

Forgiveness

There are many outstanding things recorded in the Bible that encourage us to reach higher and press harder to obtain the good that the Bible talks about. There are also a large number of testimonies and episodes that seem so far out of our human reach that we don't even try to accomplish them. I could never see myself catching 300 foxes and then putting them in pairs and lighting their tails on fire. Now, that seems impossible! But, I don't think anything compares to what Jesus did on the cross. Just thinking about the pain before the cross would be enough for me to check out on humanity. The cross itself would cause such a depth of agony and pain that very few could hold up under. All of this pain and agony for me is really sobering, but it doesn't compare to what Jesus said when He asked the Father to forgive all of us for putting Him on that cross. He released me from the consequence of my sin by accepting it and paying the price I should pay. He allowed love to overrule pain, emotion and rejection and spoke release over all of us.

The heart of love that could release you and me from death that was rightfully ours is the victory of the cross. Forgiveness for past, present and future sins was purchased on that dark day of crucifixion. Jesus then took God's own blood and through the Eternal Spirit, placed the blood of God on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies in heaven. God who is just was satisfied because the penalty of sin was paid. Since the penalty of sin was paid, we are now released from the power of sin and free from the bondage and condemnation that it produces. We now have right standing with Him because our broken relationship is restored and we now have full access to fellowship at any time. We can walk in newness of life and we don't have to remain in a broken state of humanity any longer. Isn't that exciting news to a broken people? Sin no longer has dominion over me, because the force of sin that kept pushing me into bondage was released. Now I am free to respond to the love of God. This release is what we call forgiveness. I no longer have to hang my head for my past failures or thoughts and I am free to boldly come into the presence of a Loving Father and then leave in freedom to serve. Forgiveness allows us to be free and then offer this freedom to others.

The victory of the cross is that we are washed in His blood and are no longer under the condemnation and death that sin causes. We are forgiven and released into the wholeness that Christ purchased for us. Is it any wonder that Satan tries to nullify this great victory by presenting opportunities for us to hold unforgiveness toward others? People hurt us, violate us, say unkind things, gossip about us, and many other things. The potential for us is to become offended and step over into unforgiveness and sin. We all have the opportunity to take this offense and act on the other person's pain and allow it to be mine, or to reach out and release the forgiveness we have received from Christ toward the one who is trying to give me their brokenness. When people attempt to hurt us emotionally, they are trying to project their pain onto us. We need to be Christ-like and allow that weapon to hit our shield of faith and dissolve. We must not pick up that offense and call it ours. If someone misuses or violates you, then flee to safety. After you get to safety, release forgiveness toward them and ask the Lord to cleanse you from pain and hurt. Don't allow that person and their action to keep you in bondage. You were the victim, so don't receive the guilt or somehow think you are unclean. You are clean because of the blood of Jesus Christ. We will look at a biblical pattern of forgiveness under our action point.

We are always asking for forgiveness as well as extending it to others. I John 1:9 and John 20:23 are two verses that are used daily by most of us. The enemy is trying to steal the victory of the cross in your life. He will try to make you “feel” that you are not forgiven or he will attempt to set you up to receive an offense and walk in unforgiveness. We are free and we want others to be free also. Stephan walked in the power of forgiveness. When he was stoned, he released forgiveness toward those who were killing him. (Acts 7:54-59) After Paul was stoned and raised from the dead, he went right back into the same city and ministered. (Acts 14:19, 20) David loved Absalom, even though Absalom was trying to steal David’s kingdom. (II Samuel 15) Joseph said that the Lord was the one who got Him into Egypt so he could help the very ones that hurt him. (Genesis 50:19-21) Jephthah was chased out of his home by his brothers and criticized because his mother was a prostitute, but later he came back and delivered them. (Judges 11) If all of these people walked free of offense, then I can also. I don’t have to retain anyone else’s pain and receive it as my own. Jesus carried all of my pain, and I am free of pain. I release forgiveness toward all of those who try to hurt me. That is what Christ did, and I want to imitate Him. I can’t do that in my own strength, but I can in the strength of the Lord.

Definitions:

1. Forgive: (Hebrew): Celiychad: pardon, spare, to forgive.
2. Forgive: (Greek): Aphasis: pardon, deliverance, forgiveness, liberty, remission, cry, lay aside, and away, yield up, leave, omit and separation. A putting away of sin and the deliverance of the sinner from the power of sin.
3. Forgive: (Hebrew): Nasa: Carry away, cast, burn, go on, lift, pardon, raise up and take away.
4. Forgive: (Hebrew): Kapher: to cover, condone, appease, make atonement, cleanse, disannul, be merciful, purge, reconcile.
5. Forgiveness: (Greek): Apoluo: Forgive, to free fully, release, demise, let die, depart, let go, loose, put away, set at liberty such as a debtor, and certificate of innocence.
6. Forgiveness: (Greek): Charizomai: To grant a favor, kindness, pardon or receive, freely give.

