

“Forgive (and Give) Like Jesus” Luke 17:3-5

To forgive is to release the debt and to bestow blessing in its place. Through Jesus Christ, God has forgiven the debt of our sin which we could never repay, and blessed us with life everlasting. When we forgive others, we become like God, the Great Forgiver.

You will never be whole until you learn to forgive. In fact, you will never be whole until you become really, really good at forgiving.

Read Luke 17:3-5; “increase our faith”

I. Release the debt

ἀφίημι (*aphiemi*) – to release; to dismiss, leave behind, abandon

disciples left nets; Mt. 4:20; a prisoner released; debt remitted (Dt. 15:3)

(*apoluo*) – to let go, send away or release

Ex – releasing of Barabbas instead of Jesus

Not demand payment. Entrusting justice to God. “Vengeance is Mine.”

A. Why?

1. We have been released – Eph. 4:32
We have been forgiven a debt we cannot repay
Not because person deserves it

2. We become like God – Eph. 5:1-2; Mt 5:43-48

3. We suffer if we don't – Mt 6:14-15

Eternal forgiveness v. fellowship forgiveness

Ps. 66:18 If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear;

Mt 18:21-27

- 1 denarii = 1 days' wages
 - 1 talent of silver = 6000 denarii
 - 1 talent of gold = 180,000 days wages
 - 1 talent of silver = 1/2 a lifetime of wages
 - 10,000 talents = 60M days' wages; 5000 lifetimes
 - 300 tons of silver
 - 10,000; Greek = *myria* (from which we get "myriad") largest numeral for which a Greek term existed
- ten thousand talents = possibly more than all the actual coinage in circulation in Egypt at the time!
 - annual tribute from Galilee and Perea under wealthy Herod to be only two hundred talents – Josephus

Mt. 18:28-35

OWED – 3-4 months wages; 1/600,000th of the other slave's debt

Not loss of salvation; not even physical torture. God doesn't necessarily make us suffer physically for lack of forgiveness

If you know person who hold grudges, you understand this

Of the Seven Deadly Sins, anger is possibly the most fun. To lick your wounds, to smack your lips over grievances long past, to roll over your tongue the prospect of bitter confrontations still to come, to savor to the last toothsome morsel both the pain you are given and the pain you are giving back--in many ways it is a feast fit for a king. The chief drawback is that what you are wolfing down is yourself. The skeleton at the feast is you.

—Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking*

"To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you." —Lewis Smedes

B. How?

Forgiveness is not forgetting; choice not to demand payment; choice that you make over and over when tempted to rehearse the wrong.

ex - Clara Barton, founder of American Red Cross, reminded of a cruel thing done to her, appeared not to remember. "don't you remember it?" "I distinctly remember forgetting it."

ex - Corrie ten Boom; trying to forgive a prison guard; like a bell tower; when you are hurt, the rope is pulled and the bell rings; as time goes on the bell keeps ringing even after you let the rope go; don't grab the rope again

Recommended: "*The Hiding Place*" by Corrie ten Boom

Process, not an event

1. Don't rehearse
2. Entrust justice to God
3. How can I bless? How can I do good?

II. Replace the debt – Luke 7:40-43

χαρίζομαι (charizomai) – bestow grace upon

Grace = receiving, or giving, what we do not deserve

Mt 5:43-45

Forgiveness v. wisdom

EXAMPLE: invested life savings with a friend; spends it on a car.

Should you invest with him again? Probably not. Wisdom. Sometimes there are consequences for a wrong that cannot be undone.

Might you ask other believers to hear your complaint and help you get your money back according to 1 Cor. 6 guidelines?

Forgiveness (you alone) v. reconciliation (requires 2 parties)

Love means that you do good even to your enemies. Refuse to grow bitter and act in other's best interest.

EXAMPLE: Friend breaks your lawn mower. Refuses to fix. After it is fixed, wants to borrow again.

Should you loan it again?

Lot of room between life savings and lawn mowers. Lot more important things that pertain to the soul.

Grace opens itself up to be rejected or taken advantage of.

Mt 5:38-42 (four illustrations)

1. "Eye for an eye"; disproportionate punishment not allowed; no partiality.
2. 5:39 – slap on the cheek. Personal insult. Double recompense required. Don't retaliate.

Doesn't apply to physical abuse

3. 5:40 – Being sued for a debt. Shirt taken as collateral. Not allowed to take the cloak. Give up your cloak. Progressively greater sacrifice.
4. 5:41 – Roman soldier could require Jew to carry equipment one mile.
(Jews counted 1000 steps and then stopped) go the extra mile
5. 5:42 – Needy or impoverished.
6. 5:43-45 – Love = act for their good. Pray. Do good.

Application

A person who needed to extend forgiveness said, "I can't and I won't."

God is fine with "I can't" (true that you cannot)
He is Not OK with "I won't"

You suffer
Relationships suffer
Freedom in forgiveness

Do you need to give forgiveness?

Do you need to seek forgiveness?