

Forgiveness: the changing of hearts and minds of the world

Introduction:

The body of Christ, the church, find ourselves standing at the threshold of change across the world. There is a great awakening taking place where the light of truth is being shed upon many lies and iniquities. Many people in the world are finding themselves in a place of realization. They realize where they have been lied to, and they realize where they have been wrong. One of the worst things that can happen is for these people to receive judgment and condemnation in the name of Christ, instead of God's love, forgiveness, and deliverance. We who walk in the Kingdom of God on earth, with his presence of the holy spirit in us, are to show God's love by displaying his forgiveness and empathy in order for deliverance and acceptance to take place. This is revival, this is the awakening. We must look past our selfish and self-centered tendencies, for this to take place and for God to use us in the lives of others. This all starts with atonement, forgiveness, and submission to our God and his son Jesus Christ. We cannot offer to the world what we are not receiving ourselves. Today, let's explore the responsibility that we have been given in being the hands and feet of Jesus Christ on this earth, and changing the hearts and minds of the world.

God's forgiveness versus man's forgiveness:

- Forgiveness by God recognizes by love the source of the offense and makes a way for deliverance. God's forgiveness has a purpose and a direction.
- Forgiveness by man is incomplete and self-serving.
- We are to forgive, as he has forgiven us.

Ephesians 4: 25-32

25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. 26 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil. 28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. 29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

The overview of forgiveness:

- Who are we forgiving? All those who come against us.
- What are we forgiving? Trauma, insult, betrayal, attacks and persecution.
- When are we to forgive? We should always be forgiving.

Matthew 18: 21-22

21 Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” 22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

- Where should we be forgiving others? We should forgive in the moment and at the place of the action and do it immediately.
- How should we forgive others? As Christ does. From a place of understanding and love, but with deliverance has the goal.
- Why should we forgive? We do it out of love for our God and for others. We do it to undo the works of the devil. We do it to avoid bondage and create deliverance through repentance.

What causes unforgiveness:

- Pride: We hold a value of self, that the offense has violated. We identify with a self-perceived, constructed idea (good or bad), of ourselves that the offense has threatened. Or our poor view of ourselves is confirmed and drives us deeper into that identity. Either way the position we identify with is founded in pride. Pride is not just a boastful, arrogant position. It is the self-serving, self-centered view of the world. To give an example, one feels led to speak or act by God, but doesn't because we are afraid of what will happen to us or how we will be treated. This is also pride, to put oneself image above how God sees us.

Numbers 12: 3

3 Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth.

Moses called himself the humblest man in the world. This was Moses speaking on God's behalf And from God's perspective. Moses wrote the book of Numbers! It took humility for Moses to write that about himself, not being concerned about how it would be perceived. Moses was simply telling the truth as God commanded.

- Identity: those who identify with the world, and see themselves as part of the world, are in fact identifying themselves with sin and corruption. What we identify ourselves with, is what we spend our time on and what we worship.

The results of unforgiveness:

- A victim mentality which leads to being offended by many things. This is pride!
- Suffering will always result in offense **to oneself or to others.**
- Anger, aggression, neglect, attack, insult, betrayal, manipulation, intimidation, domination, (these last three are iniquity, rebellion, and witchcraft). All of these will cause offense.
- Not all will choose to receive forgiveness and choose rather to continue in offending. We must leave those chains that were slung at us, where they lay and walk away.

Matthew 18: 15-17

If Your Brother Sins Against You

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. 16 But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

- To not forgive is to pick up those chains and carry them around our necks.

Matthew 18: 21-35

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

21 Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” 22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

23 “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. 24 When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ 27 And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. 28 But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ 29 So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ 30 He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. 31 When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. 32 Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ 34 And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. 35 So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

God's forgiveness and the results:

- Faith and identity with and in Jesus Christ, fosters and creates forgiveness. Our view as Christians changes from our "keyhole" perspective of the world through selfish motives, to the entire world view of Christ. It is an abundance mentality instead of a scarcity mentality.

Proverbs 19: 11

**11 Good sense makes one slow to anger,
and it is his glory to overlook an offense.**

- We are either sin focused, or Christ focused. Jesus was called "the man of sorrows". He cried for the world out of love because he recognized and understood the suffering that sin causes. Suffering manifests itself in countless ways.

Isaiah 53: 3

**3 He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.**

- Jesus, while hanging on the cross asked the father to forgive them because they didn't know what they were doing. He knew that his unimaginable treatment and death were being caused by the suffering of these people, due to sin and corruption.

Luke 23: 34

34 And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments.

- Even though he forgave the actions God **did not excuse the sin**. He instead, sacrificed his son and **made a way** to personal atonement through the atonement of Jesus. We must approach everyone in the same view as Christ.
- Their offense isn't towards us, but towards God. We must **first show them his love** through **his forgiveness**, and that opens the way to **tell them of his love and forgiveness** if they atone.
- Forgiving is breaking free from the chains that Satan will place on our hearts. The longer we are in the bonds of hate, resentment, spite, anger, pride and iniquity, the darker the dungeon becomes.
- Forgiveness is a gift that can only be offered and received. It cannot be compelled.
- The true act of godly forgiveness in the midst of the offense, is so contrasting to the worldview and expectations that it will foster repentance that leads to deliverance.

How to walk in God's forgiveness:

- Our faith is created and received in and by our reliance on our identity in him.

John 15: 18

The Hatred of the World

18 “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.

- That is the act of laying our sins upon the altar and is necessary to enter the intimate presence of God. This is exemplified in the temple of the Old Testament. Atonement is holiness, to be in the intimate presence of God.

Isaiah 59: 2

**2 but your iniquities have made a separation
between you and your God,
and your sins have hidden his face from you
so that he does not hear.**

- When we atone, we are exchanging our identity that gets offended, with the identity of Christ who loves and sees the suffering of the world. We put on the “new man”, with new eyes, and a new heart. God's kind of forgiveness isn't possible without personal atonement.

Ephesians 4:21-24

21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

- Personal atonement is only possible through the atonement that Jesus provided “once and for all”.

Hebrews 9:12-15

12 he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

15 Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

- Begin in prayer, taking hold with the Holy Spirit.
- Build an altar of “blessing stones”, giving Thanksgiving and praise.
- Recognize your sin and lay it as a sacrifice upon the altar.
- Enter into his intimate presence and atonement.
- **Be still and listen to him** and receive **his perspective**.