



Exploring the Kingdom of God in Matthew Forgiveness in the Kingdom!

January 21, 2018

Text: Matthew 6:14-15

WHY IS FORGIVENESS SO HARD?

Because the nature of forgiveness means we must confront areas that are extremely arduous on the soul. Forgiveness requires carrying our cross in our **hearts**.

Here are a few thoughts that explain further:

1. Because we've been hurt or **offended**.
 - Offense is a serious thing. To be offended is to be emotionally **injured**. Someone or something has done damage to one's sense of worth, idea of truth, or pride.
 - One reason offense is difficult is because we often feel blocked or hindered...like someone has attempted to cause us to fall. Most people resent that deeply.
2. Because we are **angry**.
 - The Latin word for anger means "to choke strangle, or vex."
 - Anger is widely known to make us irrational, stubborn, and unwise.
 - Wrath (or outbursts of anger) is included among the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21. Scripture also declares:

"He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated." Pro 14:17

"He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly." Pro 14:29

"A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife." Pro 15:18

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." Pro 16:32

"A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both. Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?" Pro 27:3-4

"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:" Eph 4:26

3. Because the root of unforgiveness is **pride**.
 - God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. (Jam 4:6) Peter says it this way: *"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." 1Pe 5:5*
 - Pride says, "What you did to me is more than I can forgive. I did not deserve it."
 - Humility says, "I deserve eternal death for my sins. Who am I to hold your sin against you?"
 - We lose a measure of sanctifying grace when we operate in pride. Forgiveness is one of the chief expressions of the love of God. It is very difficult to walk like Jesus where pride exists.

FORGIVENESS IN THE KINGDOM

Mat 6:14-15 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

1. Our text is a frightening text at first glance. Why? Because any verse wherein God does not forgive us is frightening!
2. We don't believe these verses mean that if a believer struggles with unforgiveness at some point that they **immediately** lose their salvation. This would be true for any sin that resides in our hearts: lust, deceit, wrath, etc. Thankfully, we are saved by grace through faith alone (Eph 2:8) and are continually being sanctified (1 Thes 4:3).
3. However, we must be careful not to attempt to remove the sting from these Words; they were given to us as they are for a reason.
4. **One application** of these verses, in our view, is a description of the overall heart condition of the saved and the unsaved. Those who are truly saved recognize that they must forgive, and with God's help, they do! Those who are not truly saved remain callous and cold in their hearts toward an offender, refusing to forgive and often reveling in the keeping of a grudge. Can a heart that refuses to forgive be a regenerate heart?
5. In other words, a forgiving heart is one mark of the new **creature** (2 Cor 5:17).
6. So then a true believer who detects unforgiveness quickly repents and forgives. They know that unforgiveness is out of step with the great love of God in Christ wherewith He saved us! A Kingdom citizen is IN the Kingdom precisely because he/she has been forgiven!
7. "Professing believers" who steadfastly refuse to forgive over time should rightly examine themselves, question their **confession**, and "make their calling and election sure."
8. **Another application** of our Text is this: unforgiveness damages our **relationship** (our intimacy) with God. Much like the husband whose prayers are hindered when he mistreats his wife (1 Pet 3:7), our life in God is hindered when we refuse to forgive as we have been forgiven.

9. Precious friends, unforgiveness is sinful. It is unkind, unloving, and plain old ungodly...

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Eph 4:32

APPLICATIONS FOR EDIFICATION (BUILDING UP) AND ENCOURAGEMENT

(ROM 14:19; EPH 4:9; 1 THES 5:11; JUDE 1:20)

1. So here is the obvious question: "Is there anyone you have been unwilling or "unable" to forgive?
2. Please receive the strength of God in Christ and forgive them! Remember that our LORD, against whom we have committed innumerable sins, has forgiven us. He shed His own blood to purchase this redemption. Praise His great Name!
3. Are you willing to go beyond "heart only" forgiveness and actually release and love them tangibly through action? If so, start this week! :)
4. Spend some personal and family time praying that we'd be a more forgiving people. Please pray the same towards our church.