Scripture Pattern:

1. Genesis 50
2. Exodus 34:4-27
3. Leviticus 16
4. Numbers 16:1-16
5. Numbers 14:1-25
6. Numbers 17:1-12

7. Numbers 21:4-9
8. Deuteronomy 19:1-7
9. Judges 11:1-11
10. I Samuel 25:1-44
11. I Samuel 26:1-25
12. II Samuel 15:1-37
13. Jeremiah 33:14-18
14. Matthew 6:1-15
15. Matthew 7:1-6
16. Matthew 9:1-12
17. Matthew 18:21-35
18. Luke 15:11-32
19. Luke 22:1-38
20. John 8:1-11
21. John 21:15-19
22. Acts 7:54-60

Scripture Application:

1. Genesis 50:17
2. Exodus 10:17
3. Exodus 32:32
4. Leviticus 4:20
5. Leviticus 5:5-10
6. Numbers 14:17-28
7. Numbers 30:5, 8, 12
8. Deuteronomy 15:2-13

9. Deuteronomy 24:1-4
10. Joshua 24:19
11. I Samuel 25:28
12. I Kings 8:30-50
13. II Chronicles 6:21, 25,27,30,39
14. II Chronicles 7:14
15. Ezra 10:1
16. Psalm 25:18
17. Psalm 66:18
18. Psalm 78:38-43
19. Psalm 85:2
20. Psalm 86:5
21. Psalm 103:3
22. Psalm 130:4
23. Isaiah 44:22
24. Isaiah 55:7
25. Isaiah 61:1
26. Jeremiah 5:1
27. Jeremiah 31:34
28. Jeremiah 33:8
29. Jeremiah 36:3
30. Ezekiel 36:25
31. Jonah 3:6-9
32. Micah 7:18
33. Matthew 5:32
34. Matthew 6:12-15
35. Matthew 7:4
36. Mathew 9:2-5
37. Matthew 12:31-34
38. Matthew 18:21, 27, 32, 35
39. Matthew 26:28
40. Mark 2:5, 7, 10

41. Mark 3:29
42. Mark 11:25
43. Mark 14:72
44. Luke 3:3
45. Luke 4:18
46. Luke 5:21, 24
47. Luke 6:37
48. Luke 7:40-50
49. Luke 17:3, 4
50. Luke 22:68
51. Luke 23:34
52. Luke 24:47
53. Acts 2:38
54. Acts 3:19
55. Acts 5:31
56. Acts 8:22
57. Acts 10:43
58. Acts 13:38
59. Acts 26:18
60. Romans 3:21-25
61. Romans 4:7
62. Romans 8:23
63. I Corinthians 11:23-34
64. I Corinthians 15:5
65. II Corinthians 2:7, 10
66. II Corinthians 7:1, 8-13
67. Ephesians 1:7
68. Ephesians 4:32
69. Colossians 1:14
70. Colossians 2:13
71. Colossians 3:13
72. Hebrews 9:22

73. Hebrews 10:18

74. James 5:15

75. I John 1:9

76. I John 2:12

Summary:

As you have studied the topic of forgiveness, I hope you have seen the necessity to receive forgiveness as well as release forgiveness to others. Matthew 5:23,24 shows us how the Lord won't even receive our offering if we are not reconciled to our brother. Mark 11:25 shows us that even if I start to pray it is not going to work unless I have a forgiving heart. Giving an offering and praying are excellent activities, but of no value unless forgiveness is working in my heart. We know this isn't always easy to do but remember that forgiveness is received and given by faith. I receive forgiveness from the Lord when I confess and by faith receive what the blood has accomplished. My feelings will eventually come into line as my actions reflect my decision to repent. It will take time for my soulish man to line up as I work out my salvation through the power of the Holy Spirit. Giving other people forgiveness is also an act of faith because very seldom will we "feel" like forgiving others. Remember we are not judging right or wrong, we are just saying their pain is not going to rule us any longer. I choose to release them from my penalty and turn them over to God so He can deal with their brokenness. The best example of this is in Luke 17:1-5 when Jesus says we should forgive a brother seven times in one day. Right away in verse five, the disciples ask the Lord to "increase our faith." They knew this would be a very difficult assignment and one that would require divine help. The Lord went on to say we are going to have to speak to those roots in our lives that cause unforgiveness. The Lord is will then pull out the roots that are not holy so that the trees that are left in me will be healthy and bear good fruit.

I want to give you six steps to walk through as you release forgiveness to others that I think will help you.

Action:

In releasing forgiveness we are walking in a Christ-like attitude and allowing the character of Christ to be fully formed in us, so I encourage you to walk these steps out in your life.

1. Say out loud that you forgive the person for the offense or violation that you have been harboring in your mind. (This is a decision to forgive and not trying to figure out who is right or wrong.) Say that you are releasing this offense and giving it to the Lord.
2. Ask the Lord to forgive you for any un-Christ-like action or attitude that you have been displaying. When Christ was mistreated, He always responded in love. (He didn't stay in volatile situations He could get out of, and you don't need to either.) We can't allow a root of bitterness to grow in our heart.

3. Put the cross right on top of the offense or violation. What the cross accomplished is strong enough to heal your hurt. We are asking the power of God to heal and we are not trying to heal it ourselves. I need to remember that He bore my pain and I don't have to bear it any longer. The victory that Christ achieved on the cross is my victory.

4. Close the door and put the blood on the place of pain! What I mean is to apply the blood by speaking out that the blood now covers the place where the hurt, scar, memory.....was located. We are shutting the doorways of our soulish realm to any more intrusions of the enemy and he will not be able to cause me to stumble again.

5. We now need to ask the Lord to help us walk out this victory. We can't do these things in the natural, but we need the power of God. I can do all things through Christ. I can only bear the fruit of love as I abide in Him. It is His power flowing through me that causes me to be more than a conqueror.

6. Now speak blessings on them. Ask the Lord to win them by His goodness and mercy. Remember forgiveness is not condoning sin, but doing everything possible for the person so that the Lord can remove the place of offense. The Lord is the only one who can change a heart, but we can cut the cords that are keeping people from rising up to be touched by the Lord. Make a list of people that have hurt you. Act on these six steps and then begin to thank the Lord that you are pain free and both of you are being conformed into the image of Christ.