

When You Pray...Part 6

Matthew 6:9-13

“The Pardon within Prayer”

INTRODUCTION

Today’s message will be one that confronts us because forgiveness is such a cornerstone element of the Christian faith. Jesus said that the world will know that we are His disciples in how we love each other in *John 13*. What does that look like in real time? How we forgive each other is one of the greatest illustrations of love there is, not just a love for the person in need of forgiveness but love for God. To simply hold on to the idea of love is theoretical, but to put it into the context of forgiveness makes it practical and real. Simply put if you do not forgive you do not love God. Now this doesn’t mean you may not struggle with forgiveness, but remember we are called and commanded to be forgivers.

So many who have “accepted” God’s forgiveness live in a real misunderstanding of forgiveness either in the way God has forgiven them their sins or how they are to forgive others. The real issue is that grace is a domino effect. Once I experience it then it should naturally overflow from my heart to another. If forgiveness does not overflow from God’s grace, we may just be missing out on God’s grace ourselves.

Let’s first begin with what forgiveness is not:

1. It is not condoning an action.
2. It is not just benefiting the guilty.
3. It is not putting yourself back in harm’s way of an unhealthy person.
4. It is not letting someone off the hook from having to deal with their injustice. Forgiveness confronts their wrong doing of injustice with a love that convicts the wrongdoer.
5. It is not painless, consider again the cross of Christ.
6. Forgiveness is not free, although it brings freedom, it costs, consider again the cross of Christ.
7. It is not a cop out or weak act, it takes real strength to forgive. Trying forgiving and see how much strength it takes.

TEXT

Our Father in heaven,
Your name be honored as holy.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
**And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.**
And do not bring us into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.

[For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]

I. The Command of Forgiveness

C.S. Lewis

To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.

Martin Luther

Forgiveness is God's command.

Matthew 6:14-15

“For if you forgive people their wrongdoing, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well. But if you don't forgive people, your Father will not forgive your wrongdoing.

Matthew 18:21-35

Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how many times could my brother sin against me and I forgive him? As many as seven times?”

“I tell you, not as many as seven,” Jesus said to him, “but 70 times seven. For this reason, the kingdom of heaven can be compared to a king who wanted to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began to settle accounts, one who owed 10,000 talents was brought before him. Since he had no way to pay it back, his master commanded that he, his wife, his children, and everything he had be sold to pay the debt.

“At this, the slave fell facedown before him and said, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you everything!’ Then the master of that slave had compassion, released him, and forgave him the loan.

“But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him 100 denarii. He grabbed him, started choking him, and said, ‘Pay what you owe!’

“At this, his fellow slave fell down and began begging him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’ But he wasn't willing. On the contrary, he went and threw him into prison until he could pay what was owed. When the other slaves saw what had taken place, they were deeply distressed and went and reported to their master everything that had happened.

“Then, after he had summoned him, his master said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Shouldn't you also have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ And his master got angry and handed him over to the jailers to be tortured until he could pay everything that was owed. So My heavenly Father will also do to you if each of you does not forgive his brother from his heart.”

II. Christianity: A Community of Forgiveness

C.S. Lewis

I think that if God forgives us we must forgive ourselves. Otherwise, it is almost like setting up ourselves as a higher tribunal than Him.

Jeremiah 31:34

They will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

Psalms 51:12-13

Restore the joy of Your salvation to me, and give me a willing spirit.
Then I will teach the rebellious Your ways, and sinners will return to You.

III. The Connection of Forgiven to Forgiving

N.T. Wright

From God’s point of view, the distance between being ordinarily sinful (what we all are) and extremely sinful (what the people we don’t like seem to be) is like the distance between London and Paris seen from the point of view of the sun.

Rick Warren

And you know, when you’ve experienced grace and you feel like you’ve been forgiven, you’re a lot more forgiving of other people. You’re a lot more gracious to others.

Luke 7:41-48

“A creditor had two debtors. One owed 500 denarii, and the other 50. Since they could not pay it back, he graciously forgave them both. So, which of them will love him more?”

Simon answered, “I suppose the one he forgave more.”

“You have judged correctly,” He told him. Turning to the woman, He said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she, with her tears, has washed My feet and wiped them with her hair. You gave Me no kiss, but she hasn’t stopped kissing My feet since I came in. You didn’t anoint My head with olive oil, but she has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; that’s why she loved much. But the one who is forgiven little, loves little.” Then He said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”

IV. The Courage & Freedom of Forgiveness

Matthew 5:23-24

So if you are offering your gift on the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Corrie Ten Boom

Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of resentment.

CONCLUSION

The one holding on to unforgiveness is like the one who injects poison in their arm. They may put on a smile and act like all is ok on the surface, but soon, very soon, the surface will begin to show the deeper illness.

Frederick Robertson

We win by tenderness. We conquer by forgiveness.

Dwight L. Moody

The voice of sin is loud, but the voice of forgiveness is louder.