

THE BLESSING OF FORGIVING OTHERS **(Matthew 18:21-22)**

I. Forgiveness is an attitude.

A. It is amazing to watch little children play.

1. Something will happen and one will be hurt and get upset.

2. Pretty soon, the one who did the hurting will say he is sorry and they will be back to playing together.

B. Somewhere along the line, our ability to forgive gets more difficult to engage.

C. Forgiveness, for children of God, is to be an attitude which is always present in our lives.

1. It was present in the life of Jesus (Luke 23:34).

a. Did this mean the people who did it were forgiven without repentance?

b. Absolutely not!

c. Notice Acts 2:23, 38.

d. Jesus was willing to forgive those who killed Him if they were willing to ask forgiveness for it.

2. The same attitude was present in the life of Stephen (Acts 7:60).

3. God has this same attitude (2 Peter 3:9).

D. We should desire people to repent so they can receive forgiveness for their sins.

E. Having an attitude of forgiveness makes seeking forgiveness much easier.

1. Isn't it much easier to ask God for forgiveness because we know He wants to forgive us?

2. If someone wrongs us, it should be easy for them to be able to ask forgiveness because they should know we want to forgive them.

F. In order to do that, we must do some things ourselves to be ready to forgive:

1. We can't hold things against others.

2. We must do all we can to remove any negative or sinful thoughts about the person who has wronged us.

3. We must love them (Matthew 22:39).

4. We must get rid of any ideas of getting even or back at the person who sinned against us.

G. Paul summed this up very well in Romans 12:19-21.

H. Epictetus, a Greek philosopher, wrote, "Forgiveness is better than revenge, for forgiveness is the sign of a gentle nature, but revenge is the sign of a savage nature."

I. In order to be forgiving, we must cultivate the attitude of forgiveness, or being willing to forgive.

J. It will also help to remember, secondly:

II. In order to get it, we must give it.

A. Our Lord very clearly tied our receiving forgiveness from God for our sins to our forgiving others who sin against us.

1. Matthew 6:12, 14.

2. Luke 6:37.

B. There is a parable recorded in Matthew 18 that bears out this idea.

1. Peter had come to Jesus and asked if how often he should forgive a

fellow Jew.

2.He thought that it was a great show of heart to forgive that brother up to seven times.

3.We know that Jesus told him not just seven times, but seventy times seven, meaning there is no time to stop forgiving.

4.He then taught the parable about the wicked servant who deeply in debt to his master, such indebtedness as to never being able to repay it.

5.He begs for mercy and his master forgives him of all the debt.

6.The servant turns around and finds a fellow servant who owes him a mere pittance and threw him into the debtors prison until he could pay the debt.

7.The fellow servants found this out and went and told the master who called the wicked servant in to him and said... (Matthew 18:32-33).

8.He then turned the servant over to the debtors prison until he could repay the previously forgiven debt.

9.Notice how Jesus ends the parable (Matthew 18:35).

C.General Oglethorpe, the founder of the colony of Georgia, once said to John Wesley, "I never forgive and I never forget." To which Wesley replied, "Then, Sir, I hope you never sin."

D.If we want to receive forgiveness, we must be willing to give it to others.

III.We must realize the value of the one needing forgiveness.

A.The person who has wronged us and is seeking forgiveness has an eternal soul that is invaluable (Matthew 16:26).

B.Jesus died for all mankind.

1.His dying for all mankind shows God's willingness and desire to forgive all mankind.

2.You and I are to be like God as much as we can (Titus 2:11-12).

3.Thus, we are to be those who forgive.

C.It does not mean that we can forgive someone who has not repented.

1.God does not do that and we are not greater than God.

2.Unless repentance is sought, we can't give it.

D.We should want to give it because of the value of the soul who has sinned.

IV.We must forgive as God forgives.

A.Psalm 103:10-12.

B.Hebrews 10:16-18.

C.What we learn about forgiveness from these verses is that we must do our best to completely forget about the sin that has been committed against us.

1.God does not hold past sins against us.

2.We can't hold sins people have committed against them either.

D.The old adage, "I'll forgive you but I won't forget it" is not biblical.

E.It is not an easy thing for us, I know that.

1.I'm not saying we don't need to be careful about things either.

2.If someone has stolen from you and asked forgiveness I don't believe we are wrong for putting our wallet up when they are around.

3.We should strive to take temptation away from people

F.Love for our fellow man, especially our spouse or brethren, calls for us to seek to restore relationships not keep them separated.

V.How forgiveness is pictured.

A.Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, taught that the one who had sinned against his brother is to leave his gift at the altar, before he offers it to God and to go be reconciled to his brother first (Matthew 5:23-24).

B.On another occasion, Jesus taught that if a brother has offended you, go to him and point out his sin so that he might repent (Matthew 18:15).

C.Notice some things here:

- 1.Both passages are about repentance and forgiveness.
- 2.Both parties are to be actively involved in restoring the relationship.
- 3.Both parties have a responsibility to make things right.

D.If we take both accounts and put them together, both the offender and the offended ought to meet each other while going to the other in order to restore that which has been broken.