

Forgiveness

- Webster: forgive-to give up resentment against or the desire to punish; pardon (an offense or offender)
- One of, if not **the**, most difficult of acts a person can carry out must be the act of forgiveness. The saying “to err is human, to forgive divine” is true because it’s impossible for **God** to err and quite difficult for humans to forgive. And many have a hard time with forgiving even those close to them. And to **forget** an act, to the point of not holding a grudge, that’s been done against us is definitely, near to if not totally, impossible. But as **Christians**, we need to be careful how we use such past acts when dealing with present situations where it would be so easy to recall them. “Well you know, as I can recall, ten years ago you...” Because **God** knows everything and it would be impossible for **Him** to forget our past sins, thankfully, **He** will never throw them in our faces once they’ve been covered by the (I) blood of **His** (II) **Son**.

Heb 8:12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember (*Gk.3415- recollect*) no more.

- How do we handle recalling the past in order to make it apply to a present situation? In a negative approach or in a positive way? (I) Sometimes things happen for a reason as was the case with **Joseph** and his brothers. They thought to do him harm when he was a younger man but in the end to him it was all part of **God’s** providence to bring his family to **Egypt** to save them from the famine in **Palestine**. (II)

Gen 50:19 And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for *am* I in the place of God? 20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive.

“Am I in God’s stead?” that I should take the law into my own hands, and take revenge. God has already judged them, and moreover turned their sinful deed into a blessing. He assures them of his brotherly kindness toward them.” (I) Albert Barnes

Gen 45:5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

- **Joseph’s** brothers did repent of the evil they did to him and he then in turn forgave them (I). But not (II) before he understood their sincerity.

Gen 42:19 If ye *be* true *men*, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses: 20 But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so. (I) 21 And they said one to another, We *are* verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.(I) 22 And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required.(I) 23 And they knew not that Joseph understood *them*; for he spake unto them by an interpreter. 24 And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes. (I)

- Is it then **Christ-like** to test the sincerity of others? **Paul** (II) did.

2Co 8:8 I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to **prove** the **sincerity** (*Gk.1103- genuine*) of your love. 9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.

- Not **commanding** the **Corinthians** to give, **Paul** relies on their own charitable nature by making a comparison to the giving of others. He appealed to their conscience to spur them on to greater service through their contributing. (I) But is that something that applies to (II) forgiveness?

Luk 17:3 **Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent** (*Gk.3340- to think differently or afterwards, that is, reconsider [morally to feel compunction/ regret]*), **forgive** (*Gk.863- to send forth: -lay aside*) **him.** 4 **And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.**

- **Jesus** said nothing in this passage about testing their sincerity but to just keep on forgiving a repentant brother. (I) That being the case **He** did say also that we are to (I)be “**wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.**” (*Mat 10:16*) (I) (I)

Mat 18:15 **Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.**

- We are to go to a brother or sister who errs against us only when we know it to be true. (I) Sometimes, if we’re not careful, we may give in to false information if a brother hasn’t erred against us in our presence. That in turn can cause a whole different set of problems where we might lose his favor. (II)

Pro 18:13 He that answereth a matter before he heareth *it*, *it is* folly and shame unto him.

- How many times have I put my proverbial foot in my mouth? (I) We are to get our stories straight before we go in, guns-a-blazing, thinking we have all the information to prosecute an unsuspecting but **possibly** innocent brother. (I)

1Co 13:4 Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envies not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, **thinketh no evil;**

- Seems the first thing always thought in any situation is tainted with negativity. (I) Even when a person’s sincerity is obviously lacking (*and has been understood (I) to be so “by their fruit”- Mat 7:20*) we are never to think beyond what we know to be absolutely true concerning them before approaching them. (I) We are not **God** so we cannot know a person’s heart, whether good or bad, or what they were thinking or going through the moment they committed an error against us. Maybe they did it without knowing they were doing it. What if they knew they were sinning against you? Would they have continued? Notice how our **Lord** handled forgiveness. (II)

Luk 23:34 Then said Jesus, **Father, forgive** (*Gk.863 [lay it aside]*) **them; for they know** (*Gk.1492- understand*) **not what they do.** And they parted His raiment, and cast lots.

