

A Godly Heart Forgives #3

Text : **Luke 17: 1-10**

S#1.

A. This is our third of four lessons on the subject of forgiveness.

1. We are devoting multiple lessons to forgiveness because it is vital to salvation.
2. Though our eternal salvation is directly linked to the receiving and the giving of forgiveness it is misunderstood by many people, even Christians.
3. Thus, we are seeking to deepen our understanding of the subject.

S#2.

B. Thus far we have observed that :

1. We must be willing to forgive an infinite number of times.
 - a. Not just 7 times, but 70 times 7
 - b. The same person, for the same sin, on the same day
2. Forgiveness is given as a grace.
 - a. It is never earned or deserved
 - b. We also were given forgiveness as a grace while undeserving.
3. God forgives much more than we will ever be called on to forgive.
4. Our salvation depends upon our forgiving others ... **“from the heart.”**
5. Christians have more to be thankful for than those who are outside of Christ.
6. Being forgiven must change the way we think about other people.
 - a. We must be merciful and gracious.
 - b. The change requires a conscious decision to be different.
 - c. The decision must be followed by consistent action. (*implementation isn't easy*)
 - d. Forgiveness is the fruit of love. (*but is not an emotion*)
- * When they need forgiveness most is when you feel the least warm and fuzzy.*
7. Forgiveness is contrary to man's nature SO it doesn't just happen.

S#3.

C. With this lesson we want to more clearly define the concept of forgiveness.

1. We've seen **why** we must forgive.
2. Before we can understand **how** we can forgive we must understand the concept.
3. Forgiveness is one of those things about which there are many **misconceptions**.
 - a. What does it really mean to forgive someone ?
 - b. To determine the positive we will first eliminate the negative.

S#4.

D. Misconceptions cause many people to think they don't have the ability to forgive.
“You don't realize what she did to me. My life is ruined.”

I. Some things that are NOT forgiveness.**S#5.****A. Forgiveness is NOT to approve of or to accept the wrong that was done. #6.**

1. One must not make the offender feel as if he has done nothing wrong. (*It's just me.*)
2. Jesus forgave the woman caught in adultery, but told her “**go and sin no more.**”

B. Forgiveness is NOT excusing the wrong.**S#7.**

1. “*It really wasn't a big deal.*” (*That is apologizing for being offended.*)
2. Make the offender face the gravity of his transgression.

C. Forgiving is NOT justifying the offense.**S#8.**

1. In forgiving one should not make excuses for the offender. (*You didn't mean it.*)
2. One who does not face his offense for what it is will not repent before God.

D. Forgiving is NOT pardoning the wrong. (*must deal with sin guilt*, etc)**S#9.**

1. Since your forgiveness doesn't remove sin, the offender must get right with God.
2. If he has broken the law, forgive him ... then turn the offender in.

E. Forgiving is NOT reconciliation. (*It is a goal but not automatic.*)**S#10.**

1. If someone has hurt you, you must forgive him, you don't have to invite him to your house for supper or to be his buddy.
2. If the babysitter molested your child, you must be willing to forgive her, but you don't have to let her around your child again or recommend her to others.

** Forgiveness is not about restoring warm fuzzy feelings.*

F. Forgiving is NOT repressing our feelings.**S#11.**

1. God tells us not to be confrontational, but He never tells us to repress our feelings.
2. Forgiving is not pretending it never happened.
 - a. “*I don't want to talk about it.*” (*You must talk about it*, “**Go to him alone.**”)
 - b. “**Be angry, and yet do not sin ...**” **Eph. 4: 26**

G. Forgiving is NOT forgetting the offense.**S#12**

1. “*I can forgive, but I can never forget.*” Don't feel guilty because you remember.
 - a. Forgetting is not a voluntary action. *Memories can't be erased; they can be managed.*
 - b. We can choose not to dwell on an offense, even though we cannot forget it.

2. The bible never tells the Christian that he must forget.
 - a. One can and often does remember the offense and still forgive it.
 - b. When the subject comes up in future, remember it was forgiven and act according.
3. God forgives, **but ..** He is omniscient, meaning that God knows everything.

- a. If God does not forget our sins, what does this verse mean ?

S#13.

Jer. 31: 34 – They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the Lord, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

- b. This is not to say that God no longer has knowledge of forgiven sin, but that he will no longer charge the guilt of those sin to the sinner.
- c. Words of scripture are not always to be taken in their most literal sense.

- 1) **Isa. 1: 18** – Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; ...S#14.
- 2) **Isa. 38: 17** – For You have cast all my sins behind Your back
- 3) **Psa. 103: 12** – Just as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

- d. You can’t even forget your own transgressions.

Remember Paul : I Tim. 1: 13 ... formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor

H. Forgiving is NOT pretending you were not hurt by the offense.

S#15.

1. Those who love are not easily offended by those they love. (*love covers a ...*)
I Cor. 13: 5 – Love ... is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong
2. No matter how much you love someone, they can hurt you.
3. The old saying, “*Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.*” is NOT TRUE.
- * 4. We can choose how we react or respond to the hurt.
5. Offenders should be made to know that they have caused hurt.

I. Forgiving is NOT optional.

S#16.

1. Forgiveness is a clear command. (*Unambiguous*)

Col. 3: 13 – bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

S#17.

2. Not forgiving others has terminal consequences, unforgiving people are lost.

Matt. 6: 15 – But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

S#18.

