



# GRACE & PEACE

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# FORGIVENESS

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## IN THIS ISSUE

<b>Perspective :</b> 	<b>FORGIVENESS</b> <hr/>	<b>1</b>
<b>Anecdote :</b> 	<b>Anecdote: 1 – FAULT BOX</b> <b>Anecdote: 2 – THE ART OF FORGIVING</b> <hr/>	<b>7</b>
<b>Outline :</b> 	<b>OUTLINE 1 : SEVEN ASPECTS OF DIVINE FORGIVENESS</b> <b>OUTLINE 2 : FORGIVENESS OF SINS</b> <hr/>	<b>8</b>
<b>Exhortation :</b> 	<b>FORGIVENESS – OUR EFFECTIVE WEAPON</b> <hr/>	<b>9</b>
<b>Study :</b> 	<b>THE LOAVES OF SHEW-BREAD</b> <hr/>	<b>12</b>
<b>Meditation</b> 	<b>FORGIVE FOR JESUS' SAKE</b> <hr/>	<b>13</b>
<b>Gospel:</b> 	<b>FORGIVEN AND FREE</b> <hr/>	<b>16</b>

# FORGIVENESS

By Nelson Thomas Mumbai

**W**e live in a polarized world. Look around and notice the animosity prevailing among various people groups and communities. Even people of similar ideologies and lifestyles find it difficult to stay together. Instead of living peacefully in harmony, they fight against each other. Often, the so-called leaders subtly promote aggression not reconciliation.

Sadly, this mindset of the society is reflected among the people of God too. An unforgiving, aggressive attitude is destroying relationships. Personal preferences and differences are shown out of proportion, leading to perpetual enmity. Many find it difficult to forgive the failures and wrongdoings of their fellow believers.

The startling fact is that even the spiritual leadership prefers to turn a blind eye to this resentment and ill-feelings found among Christians.

In the parable of the Unforgiving Servant, the Lord Jesus underlines the power of forgiveness and the consequences of an unforgiving attitude (Matthew 18: 21 – 35).

## Peter's Doubt

The immediate context of this passage is a query of Apostle Peter. It may be prompted by Christ's instructions on the local assembly discipline and the way to mend broken relationships. Peter wanted to know if it was enough to forgive the erring brother seven times unlike the three times set by the Pharisees (Matt. 18: 15, 21). The Lord's answer was surprising, "I do not say to you up to seven times,

but up to seventy times seven".

It does not mean that we should count the wrongdoings of others up to 490 times and then retaliate! Rather, there should be no limit to our love and forgiveness for one another. That is the way God loved us and forgave all our sins (Eph. 3: 17 – 19; 4:32; Col. 3:13).



To prove His point, the Lord spoke this parable of the compassionate king and the unforgiving servant. Bear in mind, the thrust of the parable is not God's

forgiveness to a sinner, but forgiveness among the children of God. Let us consider seven lessons on forgiveness from this parable.

1. Never forget the enormity of our bankruptcy and helplessness before God.
2. Never forget the riches of God's grace and compassion.
3. Failure to remember both the above truths makes one arrogant and hard.
4. God's people ought to sorrow over the unforgiving attitude and actions of a fellow believer.
5. Believers' failure to forgive their offending brethren is a serious issue.
6. An unforgiving person by his own attitude ends up in imprisonment.
7. It is not enough to receive God's forgiveness but we ought to experience it in our heart.

1. Never forget the enormity of our bankruptcy and helplessness before God.

The ten thousand talent debt to the king was a huge amount. King Solomon's annual income was 666 talents of gold (2Chro. 9:13). So, whether it was gold or silver, his debt was an unpayable amount, in spite of his claim being otherwise (Matt. 18: 21 - 26).

This precisely was even our state before God. We could never please God nor be justified by our efforts before Him, so vast and deep were our sins. Born with a sinful nature from our mother's womb, each of us were wretched sinners in and out; not only in our actions but even in attitude and imaginations (Gen. 6:5; Psa. 51:5; Rom. 3: 9 - 23). This is the poverty Christ referred to in His beatitudes,

which everyone should acknowledge before they can be saved and blessed (Matt 5:3).

A true born-again Christian will always remember his terrible past. Listen to what apostle Paul says about himself, "...I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man: but I obtained mercy..... Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief." (1Tim. 1: 13 - 15)

"I am the least of all apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle...." (1Cor. 15:9)

"I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh". "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom. 7:18a, 24)



## 2. Never forget the riches of God's grace and compassion.

It was really amazing that the king who “ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made” was moved with compassion at his helplessness. Not only was he released from imprisonment, but all his debt was also forgiven (Matt. 18: 25 – 27).

This is what God does for every

repentant sinner. On the basis of the atoning sacrifice of His Son, God the Father forgives and cleanses us from all our sins (1John 1:9). Paul says it is because of the riches of God's grace and mercy (Eph. 1: 7; 2: 7). We should never lose sight of this wonderful work of redemption and all those glorious truths connected to it.

## 3. Failure to remember both the above truths makes one arrogant and hard.

The response of the forgiven servant to his fellow servant teaches us of the danger of forgetting our past as well as God's incomparable compassion towards us.

Though a hundred denarii was not a small amount in those days, compared to the huge debt the king forgave, it was insignificant. However, the forgiven servant immediately caught him by the throat and began to choke him. Without paying any attention to his plea for mercy, the first servant put his debtor in jail (Matt. 18: 28 – 30).

This vividly depicts the attitude of a believer who forgets his own poor, wretched past and also God's gracious interventions in such situations. Such a mindset leads to a number of wrong

attitudes.

- a. Ingratitude
- b. Pride
- c. A hardened heart
- d. Thoughtlessness
- e. Lovelessness
- f. An unforgiving spirit

Notice the far-reaching consequences of a Christian's forgetfulness. The consciousness of our worthless past and the vast, unmeasured love of Christ makes one thankful and humble (cf. Luke 7: 43, 47; Rom. 2: 4).

Our failure to bear with the erring ones and relate with them kindly shows that we are not different from this unforgiving servant. Then, we too are filled with all the above-mentioned evil attitudes.



#### 4. God's people ought to sorrow over the unforgiving attitude and actions of a fellow believer.

The fellow servants of the unforgiving servant were pained at his conduct and informed the matter to the King (Matt. 18: 31).

Such should be the response of God's people towards the unkind, unloving activities of a Christian. Seeing the bitter, hardened heart of a child of God, our heart must be grieved and present

the same at the throne of grace for their enlightenment.

But alas, as mentioned earlier many prefer to keep quiet and refuse to intervene. And as a result egotism is encouraged and bitterness spreads, affecting many more, ultimately defiling the name of the Lord (cf. 1Cor. 5: 2).

#### 5. Believers' failure to forgive their offending brethren is a serious issue.

Notice his master's response to the unforgiving servant. "You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?" (Matt 18: 32 - 34).

How seriously the master looks at the merciless action of the forgiven servant! With all humility and gratitude, he should have shown kindness to his fellow servant, just as his master did for him.

In verse 35 our Lord states the main lesson, "So, My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses." (Matt. 18:35)

Without mincing any words Christ

made it very clear, the unforgiving attitude of a believer is a serious offense. God will not take it lightly; the Fathers' chastening hands will fall upon such believers.

Apostle Paul exhorts:

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." (Eph. 4:32)

"Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint one another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do." (Colo. 3:13)

Every born-again child of God is indebted to show the same love and compassion towards one another for



three reasons:

a. Reciprocating the favor we enjoyed from the Lord (Matt. 18: 32, 33).

b. Following the path of our Lord as His faithful disciple (Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60).

c. Living out a Christ-like life as He is indwelling in us (Gal. 2:20; 1John 2:6).

Notice, how much a Christian is obligated

to mercifully deal with the fallen ones (cf. 1John 4:11; Matt. 6:12; Luke 6:36).

As in the case of any sin, a believer who habitually lives with an unforgiving spirit and hostile attitude manifests deliberate rebellion or evidence of false conversion.

## 6. An unforgiving person by his own attitude ends up in imprisonment.

According to the parable the master in his anger delivered the servant to jailers until he paid all the debt (Matt. 18: 34).

Does it mean refusal to forgive will result in the loss of our salvation? Will the Lord cancel the forgiveness of our sins because we failed to forgive?

Based on other passages of the New Testament we understand that God forgives and saves us in His grace through the Lord Jesus Christ and sustains also by His grace (Titus 2: 11, 12). He delivers us from the bondage of sins once and for all and has already seated us in the heavenly places. Thus, our salvation is sure and secured (cf. John 10:28; Rom.

5:10; 8:1, 31 – 39; Eph. 1: 13; 2:6; Heb. 10:14, etc.).

