TITLE: Forgiveness

TEXT: Mt. 6:9-15; Lk. 6:37; Col. 3:13;

Mt. 18: 21-35; Phil. 4:13; Mt. 5:23-24

INTRODUCTION: The central theme of Salvation is forgiveness.. When we come to Christ that is the main thing that we come to Him for--for the forgiveness of our sin.

 Once we are forgiven then we can claim all the rest of the benefits of salvation that Christ has provided for us...Eternal life, Heaven, Sanctification, the old being made new, our being transformed into the very image and nature of Jesus, and at the resurrection, a new glorified body, one that will no longer be subject to pain and sorrow, sickness or death..

 These things are all our completed salvation that we will experience in full measure when Christ returns for His Church. But it all starts with forgiveness…

 It all starts when we come to the place of sorrowing for our sin and seek God’s forgiveness through Christ.

 When we accept for ourselves the Sacrifice that God made for us, the sacrifice of Himself on a cross to pay the price of your and my sin.

 This is the greatest wonder of the universe...The one transgressed against giving His life for those who transgressed against Him!

 The innocent paying the price for the guilty!

 Probably the most significant, the most important prayer that we have recorded in the Bible is the prayer that Jesus prayed to teach us how to pray....

**Matt 6:9 (NIV) "This, then, is how you should pray:**

**"`Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,**

**10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

**11 Give us today our daily bread.**

**12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.**

**13 And lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from the evil one.'**

 **v.12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors**

 Just what is forgiveness?

**863 aphiemi {af-ee'-ay-mee}**

**1) to send away**

**1c) to let go, let alone, let be**

**1c1) to disregard**

**1e) to give up, keep no longer**

As a Believer, This is exactly what God has done with our sin.

 He has sent it away, He has let it go, He has discarded it, He keeps it no longer!

When we accept Christ Scripture assures us that our sins are as far removed from us as East is from West, that they are buried in the depths of the deepest sea, that they are remembered no more!

 I believe it was Corrie Teem Boom who said:

 *When God buries our sins in the deepest sea, He posts a sign which reads: No Fishing!*

In other words, if God has forgiven and forgotten our sins then we don't need to be trying to dig them back up.

 A little boy came to the Washington Monument and noticed a guard standing by it. The little boy looked up at the guard and said, "I want to buy it." The guard stooped down and says, "How much do you have?" The boy reached into his pocket and pulled out a quarter. The guard said, "That's not enough." The boy replied, "I thought you would say that." So he pulled out nine cents more. The guard looked down at the boy and said, "You need to understand three things. First, thirty-four cents is not enough. In fact, $34 million is not enough to buy the Washington Monument.

 Second, the Washington Monument is not for sale. And third, if you are an American citizen, the Washington Monument already belongs to you."

 We need to understand three things about forgiveness.

First, we can not buy it or earn it.

Second, it is not for sale.

And third, if we accept Christ, we already have it.

 And once we have it there is something that we are commanded to do with it! Mimic it! copy it and pass it on!

In teaching us how to pray to God Jesus says: **Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.**

**Or Forgive us our sins as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us.**

This verse, V. 12 is the only element of the Lord’s prayer that Jesus goes on to explain!

**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.**

**Luke 6:37 (NIV) "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.**

 Once we receive God’s forgiveness then we are commanded to pass on the same forgiveness that we have received to others.

**Colo 3:13 (NIV) Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.**

We are to bear with each other!

**430 anechomai {an-ekh'-om-ahee}**

**1) to hold up**

**3) to sustain, to bear, to endure**

 If we have received God’s forgiveness in our life then we are commanded by God to hold up one another, sustain one another, if necessary, even endure one another!

We are to **forgive whatever grievances we may have against one another.**

The word used for forgive here is:

**5483 charizomai {khar-id'-zom-ahee}**

**1) to do something pleasant or agreeable (to one), to do a favor to, gratify**

**1a) to show one's self gracious, kind, benevolent**

**1b) to grant forgiveness, to pardon**

**1c) to give graciously, give freely,**

**1c1) to forgive**

**1c2) graciously to restore one to another**

We are to forgive whatever grievances that we may have!

**3437 momphe {mom-fay'}**

**quarrel , blame**

**2) to have complaint against any one.**

If there is anyone who we blame, who we have quarreled with, anyone who we blame for anything---- We are to forgive them, pardon them!

 We are to graciously restore them!

Whatever the grievance! Regardless of what they may have done!

 If we are a Christian, if we bear the name of Christ, Then the expectation of God, the command of God is for us is to: **Forgive as the Lord forgave you.**

How is it that God has forgiven us?

Freely, totally, completely, with no strings attached!

Jesus illustrates this forgiveness to us :

**Matt 18:21 (NIV) Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?"** ( Peter thought he was being pretty spiritual here.)

**22 Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.** (unlimited forgiveness)

Jesus then uses a parable to explain....

**23 "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.**

**24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him.**

**25 Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.**

**26 "The servant fell on his knees before him. `Be patient with me,' he begged, `and I will pay back everything.'**

**27 The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.**

(This is our forgiveness in Christ! Our debt has been canceled!)

