

## Mini Study – Forgiveness (part 2 of 2)

### Forgiving One Another

In **part one** of this **2-part** mini study series on forgiveness we looked at God's amazing grace to us in Christ. Those whose sinful slate He has wiped clean, cancelling our debt to Him we could never repay, and crediting us with the righteousness of Christ His Son, and adopting us into His family as His beloved children forever.

And it is we who have received God's mercy who in turn show mercy. Those who forgive one another as God in Christ has forgiven us. A topic we turn now to explore a little further in this the final study of the series.

#### **OBSERVE**

READ Ephesians 4:30-32 and:

- underline every reference to *forgiving / forgave*.

<sup>30</sup> And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup> Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

**Forgave** – STRONGS (G5483) *charizomai* – to grant as a favour i.e., gratuitously, in kindness, pardon or rescue.

#### **DISCUSS**

V32 – How are we to forgive one another?

For more on how God in Christ has forgiven us see **study one**. However, here are some verses to help us further reflect and rest upon God's amazing grace to us in Christ. For it is the more we are rooted by faith in Jesus, and God's love for us in Him, that we are empowered by the Spirit to be imitators of God, beloved children of the Father who walk in mercy and love:

READ Ephesians 2:8-10 & Colossians 2:13-14:

<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

<sup>13</sup> And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, <sup>14</sup> by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

Let's turn now to look at a couple of examples of how Jesus instructs us, His disciples, about forgiving one another.

## **OBSERVE**

READ Mark 11:25 and:

- underline every reference to *forgive*.

<sup>25</sup> And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”

**Forgive** – STRONGS (G863) *aphiēmi* – to forgive, lay aside, send away, remit.

## **DISCUSS**

V25 – What does Jesus command us to do? Why?

Who is not present, in this instance, when we forgive?

## **RESPOND**

Do you have anything against anyone? How should you respond?

Here we see that forgiveness begins in our heart, a laying aside of any bitterness and desire for revenge, and a cancelling before God of the others' debt (Romans 12:17-21; Matthew 6:12). And it is not that by forgiving we in some way merit the Father's forgiveness. Rather, if we don't forgive, we show we have never received the Father's mercy for the one of the defining characteristics of all who have is both their *willingness* and *ability* to forgive.

And forgiving others from the heart is not the end but as we are about to see should lead us to seek, when able to do so, reconciliation with the one who has sinned against us. And although beyond the scope of this study a reconciliation that does not prevent us from also pursuing justice when a crime has been committed, or spares the guilty party from having to face any consequences that result from their actions.

*“This vertical aspect of forgiveness deals with our attitudes. Its purpose is to change you, not to deal with the other person. It prepares you, so you will go to the other person already willing to be merciful.” – David Powlison*

## OBSERVE

READ Luke 17:1-4 and:

- underline every reference to *sin(s)*.
- circle every reference to *repent(s)*.

<sup>1</sup>And he [Jesus] said to his disciples, “Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! <sup>2</sup>It would be better for him if a millstone were hung round his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin. <sup>3</sup>Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, <sup>4</sup>and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent’, you must forgive him.”

**Temptations to sin** – STRONGS (G4625) *skandalon* – occasions to fall, stumbling blocks.

**Repent** – STRONGS (G3340) *metanoēō* – to think differently of one’s sins and desire to turn from them.

## DISCUSS

V1a – What are sure to come?

V1b-2 - What *dire warning* does Jesus give about the one through whom they come?

V3a – What then should we be alert to – both personally and within the Church (see 1 John 2:10)?

How might we respond sinfully to an offence? What effect might this have upon fellow believers, particularly those young in the faith?

V3b-4 – How are we to respond to a brother or sister who sins against us?

And if they repent?

## REFLECT

What should be our *aim* and *attitude* when rebuking a brother or sister who sins against us (Matthew 18:15; Galatians 6:1)?

What is the one who has sinned commanded to do (Matthew 5:23-24)?

Who is initially involved? What happens if there is repentance? No repentance? (Matthew 18:15-20).

Are we to confront every time? When might we choose to bear with one another in love instead (Ephesians 4:1-3)?

## **RESPOND**

Is there anyone you need to confront and seek to be reconciled with?

Forgiveness is hard. Much easier to harbour unforgiveness, to slander and be bitter, than to confront and seek to be reconciled with our brother or sister. However, in Luke 17:6-7 we are reminded that through faith in Jesus we can. Faith, even as small as mustard seed, that can do great things, because it's not the size of our faith but the One in whom it is placed that makes all the difference. Those who through faith in Jesus, resting in the redemption we have in Him, are empowered by the Spirit to live differently.

And when all has been said and done to live in such a manner merits no reward. For we are only doing our duty. Unworthy servants of the Master, forgiven a debt we could never repay, who in response live lives of humble obedience to Him (Luke 17:7-10).

And so, as we draw this study to a close we hope that you have found it helpful. We are so conscious that this short study will not cover every question about forgiveness you may have, nor is it intended to do so, but rather to remind us of God's amazing grace to us in Christ, and to encourage us as God's beloved children to live in a manner worthy of our calling in Him.