

Forgive as Christ Forgave You

Colossians 3:12-14 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 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. ¹⁴ But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

- This passage is mainly focused on Christian living. It actually comes out of a section from Colossians focused on our character as a new person in Christ.
- It is easy to get focused on the list of things to do – be merciful, kind, meek, patient, bearing with each other. And then forgive others as Christ forgave you.
- But this list is only possible if we start where Paul started this list. Therefore, as the elect of God.
- In vs. 10 (**Col 3:10** and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him) he says we have put on the new man who is renewed.
 - What does that mean? We have been made righteous. We have been united with Christ. We are the image of God in His likeness.

But then he says to forgive. I believe that all of the aforementioned traits cannot be considered characteristics of a believer if they are not willing to forgive others. But also, forgiving others is only possible if we live out of the divine nature we have as believers.

- **Matthew 6:12** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

But specifically, it says to forgive **as** Christ forgave you. What does that mean? How did Christ forgive us?

How did Christ forgive us?

- God's forgiveness is not earned.
- God's forgiveness is not based on right or wrong. (What was done against Him).
- God's forgiveness came at a cost

- God's forgiveness is not conditional
- God's forgiveness is complete

This is how we forgive others.

God's Forgiveness is Not Earned

Mark 2:1-5 And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. ² Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. ³ Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. ⁴ And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. ⁵ When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

- Why did Christ forgive him?
- What did this man do to earn his forgiveness?
- Jesus forgave this man completely and did not consider whether he was worthy of forgiveness, what he did to earn forgiveness.
- Jesus did not even know what this man did to need forgiveness.
- Jesus didn't know if that guy even wanted to be there.
- This man never even asked for forgiveness. Why was he there? His friends brought him there for healing.

Jesus forgave him even though he did nothing to earn his forgiveness.

Forgiving others is not dependent on others. It is solely dependent on you.

God's Forgiveness is not based on right or wrong

Forgiveness is not based on right or wrong. Christ does not consider what people do when forgiving them. He forgave us completely by Grace without considering the right or wrong, or how deserving we were.

- **Romans 5:8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- The wages of our sin was death. Christ died for us. Even though we cost Him His life, He forgave us.
- **Luke 23:34** Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots.
 - These people are in the very act of killing Him, and He forgives them. Stephen did the same thing.

Why do we get so focused on whether or not someone is deserving of forgiveness, and if what they did was right or wrong?

I believe it goes back to the garden.

Genesis 2:15-17 Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. ¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

- Eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil - Man began to define what is right or wrong.
- The statement, God is Good. What does it mean?
 - I believe it means that whatever God is, that is what good is. Good is only defined by the character of God.
 - **Mark 10:18** So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God.
- We do not have the right to define good or evil apart from God - That is eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We are making our own decisions as to what is right or wrong.
- We cannot then choose forgiveness based on our eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That is the old man.
- We can still know what is good – by knowing Him. Whatever is of God is good, anything else is sin.
- **3 John 1:11** - Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.

When we try to define right and wrong, good and evil with our own intellect, or by cultural bias, we deceive ourselves and we are getting further from the truth.

- When we define good and evil, right and wrong based on who God is, and the life of Christ in us, then we come into agreement with God and truth is in us.
- When we do that, Forgiveness becomes a part of who we are. God is forgiving. Very much so. And He forgives everything we do. And that nature is in us in the new man.
- Forgiveness has nothing to do with whether the person that needs to be forgiven is right or wrong, it has to do with the life of Christ. It has to do with the life of Christ in you.
- Forgiving someone is not the same as condoning their actions.
- Withholding forgiveness is not a punishment for us to give to someone for wronging us.

God's forgiveness came at a cost

His forgiveness came at a price. His own life. Grace is not free. It is free to us, but it cost God His Son's life.

- **1 Peter 2:21-24** For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ²² *"Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth";* ²³ who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴ who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.

Our forgiveness of others may also cost us. And we cannot take into account whether or not they deserve it, if what they did was wrong, or how often they are wrong. That's not how Jesus forgave us.

- It may cost you your pride.
- It may cost us having retribution.
- It may cost you actual money. Or belongings that never get returned.
- It may cost you your anger.
- It will cost you your flesh.
 - You can only walk in the flesh towards those you have not forgiven. You cannot walk in the spirit towards someone you are

holding unforgiveness, since the Spirit has already forgiven them.

God's forgiveness is not conditional

Matthew 18:21-22 Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" ²² Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

- We want to say, but what if they keep doing the same thing over and over?
- Forgive them
- Forgiveness does not always mean a fully restored relationship, or acting as if something never happened.
- But it is cancelling that debt against someone else. Showing them mercy. Forgiving through grace.

But some believe Jesus' forgiveness did have conditions.

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

- First, let me say this: There is no way to be more Christlike than to forgive someone else their sins against you.
- Last week I said that most of Jesus' teachings were transitional, designed to bring us from law to grace.
- Here, Jesus shows us that we cannot live up to the law. If there is anyone that we won't forgive, then we also cannot be forgiven. This points us to a need for something greater. (Jesus is that something greater).

Jesus gives a parable to explain:

Matthew 18:23-35 Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand

talents. [about \$226M] ²⁵ But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. ²⁶ The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, "Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all." ²⁷ Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii [about \$5000]; and he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!'" ²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you all." ³⁰ And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. ³¹ So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. ³² Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, "You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. ³³ Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?" ³⁴ And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. ³⁵ "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

- The order is so important here.
- The king forgives the servant
- That forgiveness has zero effect on the servant based on how he treats others
- The servant is then punished for what he was forgiven for.

What is going on?

- This is a picture of salvation. Like we said last week God has already forgiven everybody. But if you do not receive that forgiveness, it does not do you any good.
- This servant got forgiven, but did not receive it. We know this because it did not affect him.
 - The Gospel is transformative power. It changes you.
 - He acted like an unforgiven person
- Since he did not receive it, he received the punishment for his debt.

Forgiving others is a fruit that shows that we have received our forgiveness.

When the life of Jesus is in us, forgiveness is evident. Go back to our main text – Colossians 3:1-13

- If then you were raised with Christ,
- Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.
- Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth
- you have put off the old man with his deeds
- put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge
- 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.

So does Matthew 6:15 mean that God only forgives us if we forgive others? Yes and no. Forgiving others is a fruit of receiving His forgiveness. If we cannot forgive, then it is possible that His life is not in us, and His forgiveness does not benefit us.

When we receive His forgiveness, we are over-flowing with forgiveness and we will forgive others as Christ forgave us.

God's forgiveness is complete

Psalms 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

Holding onto unforgiveness keeps us in bondage.

Forgiving others sets us free.

It brings healing.

I believe that true forgiveness, forgiveness that does not weigh right and wrong, and that forgives even if it costs, and forgives even the undeserving without noting they are undeserving, is not possible without Christ.

Forgiveness Prayer

 Name of person , I have held a debt against you because identify event .

I felt identify emotion , as a result, and have held you accountable for meeting my need of

identify need that was violated.

But I know that only God can meet my need of identify need , and so I release you from the debt that you owed me. I consider your debt of identify event/emotion canceled, and I will no longer hold it against you. You no longer owe me anything. Christ Jesus has already forgiven you, and as I am in union with Christ in all things, I join Him in that forgiveness.

Furthermore, I release you, name of person , from any further expectation of change in order to be accepted by me. I also release myself from any further expectation of change in order to be accepted by you. I surrender my right to change you, and I surrender my right to change myself for you.

Holy Spirit, I ask You to cleanse and heal all effects from this, both in my life, and in

name of person 's life. Thank You for healing me. In Jesus' name, Amen.