

NORTHEAST HOUSTON COMMUNITY CHURCH

Sermon – The Inerrancy of The Bible, Pt7

Topic:- Forgiveness

Scripture: Matthew 18:21–35

04-15-2012

Quote - T.G.I.F. -- Thank God I'm Forgiven

Matthew 18:21–35 (NKJV) ²¹ Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” ²² Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. ²³ Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵ But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. ²⁶ The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ ²⁷ Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ “But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ ²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ ³⁰ And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. ³¹ So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. ³² Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. ³³ Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ ³⁴ And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. ³⁵ “So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”

This is a topic that continues to stay in my mind. I have often referenced it or mentioned it in passing but I feel led to address the topic more directly.

The subject is "Forgiveness". Last week at Easter we looked at the passage that recorded Jesus saying while on the cross. "Father forgive them for they know not what they do". I covered the reasons, with scripture, why I believe Jesus was praying for the crucifixion squad.

I believe the Bible teaches that there are three instances when we should forgive someone. The first is easy to understand and that relates back to the prayer of Jesus who forgave because "they did not know what they were doing."

This is born out when we have a little baby that breaks something of value in the house. We know they did not know the value of the item nor did they intend to break it. We don't expect

the baby to say I'm sorry because we know the he/she did not know what they were doing. At that early age there was no expectation for them to know.

Ignorance is not an excuse to get away with doing wrong when there is an expectation for the person to know,

The second instance the Bible teaches is when he who did wrong goes to the other party and truly repents. Our passage today gives us a glimpse into some private time Jesus had with His disciples. He is teaching them and answering their questions (*Matt 18:1*)

V²¹ Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”²² Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

Doctor Luke records either the same event or another teaching the same as in Matthew but with more specificity.

Luke 17:3–4 (NKJV)³ Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. ⁴ And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him.”

Now this verse establishes the need for the offender to repent and with repentance we are required to forgive.

Notice that in this passage it seems that Jesus is speaking to all the disciples not just in response to one. Also, there is no question being asked. Now this passage mentions Seven times. It could be that this is what prompted Peter's question later when he asked is seven times the limit.

The key here is true repentance.

ORIGINAL GREEK WORD

2 to change one's mind for better, heartily to amend with abhorrence (*to regard with extreme repugnance*) of one's past sins¹

Repent - 1 : to turn from sin and dedicate oneself to the amendment of one's life **2** **a** : to feel regret (*to be very sorry for*) **or contrition**² (*feeling or showing sorrow and remorse for a sin or shortcoming*³)

¹ Strong, J. (1996). *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible : Showing every word of the text of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order.* (electronic ed.). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

² Merriam-Webster, I. (2003). *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary.* (Eleventh ed.). Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

³ Merriam-Webster, I. (2003). *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary.* (Eleventh ed.). Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

Regret and contrition even God will honor and we cannot be more demanding than God.
Psalm 34:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ *The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit.*

Psalm 51:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart— These, O God, You will not despise.*

Forgiveness is not easy for the offender or for the offended. For the offender, saying "I'm sorry" is easy for many just for the moment but true regret and contrition may very well be absent. For the offender, to forgive may not be true.

Saying I'm sorry is not enough saying it either to our brothers or sister or even to God. First there has to be an acknowledgment of the wrong of the sin.

1 John 1:10 (NLT) ¹⁰ *If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.*

Then there has to be true repentance (regret, sorrow, contrition).

2 Corinthians 7:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ *For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.*

How can there be forgiveness if there is or thought to be nothing to be forgiven for? Forgiveness is something that is offered and then received. Unless there is justification of ignorance (age or mental), for forgiveness to take place there has to be an acknowledgment of wrong through confession and repentance.

Saying I'm sorry is not enough.

A third reason is somewhat like the first one (ignorance).

Mark 11:25–26 (NKJV) *“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. ²⁶ But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”*

Here is a case where the perceived offender does not ask for forgiveness but we are required to forgive. Is this a contradiction?

Here is what I get out of this. The focus is on us who believe we have been wronged and harbor ill will against the perceived offender. It may be that the "offender" has no knowledge of the offense or the offense is really not there.

Have we ever been angry with someone and later found out that there was no intended offense or we misinterpreted what we thought we saw or heard? The other party has no idea there is a problem. That is when we should forgive and not be angry or hold a grudge against them.

Consider the relationship between mother and child. A child is forgiven for doing bad and -gets punished but he/she is still the child in the family.

The attitude and forgiveness we extend to others will be extended to us.

Matthew 7:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ “Judge not, that you be not judged. ² For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

These are the three main reasons I could find that require us to forgive.

V²² Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

Peter thought He was doing that which was right. Jesus took it a little further by telling Peter that seven times by seventy times (=490 times) is not enough. I believe that if Jesus were asked that same question and the person asking would say should I forgive my brother 490 times; Jesus would say that that was not enough.

