

Kingdom Foundations - Pt 4

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For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

—Matthew 6:14–15

Introduction: The Essential Value of Forgiveness

- A. Forgiveness is not a side issue in the Christian life, it's a central marker of a heart touched by God.
- B. We live in a world soaked in offense, vengeance, and pride. Yet the gospel calls us to a different way: a forgiven people who forgive.
- C. Jesus emphasized forgiveness not just as a response to hurt, but as a defining characteristic of those who walk with the Father.
- D. This teaching from the Sermon on the Mount should shake us, challenge us and ultimately free us.

What This Passage Does Not Mean:

- A. Salvation Is Not Earned by Forgiving Others
- B. Jesus is not teaching a works-based salvation, but rather describing the fruit of a heart that has encountered mercy.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

—Ephesians 2:8-9

- C. We are not forgiven because we forgive. We forgive because we have been forgiven.

D. Forgiveness is not a condition to earn grace; it is evidence that we have received grace.

If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar...

—1 John 4:20

E. This Matthew 6 passages calls us to do a serious heart check. If there is no conviction to forgive then I wonder if such a person has ever received forgiveness.

The Power to Forgive Flows from the Revelation of our own Forgiveness

A. We cannot give what we have not received or understood.

B. Luke recounts a story in Luke 7 about a sinful woman anointing Jesus' feet with oil and tears. The religious Pharisees struggled with this act, then Jesus told a parable of two forgiven their debts. One was forgiven 12k the other 120k. Which one would be the most grateful?

Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.

—Luke 7:47

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

—Matthew 6:12

...even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

—Colossians 3:13

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities...

—Isaiah 53:5

Illustration: Corrie ten Boom's Forgiveness of the Nazi Guard

Corrie survived Ravensbrück concentration camp. After speaking in a church on forgiveness, a former guard approached her asking for forgiveness. Her initial response was fear and hesitation, but through prayer she chose to forgive, and the love of God flowed through her.

Her choice came not from strength, but from a revelation of Christ's mercy.

C. In some situations forgiveness will be a diligent/difficult process

Live Unoffended Guarding Your Heart from Bitterness

A. Forgiveness is not just a reaction; it is a heart posture. The way of Christ is to live unoffended.

The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression.

—Proverbs 19:11

It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come!

—Luke 17:1

Practical Ways to Live Unoffended:

1. Give the benefit of the doubt

Love... believes all things

—1 Corinthians 13:7

2. Resist assigning motives

For the Lord does not see as man sees...

—1 Samuel 16:7

3. Focus on your own 'plank' (Matthew 7:3)

4. Choose to forgive quickly/Do not let offenses marinate.

Love..... keeps no record of wrongs

—1 Corinthians 13:5

5. Pray blessing over those who hurt you (Luke 6:28)

Conclusion: The Danger of Unforgiveness

...looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of

God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.

—Hebrews 12:15

A. Bitterness may start small, but it grows roots. It poisons your spirit, clouds your thinking, and blocks your communion with God.

B. Unforgiveness not only affects the offender, it corrupts the soul of the offended.

C. Analogy: Carrying offense and unforgiveness is like holding onto someone else's sin. Letting go is giving them back their sin.

D. The demonic gets involved through a stronghold of unforgiveness

Reflection

- Who do you need to forgive?
- Are you harboring a quiet root of bitterness?
- Do you need a fresh revelation of how much you've been forgiven?
- Do you need to break off the spiritual stronghold of offense/unforgiveness