

Lesson 12, Part 2: Forgiveness

Overview:

1. Forgiveness and the Gospel
2. Forgiveness According to Scripture
3. Practical Summary
4. Common Questions

I. Forgiveness and the Gospel (Review)

A. Seven concepts to preach to yourself in order to “get to the place of forgiveness”

1. “Christ has suffered as I am suffering right now, and infinitely more so, which means I am never alone in any pain.”
2. “Sometimes God purposes that those whom He loves deeply be painfully sinned against.”
3. “God the Father can be trusted completely on the receiving end of any wrongdoing.”
4. “I have committed greater sins against God than any person has ever committed against me.”
5. “Rejoice that Christ has purchased my forgiveness and justification at the cross!”
6. “I am purchased and owned by God; and now I live to serve *His* purposes, not mine.”
7. “Fellowship with Christ in His suffering brings resurrection power and life.”

B. Three cautions regarding “getting to the place of forgiveness”

1. It is not permission to delay forgiveness “until you’re good and ready.”
2. It is not dictated by your feelings/emotions.
3. It does not mean that forgiveness is a gradual process.

II. Forgiveness According to Scripture

A. Two Greek words to consider:

1. *Aphiemi* – (verb) To send the offense away from mind and heart, to disregard, to omit, neglect. Springs from the _____ resolve (Matt 6:12-15; 18:21-35; Mark 11:25)
2. *Charizomai* – (verb) To do something pleasant or agreeable, to do a favor, to give, grant or show oneself to be gracious. Springs from the heart's _____ (Col 3:13; Eph 4:32; cf. also 2 Cor 2:5-11).

B. Colossians 3:12-14 (*charizomai*)

1. Forgiveness includes _____ (note that it does not come naturally, v. 12).
2. Forgiveness includes favor that is _____ (note that it does not deny the offense, v. 13).
3. Forgiveness includes favor for the _____ (note that it is granted “just as” the Lord has forgiven you, v. 13).

C. Ephesians 4:32 (*charizomai*)

1. As gracious acts are actively bestowed, anger, bitterness, and resentment are removed.
 - a. Be _____ (Luke 6:35) – benevolent, gracious as opposed to harsh, hard, bitter, sharp.
 - b. Be _____ – compassion from the gut.
 - c. Be _____ – bestowing grace on those who sin against you.
2. Forgiveness has been granted by God *in Christ*, which means:
 - a. Forgiveness will cost you something.
 - b. There are no _____.
 - c. It comes in _____.

D. Matthew 6:12-15 (*aphiemi*) (cf. Mark 11:25; 1 John 1:9)

1. Verse 12 doesn't just remind us to forgive, it _____ us to it.
2. Verse 15 shows that _____ forgiveness indicates _____ unforgiveness (day-to-day, not salvation; communion, not your union).

E. Matthew 18:21-35 (*aphiemi*)

1. This parable (as it is with all parables) is intended to make an impression.
 - a. How enormous _____?!?
 - b. How absurd _____?!?
 - c. How astonishing _____?!?
 - d. How ironic _____?!?
 - e. How shocking _____?!?
 - f. How obvious _____?!?
2. Jesus is helping his disciples (and us) make obvious connections:
 - a. Our sins against our Master are incalculable compared to the sins committed against us.
 - b. Our Master freely forgives us from a heart of compassion.
 - c. There should be no limit to the forgiveness we must be willing to grant to our fellow servants.
 - d. If we harden our hearts and withhold forgiveness, we must face the judgment of our Master.
3. The imprisonment metaphor and those who refuse to forgive:
 - a. Maximum security
 - b. Medium security
 - c. Minimum security

III. Practical Definition of Forgiveness

A. (-) I will not bring it up with the intention to harm.

1. Not to _____.
2. Not to _____.
3. Not to dwell on _____.

B. (+) I will move towards you in love.

IV. Common Questions

A. If a person does not repent, do we need to forgive them? In other words, is forgiveness unconditional?

To answer, we must ask: Does forgiveness include the transaction (i.e. confession/repentance)?

What does NorthCreek believe/teach? Forgiveness is _____ since we don't think it is necessary to wait until the transaction/reconciliation process is complete in order to label it forgiveness. In the case where the offender has yet to confess and repent, we are content to label the injured party's unilateral actions "forgiveness in part," while still calling the offender to repentance in order for the transaction to take place.

What is abundantly clear, biblically, is that if you have been sinned against, you have immediate, unilateral work to do: you must forgive. You may call your unilateral response "forgiveness," "forgiveness in part," or "forgiveness in heart," but regardless of the label, you must (1) not bring it up with the intention to harm (*aphiemi*), and (2) move towards them in love (*charizomai*). This in no way negates the responsibility to confront sin.

B. Do I need to seek forgiveness for something I did that was hurtful, though not sinful?

C. Is it possible or necessary for you to forgive yourself?

“Forgiving self” has _____ biblical support. Scripture has only two perspectives on forgiveness:

1. You can and need to be forgiven by God (Col 1:13-14; I John 1:9); and
2. You are wholeheartedly to forgive others, following the example of God’s forgiveness to you (Matt 18:32-33; Eph 4:32; Col 3:13). *SCM, p. 202*

D. Will all the consequences be removed when you receive forgiveness?

No. (Consider how Moses couldn’t enter the promised land, David lost his child, and thief on the cross died, yet all received forgiveness of sins.) *SCM, p. 203*

E. Does God require you to “forgive and forget”?

Nowhere does Scripture require you to have a blank memory about your own sins or sins committed against you. In fact, the memory of certain sins (even though these sins have been forgiven by God) is important for your training in righteousness, to help you not repeat them (for example, notice David’s remembrance of his sins in II Samuel 12:13-23 and Psalm 38). *SCM, p. 204*

F. Is it necessary, as some teach, for you to “forgive God” for what has happened in your life?

_____! The unbiblical concept of “forgiving God” is not only an affront to God’s holiness, the sanctity of His plan of sacrificial forgiveness, and His sovereign rule in this life; but it further illustrates the steps that man will take to exalt self instead of dying to self. *SCM, p. 205*

G. What about not feeling like forgiving another or not feeling like you have been forgiven?

Forgiving others is not to be based on your “feelings” or perceived equity but instead is based on God’s merciful forgiveness of you (for example Romans 5:8). As a child of God, even if you do not “feel forgiven” after sincerely confessing your sin(s), God’s Word promises that you are completely forgiven and cleansed by God, who is completely faithful and just (I John 1:9). God’s promise of forgiveness seals the fact of your forgiveness, regardless of your feelings. *SCM, p. 206*