

Hurt and Forgiveness

Have you ever been really hurt by someone? We are, each of us, vulnerable to the actions of others.

We know that no one's meant to live alone, and yet, the stark alternative is that we have to give our lives, our happiness, and our security to other people.

We often devise a good rationale as to why we shouldn't forgive someone for a hurt. We almost feel justified. And we use phrases like:

- "They don't deserve forgiveness."
- "What they've done doesn't deserve my time or effort."

When we forgive we feel like we're letting someone else off the hook, or we feel like we're setting a guilty captive free, actually, what we might find is that we're freeing ourselves.

Jesus wants to free us from those moments in our past that we really don't like to think about. In our society, if someone does wrong, justice is served only when they've done their time and they've paid the price. But Jesus tends to look at it through a different lens. Let's look at forgiveness from a story in the Bible:

Matthew

23 Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. **24** As he began the settlement, a man who owed him 10,000 bags of gold was brought to him. **25** Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

This was an unpayable debt. Our sin is like that debt—so large that we can never repay it.

26 At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' **27** The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

Instead of justice (which is an act of getting what we deserve), the servant's master gave him mercy (which is an act of not getting what you deserve). In the servant's case, he got mercy, which he didn't deserve instead of justice, which he did deserve. And he received grace, which is also giving you what you don't deserve. That's exactly what Jesus has done for us.

28 But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. **29** His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.' **30** But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. **31** When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

32 Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.' **33** Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' **34** In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

God expects us to forgive others just as He has forgiven us.

35 This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.

The brilliant thing about the gospel is that we *can* forgive, because those who have been forgiven much, love much.

If we wait until we feel like forgiving, it will never happen, because, let's be honest, we'll never actually feel like forgiving those individuals that hurt us.

Your Takeaway

Forgiving from the heart means getting honest, facing pain, and making a choice to let it go. You can pray to God, "I choose to forgive _____ (name the person)." Then tell God, honestly, what you are forgiving and how the person who wronged you made you feel. Then let God do the rest.

Forgiveness is like releasing a captive and then realizing that YOU were that captive.