

Southside Baptist Church  
Sunday Morning – 4-19-26  
Christianity 103 – Message 7 Part 4  
Stephen speaks truth to the religious leaders.

1. Introduction:

a. Taking a look back:

- 1) Stephen reminded them of the covenant of circumcision God made with Abraham.
  - a) This set Israel apart from other nations. It indicated a special relationship.
- 2) The New Covenant does not require a physical act of circumcision.
  - a) At salvation, there is a spiritual circumcision that takes place. Col. 2:11-12
- 3) Joseph faced many “afflictions” in his life.
  - a) His brothers were jealous of him.
  - b) God delivered him and used those afflictions to prepare him.
  - c) When you face afflictions, it is wise to remember that God may be teaching you something about yourself or about Him.
- 4) In Acts 7:12, we could see how God was working through a famine to bring about restoration and reconciliation of Joseph’s family.
  - a) Through forgiveness, they were restored.

b. Taking a look ahead:

- 1) We move from Abraham to Joseph to Moses.
- 2) Faith – obeying God in spite of what we see or how we feel or what may happen.
- 3) We ended last week on an amazing note.

2. Reconciliation, restoration through forgiveness.

a. Is this really a problematic area?

b. Is unforgiveness present?

- 1) I wonder if Joseph’s brothers would have admitted it.
- 2) Often the root of most relationship problems is unforgiveness.
- 3) Why is this such a problem?
- 4) Part of the problem is a lie that many people believe.
  - a) The lie – time heals all wounds.

3. Unforgiveness is a dangerous spiritual disease.

a. Only one cure.

b. Symptoms to watch for according to the Bible.

- 1) Bitterness and resentment.
  - a) Hebrews 12:15 –
  - b) “root of bitterness” – a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit.
  - c) Unforgiveness can lead to a root of bitterness that defiles you.
- 2) Anger and hostility.
  - a) Ephesians 4:31 –
  - b) Unforgiveness is the fuel that feeds your anger.
- 3) Difficulty in relationships.
  - a) I John 4:20 –
  - b) Holding on to unforgiveness breaks your fellowship with the Lord.
- 4) Spiritually you are not growing.
  - a) Matthew 6:14-15 –
  - b) When we sin, we are disobedient children, and we need to make it right with the Lord.
  - c) Living, moving each day in unforgiveness is a barrier to growing spiritually.
- 5) Physical and emotional stress.

- a) Stress and anxiety can lead to physical challenges.
- 6) A hardened heart.
  - a) Over time the heart can grow cold and indifferent not just to the Lord but to others in your life.
  - b) John 13:34-35 –
- 7) A critical spirit.
  - a) Those who struggle with unforgiveness are often the most critical and judgmental people.
  - b) Matthew 7:1-2 –
- 4. Will you consider this?
  - a. It is important to know the truth. It sets you free.
    - 1) Here is a biblical perspective of forgiveness for you to think about.
      - a) This comes from Matthew 18.
  - b. What is forgiveness really about?
    - 1) First – it isn't about earning, deserving, repayment or getting even.
      - a) It is about grace received and grace released.
      - b) Ephesians 4:32 –
    - 2) Second – forgiveness is a step of faith.
      - a) It is a step of faith because by faith you believe that when you forgive, God is now free to heal the hurt in your heart.
    - 3) Third – What is it that I am doing by faith?
      - a) Forgiveness means releasing the debt, canceling the debt.
    - 4) Fourth – Once I forgive, what do I do with the memory?
      - a) What if you were not supposed to forget?
      - b) Does God forget?
      - c) Hebrews 8:12 –
      - d) Hebrews 10:17 –
  - c. Put this together.
    - 1) Forgiveness means by faith releasing the debt, canceling the debt, and then choosing daily, if necessary, to not remember it against them anymore.
- 5. Today's Takeaway: