

FORGIVENESS

Matt 18:21,22

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Questions often ask about forgiveness that need answering
 1. What is forgiveness?
 2. Can we have forgiveness?
 3. Can we forgive and not forget?
 4. Can we forgive and hold the offender on probation?
 5. Can forgiveness be possible without repentance?
- B. We must try to find God's will concerning forgiveness

DISCUSSION:

I. FORGIVENESS IS AN ATTITUDE OF HEART WHICH RESTORES THE OFFENDER TO THE FORMER STATE AND AFFECTIONS OF THE OFFENDED ONE

- A. To forgive is to bury the matter and treat it as though it had not been committed.
 1. Forgiveness is man's deepest need and highest achievement
 2. Never does the human soul appear so strong as when it foregoes revenge and dares to forgive
- B. Forgiveness is not delayed judgment
 1. Cannot hold the offender on probation
 2. This is burying the hatchet with the handle out
 3. Forgiveness must be from the heart Matt.18:35
- C. Cannot forgive and not try to forget
 1. When Christ forgives he forgets Heb 10:17
 2. Cannot forgive and constantly remind of sin
- D. Can we forgive if the person does not repent?
 1. Christ said if he repents forgive him Lk 17:3,4
 2. Necessary steps to take in effecting repentance Matt 18:15-17
 3. If he does not repent we must still have a kind and tender feeling toward a brother, as well as enemies
 - a. Love your enemies Matt 5:44
 - b. Must not take vengeance Rom 12:19-21
- E. God stands ready to forgive Psalms 86:5
 1. Yet His forgiveness has always been based on repentance and submission to His will 2Pet 3:9
 2. Notice it is to all who "call upon" God
 3. Paul was sent to "turn" people from darkness to light and remember that repentance involves turning from one thing to another Matt 21:28,29

II. LOOK AT PETER'S QUESTION AND CHRIST'S ANSWER

- A. How oft shall my brother sin against me & I forgive him
 1. Peter thought he was being generous in seven times
 2. Did Christ mean exactly 490 times
 3. Christ is showing a continuous process
- B. Forgiving must continue as long as people sin Lk 17:3,4

III. PARABLE CONCERNING FORGIVENESS Matt 18:23-35

- A. Servant owed king 10,00 talents (10-15 million dollars)
 1. Was forgiven by the king
 2. Found a fellow servant owed him 100 pence (16-18 \$) and refused to forgive him
- B. King rescinded his favor and delivered the servant to the tormentors till he should pay all
- C. Christ gave the spiritual application of the story
 1. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also to you
 2. If you don't forgive from the heart your brother's trespasses
 3. Forgiveness from God is dependent on forgiving Matt 6:14,15
 4. He who never forgives breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass
- D. When we see the enormity of our sins and are grateful for God's forgiveness Rom 5:8
 1. Sins of our fellowman toward us seems so small
 2. Such a comparison makes it easier to forgive

IV. MANY OTHER SCRIPTURES TEACH US TO FORGIVE

- A. Example of Christ on the cross Lk 23:34 "Father forgive them for they know not what they do"
- B. Church at Colosse was taught forgiveness Col 3:13 "Forbearing one another and forgiving one another if any man have a quarrel against any even as Christ forgave so also do ye"
- C. The golden rule requires it Matt 7:12
- D. Love calls for forgiveness
 1. Love suffereth long 1Cor 13:4
 2. Charity shall cover a multitude of sins 1Pet 4:8;
- E. Seeking peace requires forgiveness Rom 14:19
 1. Follow after the things which make for peace
 2. Forgiving makes for peace and pleasantness
- F. Example of the early Christians Acts 7:60 (Stephen) "Lord lay not this sin to their charge."

CONCLUSION:

- A. A person who has a forgiving spirit does not carry his feelings around on his shoulder nor revenge in his heart.
- B. The forgiving and merciful heart makes allowances: for TEMPER, TRAINING, NATIONALITY, EDUCATION or the lack of it, and endeavors to view offenders as generously as possible
- C. If it be possible as much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men Rom.12:18 this requires forgiveness
- D. Richard Baxter, in his old age, said: "I see that good men are not so good as I once thought they were, and fond that few men are as bad as their enemies thought."
- E. God has completed his part in making our forgiveness possible, now we must do our part 1Jhn 1:9
- F. If we don't forgive men, God will not forgive us Matt 6:14,15