

Sermon Title: Heart of Forgiveness
Sermon Series: Biblical Forgiveness
Scripture: Ephesians 4:32
Speaker: Pastor Mike Barnhart



Colossians 3:13 ESV

bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

Ephesians 4:32 ESV

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

aphiemi (forgive) - to release from debt or penalty; to leave in peace.

If someone sins against you, you must forgive.

- A.) Forgiveness is NOT approving of what was done.
- B.) Forgiveness is NOT excusing what was done.
- C.) Forgiveness is NOT the same as reconciliation.
- D.) Forgiveness is NOT denying what was done.
- E.) Forgiveness is NOT forgetting what was done.
- F.) Forgiveness is NOT pretending you are not hurt.

Ephesians 4:32 ESV

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

1. I will _____.

Matthew 7:1–5 ESV

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.

Self-reflection and dealing with your own sin is of first priority.

Then, once ownership of a person’s own wrongs are dealt with appropriately, we can move on to the other person.

Basic order for dealing with sin.

1. The Gospel - (If you were here last weekend, this is what we talked about). You’ve gotta know the “bad news” of your own sin, and then see the Good News of what Jesus has done for you. He offers to rescue each of us from our sinfulness.
2. Forgiveness - Receiving God’s forgiveness and then forgiving the other person.
3. Trust - Without properly living out the gospel & forgiveness in your life, you won’t be able to be trustworthy or trust the other person involved. This is key to true reconciliation.

Psalm 139:23–24 ESV

Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting!

2. As God has been to me, so I will be to _____.

Mercy - Not getting what you do deserve.

Grace - Getting what you don't deserve.

Matthew 5:7 ESV

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Luke 6:27–28 ESV

“But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

Romans 12:9–21 ESV

Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Bitterness & joy are incompatible.

True forgiveness kills bitterness.

3. I will go to my _____.

Matthew 18:15–20 ESV

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

1. If another Christ-follower sins against you, go and tell him his fault.
2. If he doesn't listen, take someone (or a couple other believers) with you.
3. If he still refuses to listen...tell the church leadership—that's one of the pastors or elders.

We are not responsible for the miracle of repentance in someone else.

Four commitments to make to the person you forgive:

1. **“I will not dwell on this incident.”** - This means that you don't replay the person's offense against you in your mind, over & over again.
2. **“I will not bring up this incident again and use it against you.”** - Don't go into the garbage can of the past to find ammunition for your conversation today. It's one thing to use a past incident illustratively & lovingly. It's another thing to use an incident from the past to inflict shame or additional hurt.

3. **“I will not talk to others about this incident.”** - Don’t slander or gossip about someone’s sin to other people. Retelling someone’s sins to gain sympathy is NOT compatible with biblical forgiveness.

4. **“I will not let this incident stand between us or hinder our personal relationship.”** - Love does NOT keep a record of wrongs (1 Cor. 13:5). Biblical forgiveness doesn’t allow forgiven sins to keep people from growing toward a reconciled relationship in the grace & knowledge of our Lord.

“You can’t continually rehearse in your heart all someone’s perceived wrongs against you and grow in affection toward him or her. You can’t argue with yourself daily that the person is the chief cause of the wrongs that you do, and want to move close to them.”—Paul Tripp

Luke 23:34 ESV

And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments.

Because Jesus forgives you, forgive one another.

Small Group Questions:

1. In the sermon, Pastor Mike shared several statements about what forgiveness is NOT. Which of these resonated most with you? Why?

2. Read Colossians 3:13 and Ephesians 4:32. What do these verses tell us about why we—as believers in Christ—must have hearts of forgiveness?

Colossians 3:13

bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

3. Read Matthew 7:1-5. What does this passage tell us about how self-reflection is vital when seeking a heart of forgiveness? (Group Leaders: You may encourage your group members to practice self-reflection by praying Psalm 139:23-24 this week).

Matthew 7:1-5

“Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. 3 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.

4. What’s the difference between mercy and grace? How has God shown you, personally, mercy and grace in your life?

5. How does God’s mercy and grace to you help you offer mercy and grace to others?

6. Read Matthew 18:15-20. What does this text tell us about dealing with sin among two believers?

Matthew 18:15-20

15 “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. 18 Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed[a] in heaven. 19 Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

7. What commitment(s) is God asking you to trust Him to help you make so that He would produce a heart of forgiveness in you?