However, the lesson that we can draw from here is, unforgiving believers will face the chastening hand of God. Apart from that, they would be tormented by a variety of thoughts and moods, for which they alone are responsible.

Such believers will not enjoy true Christian life and freedom in Christ. Their grievances and contentions will never stop. They will blame others and even the circumstances for all their troubles, but never realize their own role in it.

## 7. It is not enough to receive God's forgiveness but we ought to experience it in our heart.

The final lesson from this parable is, how important it is to experience and enjoy our position and privileges in Christ. Many who claim to have been born again still harbor resentment and

anger within them. It may be against themselves or someone else.

But finding pleasure in licking the old wounds is not appropriate for a one who



claims to have been regenerated and have all things become new (2Cor. 5: 17). If our Christian life does not affect our practical life, it's just a ritualistic religious life which is only a façade, without any reality.

One of the major aspects of the present work of God is the ministry of reconciliation through Jesus Christ (2Cor. 5: 18, 19). If God who has all the right to punish sinful man, chose not to impute their sin unto themselves, but declared them innocent in Christ, how

can we harbor hostility against anyone? Any believer who experiences God's wonderful work of salvation will gladly show mercy to one another.

Whether in the family, assembly, or workplace, it's very much essential to bear with people. For none of us are perfect, so we all fail in one way or another. Let us learn to forgive, forget the past, and move forward. Is it not our blessed privilege to enjoy God's forgiveness and pass on the same to others around us?



### Conclusion:

The true Christian's life is always a joyful, free, and satisfied life. He is conscious of the indwelling Holy Spirit within and hence leads an obedient, holy life. Such believers are empowered by the Spirit of God to manifest the divine qualities like love, compassion, forbearance, etc.

Do you really experience and enjoy the riches of God's mercy and grace? Can you forgive the one who hurts you, from the depth of your heart?



## FAULT BOX

Source: *Unknown*

A couple married for 15 years began having more than usual disagreements. They wanted to make their marriage work and agreed on an idea the wife had. They planned to drop a slip in a “Fault” box for one month. The boxes would provide a place to let the other know about daily irritations. The wife was diligent in her efforts and approach: “leaving the jelly



top off the jar,” “wet towels on the shower floor,” “dirty socks not in hamper,” on and on until the end of the month. After dinner, at the end of the month, they exchanged boxes. The husband reflected on what he had done wrong. Then the wife opened her box and began reading. They were all the same, the message on each slip was, “I love you!”

## THE ART OF FORGIVING

*By Roy L. Smith*

The art of forgiving is a spiritual grace every Christian should develop. Because this is so difficult to put into practice, consider the following suggestions:

- 1) Assure yourself that compared to Christ’s suffering you haven’t been seriously wronged at all.
- 2) Recall the many kind deeds that have been shown to you, perhaps even by the person who has harmed you.
- 3) List the benefits you have received from the Lord.
- 4) Thank God for blessing you with His love and forgiveness each day.
- 5) Make an honest effort to pray for the one who has injured you.
- 6) Go even further by looking for an opportunity to help him.
- 7) If the offense is especially hard to forget, try to erase the memory by thinking gracious and generous thoughts.
- 8) Finally, before you fall asleep at night, repeat slowly and thoughtfully that phrase from the Lord’s Prayer, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”



# SEVEN ASPECTS OF DIVINE FORGIVENESS

By Bro. David Manchala, Hyderabad

*Three different terms are used in the Bible to describe the FORGIVENESS OF GOD*

- A. **PARDON** is used only in the Old Testament not in the New Testament
- B. **REMISSION** is used only in the New Testament not in the Old Testament
- C. **FORGIVENESS** is used in both Testaments more than 100 times

The Word FORGIVENESS deals with our sins, which means sins are gone, REMISSION deals with the sentence of the sins, and PARDON, a royal term, it's about superior grace over inferior.

The first occurrence of FORGIVENESS is mentioned in Genesis 50:17 – Joseph forgiving his guilty brothers. Man forgiving his brothers.

The last occurrence of FORGIVENESS is mentioned in 1 John 2:12 – “Sins are forgiven by God”. Yes, God in Christ Jesus forgives guilty sinners Fully, Freely, and Frankly.