Seventy times seven represented an innumerable amount of times. Remember, God is our standard and praise. With God there is no limit on the number of times God will forgive us if our repentance is for real all because of the blood of Christ. Where do we get off setting a limit on the number of times, we will forgive our brother?

In our focus passage Christ tells a parable about a king wanting to settle all the debts owed to him. He has compassion on the servant and forgives the debt, but that same servant presses and has no compassion of a fellow servant.

V²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ ³⁰ And he would not,

The King hearing this withdraws his compassion and forgiveness on the servant and has him delivered to the torturers not execution, until he should pay all that was due him. (v34).

V³⁴ And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

I first wondered how a person could pay a debt, 10,000 talents, while in prison.

The phrase " **all that was due to him**" meant until the king was satisfied. It would be similar to working off a debt.

V³⁵ “So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses

The parable was told for our learning that God will treat us as we treat others. even in the matters of forgiveness. As emphasized in our version of the "Golden Rule".

Luke 6:31 (KJV 1900) ³¹ And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

Now true forgiveness does not mean that you continue to put yourself in jeopardy of being hurt, abused, or taken advantage of.

God does not provide for blanked forgiveness to those who know to do what is right. Even as Christians' who have obtained forgiveness by the blood of Christ are required to confess our sins in order to receive God's forgiveness.

1 John 1:9 (NKJV)⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Forgive others as you would have them forgive you.

T.G.I.F. -- Thank God I'm Forgiven

END

Meditation song: He Has Forgiven Me

RESPONSIVE READING

Psalm 40:1–13 (NKJV)

¹ I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me, And heard my cry.

² **He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps.**

³ He has put a new song in my mouth— Praise to our God; Many will see *it* and fear, And will trust in the LORD.

⁴ **Blessed is that man who makes the LORD his trust, And does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.**

⁵ Many, O LORD my God, *are* Your wonderful works *Which* You have done; And Your thoughts toward us Cannot be recounted to You in order; *If* I would declare and speak *of them*, They are more than can be numbered.

⁶ **Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.**

⁷ Then I said, “Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book *it is* written of me.

⁸ **I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law *is* within my heart.”**

⁹ I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness In the great assembly; Indeed, I do not restrain my lips, O LORD, You Yourself know.

¹⁰ **I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth From the great assembly.**

¹¹ Do not withhold Your tender mercies from me, O LORD; Let Your lovingkindness and Your truth continually preserve me.

¹² **For innumerable evils have surrounded me; My iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to look up; They are more than the hairs of my head; Therefore my heart fails me.**

¹³ **Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me; O LORD, make haste to help me!**

To Win As Many As He Had Killed

One of the earliest missionaries in Christian history was Columba, born in Ulster, Ireland, on December 7, A.D. 521. His grandfather had been baptized by St. Patrick himself, and Columba's parents were believers of royal stock. He possessed a powerful presence with strong features and an authoritative voice, but Columba was strong-willed and combative. His fiery temper and iron will caused problems.

One day, Columba copied the contents of a book without permission, and when the owner requested the copy Columba refused. The argument took on a life of its own, involving more and more people. Eventually a war erupted in which three thousand men lost their lives.

Full of remorse, Columba sought and found the forgiveness of God. Then he committed himself to win as many to Christ as had died in the war. Thus he left Ireland at age forty-two to become a missionary to Scotland. With twelve companions, he established himself on Iona, a bleak, foggy island just off the Scottish coast, three miles long and a mile and a half wide. He built a crude monastery which soon became a training center for missionaries, one of the most venerable and interesting spots in the history of Christian missions. It was a lighthouse against heathenism.

From Iona, Columba made missionary forays into Scotland, converting large numbers. An entire tribe of pagans, the Picts, were won to the faith. He confronted the Druids, contesting with them over their alleged magical arts and demonic powers. He spent the rest of his life as the apostle to Scotland and as a trainer of missionaries.

What motivated him? He considered himself a debtor. He felt obligated to win as many as he had destroyed.⁴

- *There is no forgiveness from God unless you freely forgive your brother from your heart. And I wonder if we have been too narrow in thinking that "brother" only applies to someone else. What if YOU are the brother or sister who needs to be forgiven, and you need to forgive yourself?—David Seamands*
- *But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.—Joseph, in Genesis 45:5, to his brothers regarding the sins they committed against him years before.*
- *You come to a point when you've prayed, you've asked forgiveness, you've done everything you can do. And you just decide you have to forgive yourself, stop brooding over it, and get on with life. That's all you can do.— about a school bus driver who accidentally ran over a child, killing her.⁵*

⁴ Morgan, R. J. (2000). *Nelson's complete book of stories, illustrations, and quotes* (electronic ed.) (308–309). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

⁵ Morgan, R. J. (2000). *Nelson's complete book of stories, illustrations, and quotes* (electronic ed.) (305–306). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.