

Theme: Relationships are ruptured when we sin against one another, but as those forgiven all of our sins through Christ, we must forgive one another so that the relationship can be restored.

I. The Value of Teaching In A Series

- A. As most know, I generally teach in longer series
- B. This gives time to develop an idea many ways
- C. This gives time to link ideas together into a whole
- D. This is especially helpful in Relationships
 - 1. 1st - we must find our needs met in God - or else we manipulate
 - 2. 2nd - we use words as weapons to manipulate
 - 3. 3rd - because we sin and do not trust God, we slip on masks of hypocrisy - with God and others
- E. Today - we must learn to forgive, for we all sin
- F. How do we respond when someone sins? Why is this important?

II. Spotting the Need for Forgiveness

- A. Paul assumes others will sin - and we need to forgive
Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:13
 - 1. Paul does not say 'if these things happen' - they will
 - 2. In this fallen world, we sin against one another
 - 3. This is why relationships can be so difficult - sin
- B. The problem - grievances

Bear with each other and forgive whatever **grievances** you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:13

- 1. Sin produces grievances - a line is crossed
 - 2. These are ruptures in the relationship
 - 3. If these are not addressed properly, they destroy the relationship
- C. The path out - forgiveness
Bear with each other and **forgive** whatever grievances you may have against one another. **Forgive** as the Lord **forgave** you. Colossians 3:13
- 1. Bear with, forgive - three times!
 - 2. Sin is the first relationship - unforgiveness will destroy the relationship

III. Avoiding the Relationship of Unforgiveness

- A. The consistent command to forgive others
Bear with each other and **forgive** whatever grievances you may have against one another. **Forgive** as the Lord **forgave** you. Colossians 3:13
 - 1. Again, notice Paul says it three time - not an option!
 - 2. Consistent biblical teaching - forgive
Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. Luke 11:4

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32

A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense. Proverbs 19:11

B. The measure of forgiveness - as Christ forgives us

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. **Forgive as the Lord forgave you.** Colossians 3:13

1. The amount of forgiveness - unlimited

So watch yourselves. "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. ⁴ **If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him.**"

⁵ The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"

⁶ He replied, "If you have **faith as small as a mustard seed**, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you. Luke 17:3-6

- a. Seven times in a day - still forgive!
- b. Increase our faith - No, faith is not the issue - obey!
- c. We can forgive - we don't WANT to forgive

2. The quality of forgiveness - free and full

- a. Christ does not begrudgingly forgive - He does so freely
- b. Christ does not forgive but shun - he restores us to favor

3. Consequences for sin are not to be relational

- a. There can be consequences for sin (David)
- b. But the consequences do not remove relationship - they work to restore it
- c. But often we penalize by removing relationship

d. This is illegitimate - try to restore relationship

C. The link with Divine forgiveness

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. Mark 11:25

Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Luke 6:37

Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. Luke 11:4

1. Jesus makes a strong link between us forgiving others and God forgiving us
2. He even teaches us to include this in our prayers
3. We have no option - forgive!

D. Why this is so important

1. Because we are God's image - and He is loving and forgiving
2. Because we are created for relationship - and unforgiveness destroys relationship
3. Because unforgiveness hurts me - it is a burden and saps life and joy

IV. Regaining Our Foothold - Forgiving Others

A. Forgiveness begins with admitting there is an offense

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:13

1. We can't forgive if there is no offense!

2. Forgiving doesn't mean we don't work through pain
 3. Relational sins create real grief - we are not Stoics!
 4. But we do not wallow in grief - we take it to God
 5. Don't wallow in grief - receive healing from Christ
- B. Realize forgiveness is an act of the will - not an emotion
1. Emotions can take a while to process
 2. Forgiveness is our decision to not hold on to the pain and grudge
 3. Forgiveness does not mean we do not remember
 4. Forgiveness does not mean we do not have hurt
 5. Forgiveness does release the other person and begin restoring the relationship
- C. Meditate on the gospel - and speak it to others
- Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. **Forgive as the Lord forgave you.** Colossians 3:13
1. Note that forgiveness is rooted in the Gospel
 2. To forgive we must meditate on the Gospel
 3. When we see our own sin and God's forgiveness - we can forgive others
 4. When we speak the Gospel to others, we must forgive
 5. Corrie Ten Boom and the guard story
 - a. Her family had hidden Jews from Nazis