Lord Jesus preached Forgiveness on one mountain (Matthew 6:14), and He practiced it on another mountain (Luke 23:34)

*There are instances in the Bible either man forgive men or God forgives men. But we now outline 7 aspects of “Divine Forgiveness on Guilty Sinners.”*

1. God of the Forgiveness (Father) – Micah 7:18
2. Ground of the Forgiveness (Son) – Ephesians 1:7
3. Guarantee of the Forgiveness (Holy Spirit) – Hebrews 10:15-17
  - It is solely a Triune Act
4. Gospel of the Forgiveness – Luke 24:47; Acts 13:38
  - We are not told to preach the Gospel of Finance, but the Gospel of Forgiveness.
5. Gift of the Forgiveness – Acts 10:43
6. Gain of the Forgiveness – Acts 26:18; Col. 2:15
  - It's through faith only.
7. Gladness of the Forgiveness – Psalm 32:1,2

***God gives and forgives! What a wonderful God we have!***



1. The need of forgiveness – Guilt, Romans 3:23
2. The ground of forgiveness – Christ's Blood, Hebrews 9:22
3. The authority of forgiveness – God, Mark 2:7
4. The knowledge of forgiveness – through preaching, Acts 13:38
5. The condition of forgiveness – Repentance, Luke 24:47
6. The assurance of forgiveness – The word of God, 1John 2;12
7. The evidence of forgiveness – The walk, 1Thessalonians 1:4

## Exhortation: **FORGIVENESS – OUR EFFECTIVE WEAPON !**

By Bro. Tom Johns, Dallas, USA

**W**e often proudly and rightfully declare that we are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood,” as we dearly cling to the passage from 1 Peter 2:9. The fact that every Christian belonging to the ‘royal priesthood’ also comes with some inalienable demands upon our lives.

The priests are to be involved in priestly duties. The New Testament priests are to offer themselves as a ‘living sacrifice’ to God [Rom 12:1] We have heard of the stories of several missionaries who went to various hostile parts of the world and suffered greatly, and some got killed down through the centuries.

More recently, Graham Staines, the Australian Missionary, along with his two sons, Philip, and Timothy, were burnt to death in India by opposing religious fanatics in 1999. The most recent news from Manipur, India is truly heart-wrenching and troubling to us as it strikes close to our hearts.



## FORGIVENESS – OUR WEAPON

Shouldn't Christians be outraged at the atrocities committed against the children of God? In our natural mind, we ought to feel outraged, but the scriptural standards are quite different.

The scripture requires us to use forgiveness

as one of the choicest weapons of defense against the prevailing vices and trust in the mighty power of God. We are called to march to the beat of a 'different drum.' Yet, we fall easily to the fleshly urge to get even with those who mistreat us, whether from within the family of God or from outside.

## JESUS CHRIST - OUR EXAMPLE.

*“For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth, and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.”* [1 Peter 2:21-23]

Apostle Peter reminds us that we are 'called' by God with a purpose – a purpose to represent Jesus Christ while in His bodily absence on this earth. We are to follow His

steps. We are to pattern after Him. How did He conduct on this earth? Although sinless and perfect, He was reviled, suffered unjustly, He was threatened, and ultimately put to death most inhumanly.

Yet, Jesus did not revile back, suffered injustice patiently, and endured cruelty and mockery while holding back His power to annihilate them in the wink of an eye. We are challenged to pattern after Him; it requires patient endurance, not manifestations of unforgiving outbursts of retaliation.

## NOT RETURNING EVIL FOR EVIL

*“To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.”* 1 Peter 3:8-9

Again, Peter is exhorting us to behave differently to the standards of this world. Will our lives be characterized by being harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, humble, not returning evil for evil or insult for insult and more importantly giving a blessing instead?

*We often ignore these instructions and move*

*along as if these are given for 'godlier' saints and not for ordinary Christians like us. More than any other time, we need to heed Hebrews 12:19 & 21.*

*“Never take revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink ... Do not overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.”*

God commands us to march to the beat of this drum! This may sound very strange to the world and its standards.

## WHO ARE YOU TO JUDGE THE SERVANT OF ANOTHER?

*“Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master, he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.” Romans 14:4*

*“But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.” Romans 14:10*

Our unforgiving nature manifests greatly when we pronounce judgment upon others, especially our fellow believers and their families. Our responsibility is to glorify God by obeying His commands. He commands that we do not return evil for evil, and we do not judge God’s children unnecessarily, and

show patience by trusting the Lord to judge.

How Christ evaluates each believer is what matters, and his judgment does not consider religious traditions or personal preferences. So, no matter how sincere we could be in our judgment, we could be miserably wrong, and they might be flawed. How sad it would be to judge a child of God wrongly!