- Jesus didn't take a personal grudge with Him to the grave. (I) He didn't allow another's sin against Him to control Him. So were those who crucified Jesus forgiven then at His request to His Father that day? Or was there something personal they had to do first? (II)

Act 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. (I) 37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?

- Obviously there was something those, who agreed to Jesus' crucifixion, had to do in order to receive His offer of forgiveness. (I)

Act 2:40 And with many other words did he (*Peter*) testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. 41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

- Jesus had (*has*) a forgiving spirit about Him. It's the same spirit we are to have. He was willing to forgive them that day on Calvary even **before** they were humbled to repent or were ever willing to do so. When it comes to forgiving a brother or sister, even if they are not willing to admit their fault, we are to let it go, turn it over to God and move on. (I) Why be disgruntled and ruin your joy on account of another's actions? And vengeance isn't the answer for a Christian either. (II)

Rom 12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. (I) 20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him (I); if he thirst, give him (I) drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

- We are to step aside and relinquish (I) any right we think we might have and turn it over to God to take care of executing truly righteous judgment. Paul was the enemy of the church but God saw something in him. Could it be that He also sees something in those who do us wrong? (I) But even if God has given up on them, we are still not to take things personally because ultimately they are not sinning against us, they are sinning against God. Notice what David said when he had the opportunity (II) to kill Saul.

1Sa 24:10 Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and *some* bade *me* kill thee: but *mine eye* spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he *is* the LORD'S anointed.

- The saying "fight fire with fire" doesn't apply to the Christian. (I) That would be considered getting even. It should rather be "fight fire with water". That's how we "overcome evil (*fire*) with good (*water*)". (II)

1Pe 3:8 Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous: (I) 9 **Not rendering evil for evil**, or railing for railing: **but contrariwise blessing**; knowing that **ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing**.

- How can we inherit a blessing if all we do is take into our own hands what is rightfully God's business? (I) When we treat others as we would want to be treated, even when they are spiteful toward us, we begin to take on the divine nature of Christ. (II)

Luk 6:31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. (I)

Mat 5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father Who is in (I) heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. (I)

- Jesus had the power while on earth to forgive but something was necessary before even He could (II) do so.

Mar 2:2 And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive *them*, no, not so much as about the door: and He (*Jesus*) preached the word unto them. (I) 3 And they come unto Him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. (I) 4 And when they could not come nigh unto Him for the press, they uncovered the roof where He was: and when they had broken *it* up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. (I) 5 When Jesus saw their faith, He said unto the sick of the palsy, **Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.** (I) 6 But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, 7 Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? (I) 8 And immediately when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, He said unto them, **Why reason ye these things in your hearts?** (I) 9 **Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?** (I) (I) 10 **But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins,** (He saith to the sick of the (I) palsy,) 11 **I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.** 12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

- Jesus remarked about their faith. (I) We understand that faith is a synecdoche which includes repentance depending on the context. In this instance He knew their hearts in that they were willing to go to the extreme they did in order to get their friend healed by Jesus. If they didn't believe He could heal this paralyzed man then they wouldn't have gone to such a bother. If they wouldn't have sought His healing touch He would not have restored this man's health. Jesus confirmed His ability to forgive, which they understood that that was only something God could do, by performing the miracle of healing. That in turn verified His Deity. (I) So what if a brother refuses to repent of something done to spite me? Am I supposed to forgive him anyway? Am I required to do something God cannot and will not do? Would Jesus have healed the paralyzed man if he hadn't sought Him out to be healed? Getting back to Jesus' attitude toward forgiveness. Since He had such a forgiving spirit, we also are to have that attitude of **wanting** to forgive those who've done spite toward us and to **anticipate** their repentance. **Forgiveness should always be an anticipatory act on our part that can only be made complete through repentance on another's part.** God wants to forgive everyone, but He honors the choices that we all make, sometime sooner or later on our part, as to whether to accept it. Notice Paul's comment. (I)

1Ti 1:12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, Who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; 13 Who **was before** a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but **I obtained mercy**, because I did *it ignorantly* in unbelief.

