

10-15-2016, COTR Texarkana

Title: Forgiveness

Purpose: Provoke people to follow the example of Joseph and forgive people who wrong us.

Spiritual Truth: Everybody wins when we forgive people who hurt us.

Text: Genesis 50:15–21

Topic: Forgiveness, Mercy, Joseph, Justice

Series: Not Your Average Joe

Series Purpose: Provoke people to live an extraordinary life by following the example of Joseph.

Forgiveness

I. Introduction

- A. Review Series, “Not Your Average Joe”. We’re learning how to live an extraordinary life by following the example of the OT character, Joseph.
 - 1. Listen to live stream @ChurchOnTheRock.org or the COTR iPhone/ Android app
 - 2. Next week we’ll talk about the upcoming election. This election is ugly. It’s stressing people out and dividing friends, family and churches. I’m going to give a pastoral perspective about the issues. I think it will really help you. It will be educational and unifying. Invite someone. We got 100 voter reg., nonpartisan educational info, voter guides in the lobby.
- B. Last week Joseph taught us about spiritual “Survival Skills”. Today Joseph will teach us about forgiving people who have done us wrong.
- C. Title: Forgiveness
- D. Purp: Provoke people to follow the example of Joseph and forgive people who wrong us.
- E. Spiritual Truth: Everybody wins when we forgive people who hurt us.

II. Joseph forgave his brothers

- A. Context: Genesis 50:15–21 (ESV) When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “It may be that Joseph will **hate us and pay us back** for all the evil that we did to him.” 16 So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, “Your father gave this command before he died: 17 ‘Say to Joseph, “Please **forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.**”...**Joseph wept** when they spoke to him. 18 His brothers...said, “Behold, we are your servants.” 19 But Joseph said to them, “Do not fear, for **am I in the place of God?** 20...you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good...that many people should be kept alive... 21...**I will provide for you and your little ones.**” **Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.**
- 1. Joseph’s brothers thought they were going to be punished in the name of justice but instead he showed kindness to them. How could Joseph love the people who sold him into slavery and made his life a living hell for 13 years? Because there is power released by forgiveness. Forgiveness has an inherent power to heal the one who was hurt and power to restore the one who did wrong.

2. This is the 1st mention of forgiveness in the Bible. Def. forgive: “to lift up.” The idea is that Joseph is asked to “lift,” “remove,” “take away” the wrong that his brothers did to him. The act of forgiveness “wipes away the evil,” or “takes the guilt from us.” Forgiveness “excuses payment for a debt owed. T= “Please let go the sin of your brothers” or “Let your brothers go free from that bad thing they did.” When we forgive people we send away/ lift up/ turn over their wrongful deeds to God and wipe away what they did, // chalkboard. In forgiving others, we imitate God’s forgiveness for our sin.
3. Joseph’s question, “am I in the place of God”, means God, not him, was entitled to execute punishment in the name of justice.

III. Jesus and forgiveness

- A. Matthew 18:21–35 (NLT) Then Peter came to him and asked, “Lord, **how often should I forgive someone who sins against me?** Seven times?” 22 “No, not seven times,” Jesus replied, “**but seventy times seven!**”
 1. Traditional Rabbinic teaching was that an offended person needed to forgive a brother only three times. Peter was generous at 7. When Jesus said “70 times 7” He meant that no limits should be set. Then He told a parable.
- B. Verse 23 “Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be **compared** to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. 24 In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. 25 **He couldn’t pay**, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt. 26 “But the man...begged him, ‘Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.’ 27 Then **his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.** 28 “But when the man left the king, he went to a **fellow servant** who owed him a few thousand dollars. He...demanded instant payment. 29 “His fellow servant...begged for a little more time...30 But his creditor wouldn’t wait. He had the man...put in prison until the debt could be paid in full...32 Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, ‘You evil servant! **I forgave you** that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. 33 Shouldn’t you have **mercy** on your fellow servant, **just as I had mercy on you?**’ 34 Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt. 35 “**That’s what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart.**”
- C. Lessons on forgiveness
 1. All of us need God’s forgiveness for our sin. Romans 6:23 (NCV) **The payment for sin is death...** i.e. physical death and eternal death/ separation from God in hell. Our sin against God is the biggest problem we have, // foreclosure on a mortgage. Sin might not seem like a big deal on earth now but it will on Judgment Day.
 - a This is why Christians constantly refer to Jesus death on the cross. Jesus took the punishment for our sin on the cross. We can’t earn forgiveness but God wants to remove our sins/ lift them off us. Psalm 103:12 (ESV) as far as the

east is from the west, so far does he **remove our transgressions from us.**

Isaiah 53:6 (NCV)...each of us has gone his own way. But **the LORD has put on him the punishment for all the evil we have done.**

