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Morning Service

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Teaching Elder

What is Biblical Forgiveness?

Discipline is a means to an end. The end is restoration and forgiveness. God was the first forgiver and through this forgiveness He restored our relationship with Him. Likewise, we are to practice forgiveness in our relationships, or better yet, conduct ourselves where will not need to ask for it. True Biblical forgiveness can be hard and painful, but it is required.

Biblical forgiveness is not simply a hollow "I'm sorry..." nor is it someone just ignoring an offense against them. Forgiveness is a process of recognizing, confessing, and repenting of sins committed against others. Forgiveness is Covenantal, and requires work from both parties to restore the relationship. The first step in this restoration is to identify the sin that has occurred so that it may be repented against.

Our Saviour in Life, Word, and Sacrifice shows us Biblical forgiveness. He instructs us to pray to be forgiven like we forgive others, He tells us the hazards of causing others to stumble. We can cause others by not lovingly pointing out their sins so that they may be restored or we ourselves can stumble by harboring resentment against others, sin being repaid with sin.

As you listen to the sermon, ask yourself the following questions; Can you ask to be forgiven as you forgive others? Do you not point out offenses from others in order to seem more Holy? Do you tell others of an offense you've received instead of going to the offender in private?

Notes

Biblical forgiveness is a proactive operation. Sins against us and others must be identified and dealt with as they occur. Our sins are particular therefore our repentance and forgiveness must be as well. Simply saying "I am sorry..." and "I forgive you..." is not enough. Unidentified sin is unmortified sin. If your friend tells a lie about you, what help is it to him if you just ignore it? What if your friend is in need of help? Did you help by letting it go or telling others how badly you were treated? Be careful not to react to sin with more sin.

Biblical Forgiveness is exacting and purposeful;

- It meets a need
- It has a cost to both parties
- It is specific and conditional
- It requires repentance and restitution of the specific sins
- It requires a specific promise of forgiveness
- It establishes a covenant

The dangers of not forgiving correctly or at all are;

- Bitterness of harboring anger
- Danger of becoming self righteous
- We are judged, and forgiven, by the standards we use.
- Prayers can be ignored when sin is being harbored.

Scripture References

Matthew 18:1-35 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (2) And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, (3) and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. (4) "Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (5) "And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; (6) but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. (7) "Woe to the world because of *its* stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes! (8) "If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the eternal fire. (9) "If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be cast into the fiery hell. (10) "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven. (11) ["For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.] (12) "What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying? (13) "If it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray. (14) "So it is not *the* will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish. (15) "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. (16) "But if he does not listen *to you*, take one or two more with you, so that **BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.** (17) "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. (18) "Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. (19) "Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. (20) "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst." (21) Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" (22) Jesus *said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. (23) "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. (24) "When he had begun to settle *them*, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. (25) "But since he did not have *the means* to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. (26) "So the slave fell *to the ground* and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.' (27) "And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. (28) "But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and *began to choke him*, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.' (29) "So his fellow slave fell *to the ground* and *began to plead with him*, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will

repay you.' (30) "But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. (31) "So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. (32) "Then summoning him, his lord *said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. (33) 'Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' (34) "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. (35) "My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

Matthew 5:23-25 "Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, (24) leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. (25) "Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.

Numbers 5:7 then he shall confess his sins which he has committed, and he shall make restitution in full for his wrong and add to it one-fifth of it, and give *it* to him whom he has wronged.

James 5:16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Romans 7:14-21 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. (15) For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I *would* like to *do*, but I am doing the very thing I hate. (16) But if I do the very thing I do not want *to do*, I agree with the Law, *confessing* that the Law is good. (17) So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. (18) For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not. (19) For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. (20) But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. (21) I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

We are glad you have chosen to listen to this sermon and pray that it gives you strength, the want for obedience, and a desire to have God's abundant Grace mortify sin in your life. If you have any questions or comments please email chuck_ezell@yahoo.com.