3. **Gal. 6: 7** – ... God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

II. What is real forgiveness.**S#19.****A. Webster defines forgiveness as :****S#20.**

1. : to stop feeling anger (someone who has done something wrong) : to stop blaming
2. : to stop requiring payment : payment of money that is owed

B. Strong's Enhanced Lexicon defines the two words translated as "forgive" : S#21.**1. Matt. 18 , Mark 11**

Forgive : *aphiemi* : **1** to send away. 1A to bid going away or depart. 1A1 of a husband divorcing his wife. 1B to send forth, yield up, to expire. 1C to let go, let alone, let be. 1c1 to disregard. 1c2 to leave, not to discuss now, (a topic).

2. Eph 4: 32 , Col.3:13

Forgive : *charizomai* : **1** to do something pleasant or agreeable (to one), to do a favour to, gratify. 1A to show one's self gracious, kind, benevolent. 1B to grant forgiveness, to pardon. 1C to give graciously, give freely, bestow.

C. Theological definitions by bible teachers :**S#22.**

1. Forgiveness is a choice to let go of our resentment towards others and to start loving them as Christ does.
2. Forgiveness is the act of setting someone free from an obligation to you that is the result of a wrong done against you.

D. There are three elements in forgiveness.**S#23.**

1. There is an injury, **i.e.**, one person wrongs another.
2. A debt results from that injury; in the mind of the offended party he is owed.
3. The perceived debt is canceled; a moral choice is made to forgive.

III. Some observations about forgiveness.**S#24.****S#25.****A. Though we remain fully aware of the evil that was done to us, we still forgive.**

1. We must face the hurt while choosing to cancel the debt. (*Not wait to stop hurting*)
 - a. Not hide or cover it up.
 - b. Not repress it or try to act as if it didn't happen.
2. *"Sometime we find it difficult, even painful, to kiss revenge goodbye."*
3. Forgiveness is a choice, **NOT** an emotion. (*Do it in spite of what you feel.*)
4. It is only when I choose to forgive that I am showing the mercy that was shown to me.

B. 1 Cor. 13: 5 ... Forgiveness is choosing to keep no record of wrongs. S#26.

1. If I keep a record I give resentment room to grow in my life. S#27.

ILL – muslims on Mindanao plant a bamboo plant to remind them of a perceived wrong done to them. (live up to 150 yrs) The bamboo reminds their child.

2. The attitude is, “*I know what you did to me and I’m going to get even.*”
3. Many marriages are destroyed by kept records.
 - a. Folks think the couple is doing fine, but there is a seemingly sudden blowup.
 - b. It wasn’t really sudden; the list of silent frustrations had been growing.

*** One of the most important lessons a couple can learn is how to quarrel properly.**

S#28.

C. Forgiveness is refusing to punish even though the offender clearly deserves it.

1. Offenses will happen, love eliminates the fear of retaliation. S#29.

1 John 4: 18 – There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

2. You are NOT God so you never have a right to retaliate for ANYTHING. S#30.

Rom. 12: 19 – Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.

*** Payback is rebellion against God.**

D. Real forgiveness is not telling what they did to you. S#31.

1. God does not tell what you did until the judgment. (*as far as east to west*) S#32.

Luke 12:2 – Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. (*Imagine a movie telling all you did.*)

2. God wants every privacy consideration shown to try to affect reconciliation. S#33.

Matt. 18: 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. (ESV)

3. You may feel the world should know how he hurt you.
 - a. You feel all your friends would support you if they knew what he did to you.
 - b. “*What goes around comes around; he hurt me so he deserves to be hurt.*”
 - c. Remember Joseph; he told no one what his brothers did to him. (**Gen. 45**)
4. When the offender’s name comes up, never speak ill of him regarding the forgiven.

E. Forgiveness is being merciful. S#34.

1. You did not deserve forgiveness, but God gave it to you as a merciful grace.
2. Those who need forgiveness the most deserve it the least. **Be gracious !**
3. To be merciful is to withhold justice and give grace instead.

F. Forgiveness is an inner condition. It comes “from the heart.”

S#35.

1. The Christian way is to desire good for those who desire evil against us.

S#36.

Luke 6: 27-28 But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, **28** bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

2. When the offender’s name comes up, what do you think ?

- a. Are you concerned that they be in a right relationship with God ?

- b. Do you pray blessing upon them ? **THIS IS HOW YOU KNOW IF YOU FORGAVE.**

CONCLUSION :

A. True forgiveness is not easy.

S#37.

1. It runs contrary to our fleshly nature. *By nature we want justice.*
2. It runs contrary to our culture. *Our neighbors expect us to stick up for ourselves.*

B. We respond in the same way the Apostles did :

S#38.

1. **Luke 17: 5** – The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”
2. Our response should be the same ... **Lord help me to trust you to handle it.**
3. When every fiber of our body cries out for us to :
 - a. Retaliate in kind.
 - b. Speak condemning words to others.
 - c. To keep remembering the pain and hold a grudge.
 - d. God is crying out for us to turn it over to Him, to practice love and to forgive.

C. Next lesson we’ll look at some practical ways to do that.

INVITATION :

A. Jesus is our perfect example.

S#39.

1. of love
2. of forgiving grace

B. He is eager to forgive you.

S#40.

Lesson Text :**Luke 17: 1-10**

1 He said to His disciples, "It is inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but woe to him through whom they come! **2** It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he would cause one of these little ones to stumble. **3** Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. **4** And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

5 The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" **6** And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and be planted in the sea'; and it would obey you. **7** Which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come immediately and sit down to eat'? **8** But will he not say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat, and *properly* clothe yourself and serve me while I eat and drink; and afterward you may eat and drink'? **9** He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he? **10** So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done *only* that which we ought to have done.' "