- Ignorance seems to be the biggest reason most people sin. (I) Sometimes it's self-imposed ignorance but for the most part people can become educated to understand when their actions constitute a lawless deed. (II)

Isa 55:8 For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways My ways, saith the LORD. (I) 9 For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.

- But we can (I) all learn His ways! Just as Israel was given the opportunity to learn about Him through (II) diligence.

Deu 11:18 Therefore shall ye lay up these My words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. (I) 19 And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

- When we understand God's forgiving nature by retaining His word in our hearts (I) we become more and more able and ready to forgive. But sadly there is at least one (I) attitude that will prevent anyone from forgiving or being forgiven. Pride. (II)

Rom 1:28 And even as they **did not like to retain** God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, (I) fornication, (I) wickedness, (I) covetousness, (I) maliciousness; (I) full of envy, (I) murder, (I) debate, (I) deceit, (I) malignity; (I) whisperers (*Gk.5588- a secret calumniator [slanderer]*), 30 (I) Backbiters (*Gk.2637- talkative against, that is, a slanderer*), (I) haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,...

- This is speaking to Christians who feel their parents aren't to be over them once they leave home and have families of their own. Your parents will always be their parents and as long as they don't ask you to do something against God's word you are to do for them what they ask. A whisperer is someone that talks about others behind closed doors whereas a backbiter outright defames them in public. (I) When we don't have a forgiving spirit it usually confirms a lack of retaining God in our knowledge. We seem to put so much worthless nonsense in our minds but for the most part those things only fuel the fire of intolerance toward others, brethren included. When the world sanctions a get-even attitude through entertainment and the mainstream media, when it promotes a self-centered pride and we are so in tune to such lies by constantly filling our thoughts with it, (I) we then become more worldly and are less likely to forgive. (II)

Gal 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. (I) 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; (I) but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. (I)

- Jesus is ever ready, as the angels were that day to rescue Him from the cross, (I) to forgive anyone who seeks it.

Mat 26:53 **Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give (Gk.3936- to be at hand [or ready]) Me more than twelve legions of angels? (I)**

- Right now, even before we all take another (I) breath, He's anticipating (II) forgiving you.

Rev 3:20 **Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if anyone hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to you, and will sup with you, and you with Me. (alt. mine)**

- Can you feel the knocking on your heart's door? (I) (II)

#1. Do you hear

Luk 11:28 Jesus said, "... **blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.**"

#2. Do you believe

Eph 1:13 In Whom ye also *trusted*, **after** that ye **heard** the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in Whom also **after** that ye **believed**, ye were **sealed** with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Who is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.

#3. Will you repent

Mat 9:13 "**... I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**"

Rom 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

#4. Will you acknowledge Christ as the Son of God

Mat 10:32 "**Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father Who is in heaven.**"

#5. Will you have your sins washed away

Act 2:37 Now when they **heard this**, they were pricked in their heart (*because they believed what they heard*), and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, **what shall we do?**

Act 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, "**Repent**, and **be baptized** every one of you **in the name of Jesus Christ** (*acknowledging His "Sonship"*) **for** the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (*the "earnest of our inheritance"*)".

#6. Once you've done all these things, will you remain faithful

1Co 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye **steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord**, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

#7. Will you resolve to keep growing

Php 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may **abound yet more and more in knowledge** and *in* all judgment; 10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may **be sincere** and without offence till the day of Christ; 11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

- The life of a **Christian** is not to be considered an easy one. It is to be considered a commitment to faithfulness, love and duty to **God** and to **His** people. But after all is said and done, after the last breath on earth is taken and all labor ceases, an inheritance in

eternal bliss awaits the faithful saint. How about you? If you're not a **Christian**, if you haven't taken these steps to secure your salvation, won't you come?

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