

Practical Forgiveness

Kathryn Seib on Saturday evening, July 24th, 2021

Goal - talk about the practical aspects of Forgiveness – Benefits and logistics

Peak into the behind the scenes of what was going on in my mind

- Some thoughts stirring in the back of my mind
- In May Al was preaching about the Lord's prayer and the week he preached on forgive us our debtors as we forgive those who trespass against us – surprisingly impacted me
- A few of us had a conversation the other night about being real and authentic people who are open minded and good listeners and surprisingly one of the points that got brought out was how important

3 stories

- Being stuck
- Corrie Ten Boom
- Melinda

1. Basis for Forgiveness - Forgiveness as a foundation

- Starting at the foot of the cross
- Foundational issue
 - Even before we receive the free gift of salvation it starts with an understanding and awareness of sin and our need for forgiveness
 - We have missed the mark – therefore we need to be forgiven
 - Because of what Jesus did we can be reconciled to God so if being reconciled is being brought back then forgiveness is the bridge on which we travel toward that reconciliation.
 - which comes from the Latin reconciliāre, meaning “to make good again” or “to repair.”
 - **1 John 1:9** - If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous, so that He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
 - Transition from God forgives us to we forgive others
 - Scriptural references
 - **Col 3:13** - bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so must you do also
 - **Matt 6:14-15** - For if you forgive other people for their [j]offenses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15But if you do not forgive other

people, then your Father will not forgive your [k]offenses. (this is given in the same context as the Lord's Prayer)

- **Mark 11:25-26** - And whenever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your trespasses. (This is in the last week of Jesus earthly life)
- One of the very last things Jesus did before he gave up his spirit was to "forgive them, for they know not what they do" (**Luke 23:34**)
- In John it talks about Jesus breathing on them to receive the Holy Spirit and then immediately talking about forgiveness
- So basically, not only is forgiveness key to our Christian lives it is commanded of us over and over again

2. Forgiveness as a key

- Unlocking the past
- My story
- 1 image with the 2 different types of music
- Reconciliation and unity – one of the things we heard at Equip – Unity
- Reconciliation – this is a hard one for me. Choose to forgive and be united
- Offences and forgiveness – one of the main ways to get us distracted
- Key to freeing ourselves – eating a poison apple and wishing the other one to die

3. Practical aspect of forgiveness

- **Is not a feeling** – Feelings follow truth and our choices – if we waited until we felt like forgiving that might never happen
- **Is a choice / an act of the will**
- Story of Corrie ten Boom
 - <https://www.guideposts.org/better-living/positive-living/guideposts-classics-corrie-ten-boom-forgiveness>
 - 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.
- “Jesus, help me!” 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!”
- And that’s not the end
 - You would have thought that, having forgiven the Nazi guard, this would have been child’s play. It wasn’t. For weeks I seethed inside. But at last I asked God again to work His miracle in me. And again, it happened: first the cold-blooded decision, then the flood of joy and peace.
 - I had forgiven my friends; I was restored to my Father.
 - “Up in that church tower,” he said, nodding out the window, “is a bell which is rung by pulling on a rope. But you know what? After the sexton lets go of the rope, the bell keeps on swinging. First ding then dong. Slower and slower until there’s a final dong and it stops.
 - “I believe the same thing is true of forgiveness. When we forgive someone, we take our hand off the rope. But if we’ve been tugging at our grievances for a long time, we mustn’t be surprised if the old angry thoughts keep coming for a while. They’re just the ding-dongs of the old bell slowing down.”
 - Summarize – It is a choice - Forgiveness is an act of the will and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart.
 - **Daily and over the little things**
 - Story of Melinda
 - Be intentional – stop pulling on the rope
 - What happens when there is a reoccurrence? - Layers – image of an onion
 - **Can’t do it in our own strength**

- Like Corrie choosing to stretch out her hand and asking God to give her the strength
- It is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world's healing hinges, but on His. When He tells us to love our enemies, He gives, along with the command, the love itself.
- 1 Peter 1:3 - for His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

Conclusion

- Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of resentment and the handcuffs of hatred. It is a power that breaks the chains of bitterness and the shackles of selfishness.
- To forgive is to set a prisoner free and to discover the prisoner was you.
- Thoughts on reconciliation - Forgive but don't trust
- Go to a time of prayer