

“Forgiveness”
Mark 11:25-26
(Preached at Trinity, October 16, 2013)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Verses 22-24** Jesus taught His disciples regarding the relationship between prayer and faith. He makes the amazing promise in **Verse 24**
Mark 11:24 NAU - "Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be *granted* you."
2. I pointed out that there are certain requirements for prayer taught here
 - a. We must pray – the prayerless man cannot expect to receive from God
James 4:2 NAS - "You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask."
 - b. We must pray in faith
James 1:6-7 NAS - "But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord"
 - c. We must pray from a sincere heart – not from hypocrisy.
"all things for which you pray" implies all thing for which your *ought* to pray.
There are some things that are not worthy of prayer; things that reveal the lusts of our own heart.
James 4:3 NAS - "You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures."
3. I also pointed out last time the essential element in the Gospel of John
John 14:13-14 NAS - "And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ "If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do *it*."
This means to pray in a manner consistent with His Divine nature and in accordance with His will and for His glory.
4. In **Verses 25-26** Jesus gives us another essential requirement. We must have a forgiving heart. **Mark 11:25 NAU** - "Whenever you stand praying, forgive"
5. Then Jesus makes a stirring declaration:
Mark 11:26 NAU - "*But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.*"
6. This is consistent with our Lord's statement in the Sermon on the Mount
Matthew 6:14-15 NAU - "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."

7. Does this mean that our salvation is based upon the degree to which we are forgiving?
No. And yes.
- A. On one hand we are saved by grace through faith alone. We are saved by the merits of Christ alone. His atoning work upon the cross is alone sufficient.
- B. On the other hand our Lord's words seem clear:
"But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions."
8. How are we to understand this extreme statement?

I. Jesus told a parable in **Matthew 18:21-35**

Verse 24 – This was an incredible sum. A talent was valued at no less than 6000 denarii. A denarius was equivalent to an average days pay. It would take an average laborer a thousand weeks just to earn one talent. This person owed 10 thousand talents. Even if the laborer were able to save all of the money he earned he could not be expected to earn more than 10 talents in a lifetime.

This servant owed 10,000 talents – it would take over 1000 lifetimes.

The point is that it was a debt too large to ever be satisfied.

Sin is an infinite sum

A single sin demands an infinite punishment

Verse 25 – the king came to make claim upon the debt.

1. This will be the striking reality on the Day of Judgment. All will be called to give account.
2. This poor debtor cried out for mercy. He found himself in an impossible situation owing a debt he could not pay.
This is precisely our condition. We owe a debt that we shall never be able to satisfy. After an eternity in hell the debt will still be unpaid.
3. The king showed him mercy and forgave his debt in full.
Matthew 18:27 NAS - "And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt."
4. This should have resulted in great joy and gratitude from the slave. He had been shown great mercy. This should have resulted in a heart of grace and mercy towards others—as one slave to another.

Verse 28 describes the unthinkable

1. Instead of showing mercy to the slave that owed him he demanded full payment.
2. We should take notice of the debt. It was enormously smaller than the debt he had been forgiven of - it amounted to 1/600,000th of the debt he had been forgiven.
3. Sinners forgiven by God have been forgiven an infinite debt.

Verses 32-34 describe the response of the king when it was made known this great inequity - "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him."

1. The servant demonstrated by his actions that he knew nothing of the enormity of the debt of which he had been forgiven.
2. He knew nothing of the mercy. He should have been required to pay it in full. Instead he received compassion and mercy.
3. Those with a hard unforgiving heart demonstrate that they know nothing of the gospel of Christ.

II. So how are we to apply our Lord's words?

Mark 11:26 NAU - "*But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.*"

- A. Those with a hard unforgiving heart demonstrate that they know nothing of the gospel of Christ. Our forgiveness of others is evidence that we have been forgiven.
1. We are justified by faith alone apart from any merit from our works. But while we are not saved by what we do, including how consistent we are in forgiving others, the Gospel presupposes several things of those coming to Christ. While we don't have to be theologians to be saved there are some things that we must know at least to some degree.
 - a. We must recognize the holiness of God and the justness of His Law.
 - b. We must recognize that we are guilty before God. We must see the enormity of our sin—we have a debt we cannot pay.
 - c. We must recognize that the only solution to our sin and guilt is Christ alone through His death upon the cross.
 2. With the knowledge of these things we come before God by faith, confessing our sin and trusting in the infinite merits of Christ.
 3. The Christian understands that all of this is by grace. We deserve the eternal punishment of hell where God's justice will be displayed and His holiness vindicated. Our hearts are stirred and we sing out like John Newton, "Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me." Or Isaac Watts, "Would He devote that sacred head for such a worm as I"
 4. To experience such love and mercy from God humbles us. It enables us to look upon others with pity. We are all sinners in need of God's grace. It enables us to forgive others when we are offended.
 - a. We are able to cry out with the words of our Lord, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."
 - b. Or Stephen, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."
 - c. Or Paul, **2 Timothy 4:16 NAS** - "At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them."
Romans 12:20 NAS - "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink"
 5. Lloyd-Jones – "I say to the glory of God and in utter humility, that whenever I see myself before God and realize even something of what my blessed Lord has done for me, I am ready to forgive anybody anything. I cannot withhold it, I do not even want to withhold it" (*Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, Vol. 2, pages 75-76).
 6. An unforgiving heart towards others demonstrates a complete ignorance of the nature of God's forgiveness towards us. We prove our forgiveness by forgiving others.

- B. Jesus is not teaching us that a lack of forgiveness will reverse God's pardon towards us
1. It does teach a great warning to those who fail to understand the nature of the Gospel
 - a. The Gospel warns against pride and presumption
 - b. It warns against bitterness & hatred
 2. The one who shows no mercy shall find no mercy because they know nothing of mercy.
James 2:13 NAU - "For judgment *will be* merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment."
 3. Those who have no mercy curse themselves every time they pray the Lord's prayer
Matthew 6:12 NAU - "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

Conclusion:

1. Regeneration changes our heart. The Holy Spirit indwells us and begins to create within us a heart of love.
Galatians 5:22 - "The fruit of the Spirit is love . . ."
2. Love changes everything.
1 Corinthians 13:5 NAU - "love does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*,"
3. Love causes us to love even our enemies.
Matthew 5:43-46 NAU - "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous. ⁴⁶ "For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?"