expense of JUSTICE. The requirements of God's Holy character are still met or there would be even more sin to deal with. The revelation is that Jesus chose to take the consequence/penalty for sin. He was not forced but he took upon him the sins of the world so that we could be free and that he would be sent away. **JESUS IS THE TRUE SCAPEGOAT AND HE HAS CARRIED OUR SINS FAR AWAY!!!!**

**LEARN FROM
THREE
POWERFUL
PERSPECTIVES
ON FORGIVENESS**

LOVE-GIFT

FREEDOM

ESCAPE

LEARN FORGIVENESS FROM HOW JOSEPH FORGAVE HIS BROTHERS

The jealousy and cruelty of Joseph's family is hard to imagine. All of Joseph's brothers plotted to kill Joseph and then decided to sell him into slavery instead. After years of slavery and imprisonment, Joseph not only forgives them all but he also provided for all the needs of his entire family. **Genesis 45:5-15; 50:19-21** Joseph experienced all the consequences of sin and yet made the decision to forgive. This was illustrated very literally in that he named his first son, Manasseh which means "forgetting". Joseph chose to forget or release all the bitterness and poison that comes from withholding forgiveness. **See: Heb. 10:17; & Heb. 8:12** *For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."*

"UNFORGIVENESS IS THE POISON WE DRINK HOPING THAT OTHERS WILL DIE"

WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DO NOT FORGIVE OTHERS?

According to (**Matthew 6:14-15; Psalm 130:4-8; Psalm 103:3; Acts 8:23; 2 Corinthians 2:7,11**) these are the consequences of holding back forgiveness:

- You will stand condemned.
- You will feel a hopelessness.
- You are vulnerable to physical sickness.
- You fall into "Spiritual-deception"
- Others are destroyed by sorrow.
- You give Satan an advantage over us.

"FORGIVE...just as in Christ God forgave you."

HAVING AN ATTITUDE OF FORGIVENESS RESTS ON YOU, BUT **RECONCILIATION** DEPENDS ON *BOTH* YOUR WILLINGNESS AND THE OFFENDER'S REPENTANCE

The goal of forgiveness between two people is...**The Restoration of The Relationship!** This goal of reconciliation feels impossible at times. Especially in circumstances that have destroyed lives or broken intimate trust. This is not referring to offenses that can and should be overlooked or that do not involve substantial sins like adultery. What do we do then? We gently restore and keep watch over our own hearts so that we do not fall into sin.

Here are some fruits that are evidence of repentance on the part of an offender: (Matt. 3:8; Luke 19:8; Galatians 6:1)

Restitution: There will be a willingness to deal with substantive issues like money and property making restitution wherever possible.

Acceptance of Consequences: There will be an acceptance of consequences and the "new reality" which those consequences have brought. There will be respect for new boundaries.

Trust Through Testing: Through time there will be evidence of real change and proof of trustworthiness.

HOW DOES FAITH RELATE TO FORGIVENESS?

It is clear that in **Mark 11:12-14; 20-26**

Jesus describes an environment where faith is truly effective. Jesus says that in this effective environment, you must "Believe"; which is having a strong persuasion on the word of God. You must also "Forgive" if you want prayer to be effective or even heard.

It is good to remember that this teaching was given in response to the disciples marveling at Jesus' miraculous power. Jesus just cursed a fig tree and the tree miraculously withered from the roots up. This is a powerful illustration of the kind of power that forgiveness opens.

Mountain moving power is available when you are free from bitterness and resentment.

MIRACLE

FORGIVE