**28 "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. `Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.**

**29 "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, `Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'**

**30 "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.**

 How often have we done the same thing! God has forgiven us a tremendous debt! He has forgiven us all the transgressions, all the wrongs that we have done to Him! When we come to Christ He cancels the debt that we owe! He delivers us from the just judgment of Hell! He graciously restores us to fellowship with Himself!

 God not only forgives our sin but He has determined to forget them as well!

 And even after we receive this great forgiveness, we experience this mighty Grace of God, we refuse to forgive those who may have wronged us..

 By refusing to forgive we are no better than this man in Jesus parable.

 It says of him...

**31 When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.**

**32 "Then the master called the servant in. `You wicked servant,' he said, `I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.**

**33 Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?'**

**34 In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.**

**35 "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."**

 Folks, once we receive God’s forgiveness in our life, Once the Spirit of the living God comes and makes His abode in our heart, if we are still unwilling to forgive others the wrongs that they have done us then there is something very seriously wrong!

 And the problem isn't with someone else, the problem is within us!

 Example: Man who refuses to forgive--always bitter, always has someone else to blame for all his troubles...

 The bitterness that has grown from his inability to forgive...I take that back...From his unwillingness to forgive has all but destroyed every relationship this man has ever had....

 But what is worse, it has all but destroyed his relationship with God.

 The fact of the matter is..

 If we are not willing to forgive others then we will never really feel forgiven by God…

 You show me someone that has a hard time accepting God’s forgiveness in their own life and I will show you someone who has a problem with forgiving others!

 If we call ourselves Christian, if we bear the name of Christ, then the command of God to us is:

 **Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.**

Amy Carmichael wrote:

 *If I say, yes I forgive, but I cannot forget as though the God who twice a day washed all the sands on all the shores of all the world could not wash such memories from my mind, then I know nothing of Calvary love. If the living God who made the tide and washes the shores daily cannot wash away from my mind the caustic remarks, the ugliness, the wrongs in someone else then I haven't even entered into Calvary love.*

 -- D.L. Moody

 *Forgiveness is not that stripe which says, "I will forgive, but not forget." It is not to bury the hatchet with the handle sticking out of the ground, so you can grasp it the minute you want it.*

 When we forgive someone, when we bury the hatchet, we need to bury the hatchet handle down so that there is nothing left for us to grab on to! Wee need to completely forgive them.

 -- Alexander C. Dejong

 *To forgive someone involves three things. First, it means to forego the right of striking back. One rejects the urge to repay gossip with gossip and a bad turn with a worse turn.*

 *Second, it means replacing the feeling of resentment and anger with good will, a love which seeks the other's welfare, not harm.*

 *Third, it means the forgiving person takes concrete steps to restore good relations.*

 Church, forgiveness is not an option for the Believer! It is not a suggestion of God!

 It is a command! It is the evidence that the love of Christ is ruling and reigning in our hearts.....

 I have talked with Christians who have said that there are things that have been done to them that they can't forgive, much less forget....

 And after listening to the things that have been done to them I have to agree that in and of themselves they probably can't forgive them....

 But we don't have to do it in and of ourselves if we have accepted Christ into our life...

 When God equipped us with the Holy Spirit He thoroughly equipped us!

 **It is not by might nor is it by power but it is by His Spirit says the Lord!**

 **Phil 4:13 (NIV) I can do everything through him who gives me strength.**

Everything! Even forgive the unforgivable!

God has given us the motivation---He has forgiven us our sins--all of them!

God has given us the ability---He has placed the Spirit of His Son within us!

 In closing, Let me share 5 facts about un-forgiveness with you this morning .

1. Un-forgiveness will make you miserable and rob you of your joy.

2. Un-forgiveness is destructive. It will destroy!

 It will erode and destroy relationships that you have with others...

3. Un-forgiveness will put up a wall of separation between you and God. It will eventually erode and start to destroy that relationship..

4. You will be the primary looser…

5. Those you love the most will suffer the most for it.

Horace Bushnell

 *Forgiveness is man's deepest need and God's highest achievement.*

 Are you allowing God to achieve in you what He wants to achieve?

 We are going to close in prayer.....

**Matt 5:23 (NIV) "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you,**

**24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.**

Pray....

 God reveal any seed of un-forgiveness that may be in our life...

 If there is anyone that we have offended then bring them to mind that we may seek their forgiveness....

 If there is anyone that has ever offended us then bring them to mind that we may forgive them...

 Lord, empower us to forgive just as we have been forgiven...freely, totally, completely, with no strings attached...Let us bury the hatchet and bury it with the handle down so there is nothing that remains for us to later grab hold of.

 Forgiveness is what sets the captive free...especially when we find that we are the one held captive to un-forgiveness....

 If you have anyone that you need to forgive this morning as Pam continues to play I encourage you to Come up to the alter & offer it up to God or let the place where you are seated be that alter this morning.

 You can leave this morning whenever you are ready.