

In the Hot Seat with Jesus
Questions Jesus Asked
Should You Not Have Mercy?

Forgiveness

Matthew 18:21-35

Grace Fellowship Church, Pastor Brad Bigney, Nov. 6, 2011

Forgiveness is not about **forgetting** what that other person did **to you...** it's **choosing** to remember and **delight in** what Christ has **already** done **for you** on the cross... so that you can extend that same mercy to them!

I. When You Forgive You Choose to Give Away the Mercy that God has so Freely Given to You!

Matthew 18:32-33

If you don't understand the depth of YOUR OWN sin against God and HOW MUCH He's forgiven you... you'll never have what it takes to forgive other people around you.

II. When You Forgive You Refuse to Live by Your Feelings

“Unforgiveness is like ringing a bell. As long as you pull the rope, the bell in the tower rings. Then you make a decision not to ring it anymore. You let go of the rope, and you are free of the unforgiveness. That's fine, but the bell keeps ringing for a while. Your hand is no longer on the rope. You no longer will it to ring it, but the momentum of your emotions does not instantly stop because a decision of the will has been made.” *Streams of Mercy*, Mark Rutland, p. 158-159

When you forgive you're saying...

1. I will not bring this up to YOU again to use in a hurtful way – but only for your benefit
2. I will not bring this up to OTHER PEOPLE
3. I will not DWELL on it MYSELF
4. I will not allow this incident or this hurt to keep me from rebuilding closeness with you

As you consistently work hard in these 4 areas, your feelings will follow; and they'll gradually start to change.

III. When You Forgive You Refuse to Live on a Mission to Get Even

Forgiveness always entails a cost... a price is paid. But regardless of the cost you pay for someone else's sin... it still costs you far less than what it cost Christ to forgive you!

“Forgiveness can be a costly activity. When you cancel a debt, it does not just simply disappear. Instead, you absorb a liability that someone else deserves to pay. Similarly, forgiveness requires that you absorb certain effects of another person's sins and you release that person from liability to punishment. This is precisely what Christ accomplished on Calvary.” *Peacemaker*, Ken Sande, p. 163

Romans 12:17-21

1 Peter 2:21-24

“All of us get hurt from time to time, and most of us are hurt very badly at some point in our lives. But Christians have the incredible resource - and the responsibility to forgive. Not out of our own strength, but out of the strength God provides through our experience of His forgiveness... Does this sound difficult? It's not difficult. It's impossible, unless you and I have **feasted** on the cross of Christ.” *A Call to Die*, David Nasser, p. 216

- Have you experienced the forgiveness and mercy of God in your own life? And are you feasting on the Cross of Christ?

IV. When You Forgive You Refuse to Live Your Life Stuck in the Past

To get over the past you have to be consumed with something greater than the way that other person wronged you. It's when you get consumed with knowing Christ... loving Christ... enjoying Christ... that you feel the grip of your painful past begin to loosen... and the memory of that painful past begin to fade.

Philippians 3:10-14

V. When You Forgive You Choose to Put at the Forefront What God's Done for You

“The word *forgiveness* has been watered down... It frequently means no more than, ‘I'll let it go this time - I won't let it bother me - but don't do it again.’ It is the verbal equivalent of a shoulder shrug. So there needs to be a repeated return to the New Testament to renovate the word, to discover its vitality, its strength, its power...” *Like Dew Your Youth*, Eugene H. Peterson p. 107

Ephesians 4:31-32

Colossians 3:13

Matthew 18:33

Colossians 3:12-13

Forgiveness is not a suggestion... it's not an encouragement... it's a command.

“It is not always easy and sometimes it comes at great personal cost in the sense that we have to let go of resentment that has been the cornerstone of our lives for years. People who hate get a great deal of energy from that hate. It becomes a way of life...” *Leaving Yesterday Behind*, William L. Hines, p. 122 & 123