

Miscellaneous

The Nuts and Bolts of Forgiveness Part 2 - How do we do it?

April 10th, 2011

Text - Various

Scripture Reading - Matthew 5:21-26

God laid the topic of forgiveness on my heart about six weeks ago when I read the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18. It is a very important topic that everyone deals with and that is very near and dear to God's heart. God's willingness and ability to forgive is one of His greatest and most loved attributes. It is also one that He has passed on to us as those who have been created in His image. In the last six weeks the topic of forgiveness seems to be popping up all around me in books, in the lives of others, and in my own life as well. My hope is that God will use this final message, as well as the two I preached previously, to help you to understand forgiveness more fully and to extend it to others, from your heart.

Quick Review

- Three weeks ago - The need/call to forgive and the power to forgive (the Gospel)
- Last week - What does forgiveness look like?
- This week - How do we do it?

6 Biblical principles to help you forgive your brother from the heart

The ideal way to listen to this message would be to think of someone in your life right now that you are struggling to forgive and apply each principle as we go.

1) Remember how much you've been forgiven

a. **Matthew 18:23-27 (ESV)**

²³ "Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents (200,000 yrs wages or \$6 billion today). ²⁵ And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be

made. ²⁶ So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.'
²⁷ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.

- b. How big a debt do we owe God?
 - i. Every time we sin against God it costs us eternal life.
- c. How badly is God hurt by our sin?
 - i. God hates sin and is deeply grieved by our every transgression.
 - ii. Put yourself in His place.
- d. What did it cost God to pardon our debt?
 - i. His one and only Son

2) Take Jesus' warnings about unforgiveness seriously

a. **Matthew 18:28-35 (ESV)**

²⁸ But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii (20 weeks wages or \$12,000 today), and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.'
²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.'
³⁰ He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt.
³¹ When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place.
³² Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.
³³ And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?'
³⁴ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt.
³⁵ *So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.*"

b. **Matthew 6:14-15 (NIV)**

¹⁴ For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
¹⁵ *But if you*

do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

3) Understand what it means to forgive

- a. One of the things that keeps many people from forgiving others is the idea that *to forgive is to forget*. In other words, many people mistakenly believe that to forgive someone means to sweep their sins under the carpet and pretend as though nothing ever happened.

But last week we talked about how God does not do this, and He doesn't expect us to do this either. God never excuses, ignores, or forgets about our sins in the sense that He sweeps them under the carpet or pretends they never happened. Instead, if we've put our faith and trust in Jesus, He makes the conscious choice *to pardon our sins and to hold them against us no more*. He makes the conscious choice to wipe our slate clean in His heart and to not allow our past sins to affect His current love for us. He makes the conscious choice to harbor no bitterness toward us and to desire the best for us and not the worst. He makes the conscious choice to smile down on us, instead of frown. This is what it looks like for God to forgive us and this is what God expects of us when we forgive others.

C.S. Lewis had some great insight into what forgiveness looks like when he said *we're to forgive others as we forgive ourselves* (Mere Christianity)

- b. Another misunderstanding about the meaning of forgiveness is that unless things go back to normal, you haven't really forgiven. This is not necessarily the case. Though full restoration of the relationship is both ideal and possible, the degree to which it can actually be accomplished is dependent upon the amount of damage that has been done and the degree to which both parties are willing to humble themselves and repent. Though forgiveness can happen without repentance, full restoration of the relationship cannot.

- i. Trust is critical for relationship. Sin breaks down relationship and only true repentance can restore it.

4) Recognize that we are all blind to our sin to one degree or another

a. **Luke 23:34 (ESV)**

³⁴ And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, *for they know not what they do.*"...

- b. This is certainly true of those who have yet to be born again

- i. **Ezekiel 11:19-20 (NIV)**

¹⁹ I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. ²⁰ *Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God.*

- ii. This helped me a ton with the case of unforgiveness I dealt with from high school
- c. But it's also true of those who have been born again as well

- i. **1 Corinthians 4:1-4 (ESV)**

¹ This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. ³ But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. ⁴ *I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted.* It is the Lord who judges me.

- ii. It's amazing to me how I can miss my sin

1. I had a conflict this past summer that I was SURE I was completely in the right on.
 2. Now, nine months later, I see clearly that I wasn't
- iii. This is why it is crucial that we ask God and others for help

1. **Psalms 139:23-24 (ESV)**

²³Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts! ²⁴And see
if there be any grievous way in me, and
lead me in the way everlasting!

2. Run the situation by someone you trust without defiling the person you are in disagreement with

5) Assume the best of others

- a. It is so easy, especially in conflict, to assume the worst.
 - i. To think we know what the other person is thinking and feeling about us.
- b. That's why we need to do number six!

6) Take the log out of your own eye and go

a. **Matthew 5:23-24 (ESV)**

²³So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

- i. Even if you *think* your bother has something against you, *go right away*. The longer you wait the more the wounds will fester and the worse they will be.

1. Ex. I knew something was wrong since fall

ii. Fresh Wind Fresh Fire p. 160

b. **Matthew 7:1-5 (ESV)**

¹"Judge not, that you be not judged. ²For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. ³Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

c. In conflict situations we are all about taking the speck out of our brother's eye, *but the best thing we can do is take the log out of our own.*

i. Ex. A great result last week. The blessing of forgiveness and restoration