We are judging a brother or a sister in Christ, whose offenses are already been forgiven by God through Jesus Christ. According to 2 Cor 5:21, the one who is being judged here has already possessed the ‘righteousness of God,’ in Christ Jesus.

## FIND DELIGHT IN FORGIVING!

*“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” Eph 4:32.*

The greatest hindrance to extending unconditional forgiveness to others is that we fear that they may get away with greater offenses. But the scriptures demand us to think differently. God patiently endured the greatest offense I can ever commit against any individual.

I caused the death of God’s Son Jesus Christ because I have sinned and committed the most gruesome offenses against Him. Jesus died for me while I was yet a sinner. But I often demand others to come to beg for my

pardon and even then, I am unwilling to extend it.

If God found delight in forgiving me unconditionally, how can I resist His demand to be kind to others, being tender-hearted and forgiving?

Do we wake up every morning with the prayer that God would bring someone to our path so that we can show forgiveness and mercy, no matter how underserving that person is? If we delight in forgiving just as God delights in forgiving seventy times seven a day [Matt 18:22], how much of a blessing that would be for our lives!



## SOVEREIGN GOD IS IN CONTROL.

*“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good to bring about his present result, to preserve many people alive. So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.” So, he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.” Gen 50:20-21*

Can we trust God to execute justice? Can we trust His sovereign ways? The Genesis 50 passage stands as the ultimate vindication to God’s children. Hardly any of us had been so mistreated as Joseph had been by his brothers.

Joseph trusted in his God to vindicate him and execute righteous judgment upon the ones who hurt him so badly. Joseph’s godly attitude allowed him to forgive them, although he recognized the level of offense they committed.

Forgiving is not forgetting about what had happened, but offering forgiveness is merely an extension of a godly attitude in us to other fellow beings. It is not a virtue that we offer forgiveness to others who are undeserving, but it is a demand on our lives.

## Study: Notes on Tabernacle – 22: THE LOAVES OF SHEW-BREAD

By Charles E. Wigg, Australia

These were twelve in number, and each one represented one of the tribes of Israel, and thus they represent the saints as they appear before God, in their order and beauty, sprinkled with frankincense, which speaks of the very perfection of the grace of Him on whom we rest.

They were to be placed in two rows, six in a row. The two is the number of witness or testimony, and the six is the number of man, according to Rev 13: 18. Thus if we bring both together, it would remind us that though we are but men, yet we appear before God, as a testimony to His marvellous work of grace in us according

to His eternal purpose.

### Testimony to the Divine Nature

Here we see then a testimony to the divine nature in the believer. That which is purely the work of God by His Holy Spirit, which cannot and does not sin.



We are not here to introduce the doctrine of sinless perfection, as taught erroneously by some, but to remind ourselves that what God is doing in us is sinless and perfect. It is thus we appear before God who, ever takes delight in His own work in the believer, as He did in the creation at the beginning.

God sees us thus, resting on Christ, wrought by the Spirit in His divine character. And as the loaves were sprinkled with frankincense, exhuming the very fragrance of Christ manifesting in some small measure, something of the perfect human graces that shone in all their fullness in Him.

## Meditation: **FORGIVE FOR JESUS' SAKE**

By Warren W. Wiersbe

“*And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God in Christ forgave” (Eph 4:32).*

An unforgiving spirit creates all kinds of problems. In my pastoral ministry, I have counselled some who have had physical difficulties, not because of sickness, not because of injury but because of attitudes in their heart. Many psychiatrists have observed that people who have emotional problems often have an unforgiving spirit.

This is why the Holy Spirit directed Paul to write in Ephesians 4: 30 – 32, “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another,

even as God in Christ forgave you.”

Remember Paul was talking about family members forgiving one another – those in the church family who need to forgive each other. Let us consider two things about this matter of family forgiveness.

### Evidence of an unforgiving spirit

#### 1. Corrupt communication

When we have an unforgiving spirit, we say things about people that we shouldn't say. If I am the kind of person who immediately jumps at the chance to say something evil about a person, that means I am holding a grudge against him. If we cannot say something good, it may mean that we have something bad in our hearts.

#### 2. Inner Feelings

Sometimes we are able to control our tongues; sometimes we are able to just bite our lips and not say something evil



about somebody. But people would be shocked if they could see what we feel in our hearts!

