

Wise Forgiveness of Grace

Sunday, February 20, 2011

Life, life, life. What a blessing and for some, what a curse. True life in Christ is never a curse, it's never a burden but a joy complete with no true complaints. But then there are others, others in our lives that cause us pain, stress, discomfort and pure problems all the way around.

A wise man once told me that the good news is we get to work with people and the bad news is... we get to work with people.

Seriously? It has both sides of the coin hemmed up.

Life would be SIMPLE if we did not have others probing around in our lives, getting in our way on the freeway, allowing their loud children to interrupt our meals, standing in lines at the DMV. If we could "remove" other people from our lives they would be somewhat simple right?

Well, it might seem like a dream to you, but I can honestly say that if you think hard enough, you will see that there are relationships in your life that are a complete blessing, and then there are those that you had rather not talk about. Or at least you wish these people were not around.

Be honest, there are myriads of different personalities, interests and odors that keep us guessing and sometimes digressing when it comes to people. The seriousness of the matter for the church is that we have a misunderstanding of how we are to relate to each other in many situations.

For example. When you think of the word UNITY, what comes to mind? For most, it's the easy answer of "always getting along..." or maybe it means that we are all on the "same page" and that we "like each other." Well, this is NOT the case. Unity is really defined as a TOTALITY OF ONENESS WITH NOTHING WANTING or a COMPLETE LACKING NOTHING AS A WHOLE.

Do you feel that way? See, what if what you believe means that what the bible teaches is wrong? What if your brother sitting next to you thinks one thing about who Christ is and you think another but you never say anything. That is NOT UNITY, that is division and worse than that, it is highly dangerous.

OK, here's another, some people consider the word LOVE and think "perfect tenderness" but isn't it loving to discipline a child and isn't it loving to rebuke one in danger? Often times we consider terms like LOVE and UNITY in a way that causes us to actually deny what God has called us to do.

How can we LOVE and ENDURE each other if there is never an opportunity to express love toward an unloving person. How can we endure when everything is perfect?

People cause problems with other people. People are going to hurt you, laugh at you, smirk at you, hate you, try to kill you, rob you, beat you, ignore you, make fun of you. People are cruel and at some time in your life, you might have been cruel to someone else or at a minimum, had a cruel thought toward them in your heart.

Chances are if you were to finish this statement, it will tell you a little about yourself. The

last person in the WORLD that I would want to see today is.....

Who is that person? What did they say or do? When you come to church do you see people in the congregation and HOPE that they don't come up and talk to you? Are you here now and upset because you EXPECTED someone else to do something that they failed to do? Do you have feelings toward someone right now that if they knew about it, it would hurt or anger them? Who is the one person that could never call you again and it would make your life better?

Well, let's focus on an issue that hits right to the heart of this today and THIS will be a primer for the next four Sundays as we venture into the proverbs as it relates to relationships with people.

One of the most amazing things about so many professing Christians is their MISUNDERSTANDING of FORGIVENESS and how to properly appropriate it in their lives. And I'll be completely FRANK with us all today, one who does not forgive is in danger, grave danger.

TRUE LOVE is the love that God has given to His children. His power to love in spite of the difficulty. The true lover of God is the true lover of His children, no matter how "bad" they might be toward us at times.

This does not mean that we allow an offender to ESCAPE the CONSEQUENCES of sin. WE are to allow the law to rightly impose justice where God allows. But if we continue to hold that person in bondage to US, it is because we feel that their sin against us is greater than our sin against God. So in turn, our lives become imprisoned and suffers greatly.

FIRST WE SEE THE PROBLEM WITH UNFORGIVENESS

Here's how:

The person who does not forgive is BLIND to their own sins.

The person who does not forgive is MOCKING the gospel.

The person who does not forgive is REBELLIOUS toward God.

The person who does not forgive is BLIND.

The person who does not forgive ENVYs others.

The person who does not forgive is FOOLISH instead of WISE.

The person who does not forgive is an EXAMPLE of SIN Led Living.

The person who does not forgive has NO PEACE.

Proverbs 14:30 (ESV)

30 A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot.

No Peace because

They cannot WORSHIP - You praise me with your lips but your hearts are far from me. God is LOVE and His children love HIM with their hearts,

minds, souls and strength(s) :).

They cannot LOVE - and those that love God love the children of God, they love the brothers. LOVE is opposed to unforgiveness, love exists inside of letting the hurt GO.

They cannot PRAY - God does not HEAR the prayers of one who harbors bitterness in their heart. God does not listen to the prayers of the wicked and he who hates his brother has no life in him.

Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save,
or his ear dull, that it cannot hear;
but your iniquities have made a separation
between you and your God,
and your sins have hidden his face from you
so that he does not hear.
(Isaiah 59:1,2 ESV)

The person who does not forgive is IMPRISONED in BITTERNESS.

Proverbs 14:30 (ESV)

30 A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot.

NOW WE SEE THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

The PROVERBS teaches the foundations of what the Apostles confirmed. We are to put on STEADFAST LOVE.

Proverbs 3:3 (ESV)

3 Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart.

BECAUSE God has given STEADFAST LOVE TOWARD US

Proverbs 16:6 (ESV)

6 By steadfast love and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the LORD one turns away from evil.

The STEADFAST LOVE of God is a never ending and eternal love.

An act, that does NOT REMOVE God's ANGER toward sin.

So, FORGIVENESS is not putting our anger toward SIN aside, our anger toward sin must remain (fear of the Lord is hatred of evil) however, FORGIVENESS requires our anger toward the PERSON to be released.

The FAITHFULNESS of God is a FOR SURE, even when we FAIL.

2 Timothy.

2 Timothy 2:11-13 (ESV)

11 The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him;

12 if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us;

13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself.

Romans 3:3 (ESV)

3 What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God?

We are TO REMAIN FAITHFUL to forgive because God has forgiven us.

Matthew 6:12 (ESV)

12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Mark 11:25 (ESV)

25 And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

The LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS of God has ATONED for SIN.

Wow. We see the result of God's faithfulness and love, that He forgives sinners who DO NOT DESERVE IT.

Those in our lives that DO NOT DESERVE forgiveness are to get it period.

The LORDS TABLE is a picture of this atonement through the blood and body of Jesus Christ. Paul FORBIDS partaking of the elements if one has a grievance toward another. For Jesus who said, forgive them... expects that His spirit in us enables us to do just the same.

The FEAR OF THE LORD turns us from EVIL

In this SERMON, that evil is bitter un-forgiveness. We hold others in bondage for the very thing that God has forgiven us for doing and thinking and saying.

The reason this happens is that we have FORGOTTEN we are NOT VESSELS of destruction or wrath but objects of MERCY. We are called out by God's grace and granted repentance.

OFTEN times, we fail to forgive because we are not DEEP in love with the word and therefore the GRACE needed to forgive is not there.

Colossians 2:13 (ESV)

13 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,

DEAD is dead. We were ONCE dead and have been set FREE by grace.

Colossians 3:1-17 (ESV)

1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming.

7 In these you too once walked, when you were living in them.
8 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.
9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices
10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.
11 Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.
12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,
13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.
14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.
16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Luke 23:34 (ESV)

34 And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments.

1 Peter 2:23 (ESV)

23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

FINALLY WE SEE THE PROCESS OF FORGIVENESS

REMEMBER

What God has done for and toward you and let this be the tone that sings in your heart, not "hurt" and bitterness.

THINK

When think about the hurt another has caused you, pray and praise God for being God and that He has forgiven you!

PRAY

Pray for those who persecute you and bless your enemies.

So pray blessings in the lives of those who hurt you, pray God will make them prosper and be strong in Him.

Proverbs 24:17 (ESV)

17 Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles,

Proverbs 17:5 (ESV)

5 Whoever mocks the poor insults his Maker; he who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished.

Luke 6:28 (ESV)

28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

Matthew 5:44 (ESV)

44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

SERVE

Serve the one who offends you, give them peace and affection and lay your life down for them. Just as Exodus says to help your enemy when his ox or mule runs off, so do it for those who offend and sin against you.

REPEAT

How often?

Luke 17:2-4 (ESV)

2 It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin.

3 Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him,

4 and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."

FORGIVENESS means that you no longer expect the person to **RETURN** and do the same thing over and when he does, it is like the **FIRST TIME**.

This seems so hard for us but it is possible in Christ. We must **STOP** talking about our offense and get over to the cross of Jesus Christ and His faithful **LOVE** that covers a multitude of sins.

If the **LOVE** of a **HOLY AND JUST GOD** can cover your sins, can it not cover the sins of your brother?

THANKSGIVING

Give thanks in the Lord **ALWAYS** in **ALL THINGS**. Thank Him for the **SIN** against **YOU** so that you might be **HUMBLE** and reminded of how much He has **FORGIVEN YOU** and then **GIVES** you an opportunity to **FORGIVE** others.

We are unable to **LIVE** according to the **WORD** of God if we all just "get along" and the wisdom of God is **SEEN** in our forgiveness toward each other.