

Sunday Morning Message

February 3, 2019

### ***Forgive, Even as God Forgives You***

(This text has been preached many times through the years under the title - *Who's in Your Dungeon*)

Topic - Forgiveness

Texts – Ephesians 4:29 – 32; Matthew 18:21 - 35

Congregational Reading – Ephesians 4:29 - 32

### **Introduction**

*"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*

(Ephesians 4:29-32)

Forgiveness is the central theme of the Christian faith, yet it is something that is somewhat hard to fully comprehend, and even more difficult to apply in a practical way in our lives. The truth simply stated is this: if you are a Christian God has completely forgiven you of every sin that you have ever committed or even have thought against Him, and because He has forgiven you, He now expects you to completely forgive other people for the sins that they have committed against you.

The world we are living in is a very unforgiving place. The devil, on the one hand, is enticing people to live according to their lusts, to do whatever feels right to the individual. (If it feels good, do it) Satan is actively and aggressively working, tempting people to sin, and when they do, he sees to it that they are crucified mercilessly for crossing the line. He tempts you to do it, and then he condemns you without mercy after you do it, and will see to it that the world offers you no breaks, no forgiveness; just merciless justice.

However, God forgives sin, and even possesses the will to forget sin:

*"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."* (Psalm 103:12)

*"... for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."* (Jeremiah 31:34)

Of course, this does not mean that because God forgives our sin that He condones our sin, and nor should we condone the sins of others. But, we are to forgive the sins of others.

The seed of unforgiveness will eventually blossom into a tree of bitterness, yielding a toxic fruit that first destroys the heart in which it is allowed to grow, and will soon spread its poison in an attempt to infect others.

"To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you." (C. S. Lewis)

"He who cannot forgive others destroys the bridge over which he himself must pass." (George Herbert)

"To carry a grudge is like being stung to death by one bee." (William H Walton)

The Message is simple this morning – Forgive, even as God forgives you.

### **More Supporting Verses**

Matthew 5:17 – 26; 43 - 48

Matthew 6:5 – 15

Luke 23:33 – 34

Acts 7:59 – 60

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6:1 - 7

God forgave you – you are to forgive others.

Turn to Matthew 18:21 – 35

(Explain the parable)

Note – a talent was a unit of measurement in Bible times that varied at different times and in different places. Some have said that a talent was the approximate weight of a person. It has been stated that a talent could be 75 pounds or even 125 pounds.

Based on today's price of gold, which is a little over \$1,320.00 per troy ounce, which equates to around \$19,250.00 per pound and 1.45 million per talent (based on a 75-pound talent). That means that this man actually owed his lord just under 15 Billion dollars. That's a lot of debt.

In comparison, a "pence" was equivalent to 3.898 grams or .1375 oz. of silver. A hundred pence in today's money would be worth about \$199.00 dollars.

The obvious truth that this story is teaching is that one who was forgiven so large a debt, should easily be able to forgive a very small debt (by comparison) owed to him by someone else.

If God forgives every sin that we have committed and will commit against Him, ought not we forgive those who have done us wrong. Yes – we should.

There ought not be any sin that we cannot forgive.

How can we do this?

### **I We Must Understand the Forgiveness That Was Given to Us.**

*"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." (Colossians 3:13)*

Sin is the transgression of God's Law.

The thought of foolishness is sin.

Knowing to do good and doing not is sin.

Anything not done in faith is sin.

We sin all of the time.

The payment or judgment for sin (what we owe God) is death – Hell – Eternal punishment.

Yet God forgives those who come to Him through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **II We Must Understand That the One Who Forgives Us Demands in Return That We Forgive Others.**

Based on our illustration from Matthew 18 it would be equivalent to you awarding someone \$200.00 worth of forgiveness after receiving \$15 Billion.

Who Must We Forgive:

### **1 Ourselves**

If God forgives us, we ought to forgive ourselves.

### **2 Others**

All of us have been burned. We have all been treated unfairly, misunderstood, gossiped about, cheated. We have all been hurt by others, but each of us is also guilty of hurting others. The things that have been done to us by people are inexcusable and unjustifiable, but so was our sin, and so is our refusal to forgive.

We must base our forgiveness on what God has done for us, and not on what people have done to us.

### **3 God**

Sometimes, it is God who we are holding a grudge against. We live in a world that is full of sin and the problems that result from it. God sometimes gets the blame for the tragic events that come into our lives. Though God does not cause many of our troubles, He does sometimes allow trials and tragedies to come our way. Sometimes also, God has a plan for our life, or perhaps for the people we love that is not what we want. We sometimes get mad at God.

## **III We Must Allow God to Heal Our Past Wounds**

*"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;" (Hebrews 12:14-15)*

You can't control the way you feel about somebody or something, but you can bring those feelings, those hurts and wounds to God. Ask Him to heal your heart.

## **IV We Must Allow God to Handle the Judgment That We Feel People Deserve**

Give the situation over to the Lord. He always does what is best.

*"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay,*

*saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."* (Romans 12:18-21)

## **V We Must Try to Forget About the Offence**

*"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."* (Philippians 4:8)

*"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee."* (Proverbs 23:7)

*"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"* (2 Corinthians 10:5)

## **VI We Must Not Allow Past Hurts to Hinder Our Future Relationships**

We have all been burned by people in the past. Yet, God still wants us to open up our lives in relationship to other people. You may get burned again, but the blessing you receive from good relationships will outweigh the hurt you receive from the bad ones.

## **VII We Must Remember God's Principle of Sowing and Reaping**

*"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."*  
(Galatians 6:7)

If you refuse to forgive people, people will refuse to forgive you.

"An eye for an eye just makes the whole world blind."

*"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."* (Matthew 5:7)

## **Conclusion**

Who's in Your Dungeon?

Did a face just pop into your mind's eye?

- A parent
- A spouse
- A child
- A brother or sister
- A neighbor
- A former friend
- An employer

Unless you release these people from the dungeon of your heart, the unforgiveness will develop into bitterness, and the bitterness will continue to grow until it eventually destroys you.

*"Bitterness is the only poison that destroys its own container"*