- b** We need forgiveness and God wants to forgive us if we ask Him.
- 2. God expects me to forgive people the same way He has forgiven me. Jesus said this in the Lord's prayer. Matthew 6:9–15 (NCV) So when you pray, you should pray like this: 'Our Father in heaven...12 **Forgive us** for our sins (*ESV debts*), **just as** we have forgiven those who sinned against us. 13...Amen. 14 Yes, **if you forgive others** for their sins, your Father in heaven will also forgive you for your sins. 15 **But if you don't forgive others**, your Father in heaven will not forgive your sins.
 - a** God will forgive me in the same way I forgive others. If I choose not to forgive and hold a grudge, seek revenge or punish, God won't forgive me and my fellowship with God will be broken, // kink water hose stopping the flow of His Presence in my life. Unforgiveness will affect my relationship with God.
 - b** We've all been really hurt and forgiveness doesn't seem fair. (I want mercy/ forgiveness for me; justice for you.) Unforgiveness is a form of punishment, i.e. an attempt to secure justice. But when we don't forgive we hurt ourselves. We become bitter because we close off the flow of God's grace in our life.
 - c** This doesn't mean justice is forgotten. This is why we have a "justice system".
- 3. There is limit to how often I must forgive and no wrong too great to forgive, eg 70x7
 - a** Context: on the cross Luke 23:34 (NCV) Jesus said, "**Father, forgive them**, because they don't know what they are doing....God's love sent Jesus to earth to forgive the very people who killed Him...and He forgave them. If Jesus could forgive people who tortured Him, I can forgive the people who hurt me.
- 4. How do I forgive?
 - a** Forgiveness starts in prayer (remember the Lord's prayer) in which we "lift up" the offense to God. Tell God who hurt you and you forgive them, i.e. we turn justice and punishment over to God. We tell God we are "removing/ taking away/ wiping away" the wrong they did to us/ the debt they owe us.
 - b** When we see them we tell them we forgive them whether they say they're sorry or not.
- 5. What do I do if I still feel hurt and anger after forgiving? How do I forgive when I can't forget? (The act of forgiving is easy; not picking up the offense again is hard.)
 - a** Matthew 5:44 (NCV) But I say to you, **love your enemies. Pray for those who hurt you.** Romans 12:14 (NCV) Wish good for those who harm you; **wish them well and do not curse them.** (1) Pray/ speak a blessing over those who hurt you. (2) Treat people with kindness who did evil to me. It's hard to hate someone I'm praying for and doing nice things for.
 - b** (3) // hurt and offenses are like playing catch. When my memories, situations or satan puts the hurt back in my face (// throwing a ball) throw it up to God instead of back and forth, reliving it in my mind. Illustrate ball to play catch.

IV. Conclusion: Forgiveness has power to heal the wounds of the past by helping me and the person who hurt me.

- A. Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2BITY-3Mp4>
- B. Forgiveness can change both our lives for the better. Joseph forgave his brothers; Jesus forgave those who crucified Him and this mom forgave the man who murdered her son. If they forgave so can I.

V. Response

- A. Prayer: Is there someone you need to forgive? Are you having a hard time forgiving someone? Is God showing you to do more than pray for someone, i.e. be good to them.
- B. Souls: Do you need God's forgiveness for your sin? We can pray and ask Him now.
- C. *** *Logos Bible Software and library, Bible Knowledge Commentary, UBS Handbook: Genesis, The New American Commentary, A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Genesis, Harper's Bible Dictionary, Easton's Bible Dictionary were used to prepare this message.*