- b. They were arrested and sent to Ravensbruck concentration camp
 - c. Her sister Betsie died in camp on December 16, 1944
 - d. Corrie was released due to a clerical error or else she would have been killed
 - e. After the war she spoke in Germany to proclaim forgiveness - amazing forgiveness on her part!
 - f. Read her story of encounter in 1947
6. When we see and speak the Gospel - we forgive¹
 7. When we forgive, we experience God's love & forgiveness afresh

V. Applying the Word - Coming To the Table of Forgiveness

- A. At this Table we forgiveness is proclaimed & received
- B. At this Table we are called to forgive as we are forgiven

Slipping Over the Line (When Trust Is Broken)

Colossians 3:13
 May 18, 2014, 2014
 Communion
 Psalm 79:9//Luke 11:4

Help us, O God our Savior, for the glory of your name; deliver us and forgive our sins for your name's sake - and empower us to forgive everyone who sins against us. Ps 79:9, Luke 11:4

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. **Forgive as the Lord forgave you.** Colossians 3:13

“It was in a church in Munich that I saw him—a balding, heavysset man in a gray overcoat, a brown felt hat clutched between his hands. People were filing out of the basement room where I had just spoken, moving along the rows of wooden chairs to the door at the rear. It was 1947 and I had come from Holland to defeated Germany with the message that God forgives.

“It was the truth they needed most to hear in that bitter, bombed-out land, and I gave them my favorite mental picture. Maybe because the sea is never far from a Hollander’s mind, I liked to think that that’s where forgiven sins were thrown. ‘When we confess our sins,’ I said, ‘God casts them into the deepest ocean, gone forever. ...’

“The solemn faces stared back at me, not quite daring to believe. There were never questions after a talk in Germany in 1947. People stood up in silence, in silence collected their wraps, in silence left the room.

“And that’s when I saw him, working his way forward against the others. One moment I saw the overcoat and the brown hat; the next, a blue uniform and a visored cap with its skull and crossbones. It came back with a rush: the huge room with its harsh overhead lights; the pathetic pile of dresses and shoes in the center of the floor; the shame of walking naked past this man. I could see my sister’s frail form ahead of me, ribs sharp beneath the parchment skin. Betsie, how thin you were!

This man had been a guard at Ravensbruck concentration camp where we were sent!

“Now he was in front of me, hand thrust out: ‘A fine message, Fräulein! How good it is to know that, as you say, all our sins are at the bottom of the sea!’

“And I, who had spoken so glibly of forgiveness, fumbled in my pocketbook rather than take that hand. He would not remember me, of course—how could he remember one prisoner among those thousands of women?

“But I remembered him and the leather crop swinging from his belt. I was face-to-face with one of my captors and my blood seemed to freeze.

“‘You mentioned Ravensbruck in your talk,’ he was saying, ‘I was a guard there.’ No, he did not remember me.

“‘But since that time,’ he went on, ‘I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from your lips as well. Fräulein,’ again the hand came out—‘will you forgive me?’

“And I stood there—I whose sins had again and again to be forgiven—and could not forgive. Betsie had died in that place—could he erase her slow terrible death simply for the asking?

“It could not have been many seconds that he stood there—hand held out—but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do.

“For I had to do it—I knew that. The message that God forgives has a prior condition: that we forgive those who have injured us. ‘If you do not forgive men their trespasses,’ Jesus says, ‘neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.’

“I knew it not only as a commandment of God, but as a daily experience. Since the end of the war I had had a home in Holland for victims of Nazi brutality. Those who were able to forgive their former enemies were able also to return to the outside world and rebuild their lives, no matter what the physical scars. Those who nursed their bitterness remained invalids. It was as simple and as horrible as that.

“And still I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is not an emotion—I knew that too. Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. ‘... Help!’ I prayed silently. ‘I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling.’

“And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes.

“‘I forgive you, brother!’ I cried. ‘With all my heart!’

“For a long moment we grasped each other’s hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God’s love so intensely, as I did then”