

“ADJ - Call to Discipleship Part 2” (2-20-22)

Introduction: Being a disciple is about becoming like your master - in character & purpose

LG Example: Discipleship - can feel overwhelming, but it is simply the gospel permeating our lives . . .

Tony Evans on being a Kingdom Disciple . . .

- The content of the gospel is simple: Jesus - cross, burial, resurrection, & imminent return
- The scope of the gospel touches everything - a disciple lives to discover & co-operate with the gospel

Today: The content & scope of Forgiveness in the life of a disciple

1) Receive Forgiveness

Luke 23:32-34 (ESV)

(32) Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. (33) And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. (34) And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” . . .

Next several verses - much mocking follows, from the observers and the criminals on each side . . .

Luke 23:39-43 (ESV)

(39) One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” (40) But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? (41) And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” (42) And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” (43) And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Note: On the cross - Jesus forgives . . .

- Jesus - “Father forgive them, they don’t know what they are doing” (34)
- Jesus - “Today you will be with me in paradise” (43)
- Thief - deserved to die, initially mocked Jesus too, did nothing to deserve forgiveness

This is what Jesus has done for all who call on his name . . .

Colossians 1:13-14 (ESV)

(13) He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, (14) in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Note: I am the thief on the cross; therefore I recognize my need, call on His name, rely on His love!

This is a more than 1 moment in time, this is a way of life - we are transferred into His Kingdom!

A reflection on forgiveness . . . from Psalm 103

Psalm 103:2 - “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits” . . .

- (3) who forgives all your iniquity
- (4) who redeems your life from the pit
- (4) who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy
- (5) who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s
- (8) The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- (10) He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.
- (12) as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us
- (14) For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.
- (17) But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him

2) Seek Forgiveness

Matthew 18:15-17 (ESV)

(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.

Note: This is describing a pursuit of forgiveness - seeking the opportunity to reconcile!

Remember - Being a disciple is about the scope of the gospel permeating our lives. 2 examples . . .

1 John 1:7-9 (ESV)

(7) But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. (8) If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Note: Fellowship & Freedom are the goal here!

Classic excuses - “But they are in the wrong. Ok, maybe I’m kind of wrong, but they are more wrong!”

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 (ESV)

(17) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (18) All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. (20) Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (21) For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Note: See this is where our character aligns with and allows us to participate in His Kingdom purpose!

There is immense power for the gospel to work in our midst when we grow in the area of forgiveness!

So many read Matthew 18 looking for justification to black-ball someone who has hurt us, when instead its meant to establish a sense of urgency to resolve conflict within the body of Christ . . .

Matthew 18:18-20 (ESV)

(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 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.”

Note: So often we isolate these verses as separate from the entire context of forgiveness & fellowship!

The power is in unity - not faked, but real and rooted in forgiveness which has been hard won by Jesus!

3) Practice Forgiveness

Matthew 18:21-22 (ESV)

(21) Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” (22) Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

Note: Well that's discouraging!

Dave Buehring (from ADJ page 45)

“We want to believe that our forgiveness depends on the debt we’re owed and our perpetrator’s willingness to compensate for the pain they caused.”

That isn’t Jesus’ view on forgiveness - he neither taught that nor lived it . . .

Matthew 18:23-35 (ESV)

(23) “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. (24) When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. (25) And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. (26) So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ (27) And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. (28) But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ (29) So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ (30) He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. (31) When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. (32) Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. (33) And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ (34) And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. (35) So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

Note: Am I cultivating a lifestyle of forgiveness, or do I just draw on that account when I’m in trouble?

Conclusion: I encourage you to spend some time in reflection - review Psalm 103. Consider the questions below. Reflect on specifics, but also reflect on your general attitude towards forgiveness. Ask the Lord to cultivate this in your heart.

For Reflection:

Consider reasons you may avoid receiving forgiveness from God:

- I don’t want to be forgiven (perhaps my pride is resisting)
- I haven’t done anything wrong (perhaps I have some blinders up, or I justify my sin)
- I don’t deserve forgiveness: What I did was too much
- I don’t deserve forgiveness: I’m still struggling and will probably just do it again
- I don’t deserve forgiveness: I believe Jesus forgave my “before Christ” sins, but I have been unfaithful since then, and that’s a betrayal of his love.

Consider reasons you may avoid forgiving People:

- Review the points from the previous section in the context of your relationships with other people
- They aren’t sorry
- The hurt is ongoing
- I’m still suffering from what they did, so they should suffer too