### **Bitterness**

In Ephesians 4:31 Paul talked about bitterness. Somebody hurts us, and we get bitter. Some Christians hold things inside, and the bitterness just grows like poison in the system. As you well know, when you have an infection, everything is very sensitive, everything hurts.

Bitterness is evidence of an unforgiving spirit. Wrath, anger, clamour – these are the outward evidences of that inward feeling. When there is bitterness in the heart you can't hide it. When that person we are bitter toward is mentioned, we get angry, or we decide to say something that we shouldn't say. So, corrupt communication is evidence of an unforgiving spirit.

### **Malice**

Malice is that hateful feeling that we nurture down inside. How easy it is to lie in bed at night and to think up all sorts of evil things about those who have wronged us! That is another evidence of an unforgiving spirit.

When we have this kind of attitude, are we hurting the other person? Of course not! If someone has sinned against me or if someone has done something I didn't like and I harbour resentment down inside, am I hurting that person? No, I am only hurting myself. Having an unforgiving spirit is something committing spiritual

suicide – you are only hurting yourself.

What are the evidences of an unforgiving spirit? Unkind words, evil words, bitter thoughts, bitter feelings down inside down.

## Essentials for a Forgiving Spirit

I don't think any of us wants to be unforgiving. We want others to forgive us; therefore, we should forgive others. The person who will not forgive others is destroying the bridge on which he may have to walk himself someday.

If we do not forgive others, we are putting a barrier between us and other people and between us and God. In fact, our Lord Jesus said that forgiving our brother is one of the conditions for answered prayer. (Matt 6:15)

### *i. Kindness*

“Be ye kind to one another.” (Eph 4:32) In Ephesians 2:7 Paul talked about kindness with reference to our salvation:

“That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

Have you ever stopped to think about how kind God has been to you? (cf. Titus 3: 3 – 5) Why, we who have been condemned forever were able to trust God for salvation? Because of His mercy and kindness.

God is kind to us, not because we are so good but for Jesus' sake – because of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. If I am going to forgive, I must show kindness.

The kindness of God is shown to those who do not deserve it.

### *ii. Tenderheartedness*

A hard heart is a terrible thing. When you have a hard heart, it robs of blessing and joy. A hard heart is the result of bitterness and anger, wrath and malice. A hard heart results when we harbor evil feelings inside. Paul said that if we are tenderhearted, then we can forgive. (cf. Eph 4:32)

### *iii. Honesty*

In Ephesians 4:15 Paul said, “But speaking truth in love.” It’s wonderful when saints can be honest with each other in love. Do not harbour bitterness down inside.

If someone in your church fellowship has done something against you, don’t go around talking about it, don’t be bitter, and don’t develop a hard heart. Don’t think up unkind things to say and do. Go to that person honestly and humbly, and try to get it settled. (cf. Matt 18: 15 – 17) Do you know why? Because “God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you.” (Eph 4:32)

My experience as a pastor has been that when we take that first step, God usually works in the person’s heart, and the problem gets solved.

The freedom of forgiveness is a marvellous thing. God has forgiven us, and so we are free from our sins. We forgive others; therefore, we are free in our relationship with one another.



### Forgive & Forget

You may say, “Well, I can forgive, but I can’t forget.” The Bible does not say that we forget all of these things. In the Bible “to forget” means “not to hold against a person.”

When God says, “Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb 8:12), it does not mean He actually forgets. God cannot forget anything. It simply means He does not hold it against us any longer.

### Walk in love

You may say, “It’s awfully hard to forgive.” But it’s harder not to forgive! If we don’t forgive, we grieve the Holy Spirit. If we don’t forgive, we deny what Jesus did for us on the cross. If we don’t forgive, we are not walking in love. Ephesians 5:2 says, “And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us.”

Life is too short to have enemies. Enemies are very expensive too. And so, we are not going to have enemies; we are going to forgive. We are going to forgive, not because anybody deserves it but for Jesus’ sake.



# FORGIVEN AND FREE

By Aby Kuruvilla, Mumbai

**H**ave you ever felt the need to set your relationship right with someone you've offended - that longing to be reconciled; that desire to be restored; that need to be free from guilt?

## SINFUL WOMAN

There was a woman, who in her city was infamously labelled a sinner (Luke 7:36-50). What her sin was is not recorded. But that sin of hers tarnished her public image.

One day Lord Jesus visited that city and was invited to a house for a meal. While Jesus sat at meat, this woman went to the house with a very costly ointment. She stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet and anointed them with the ointment.

What she was doing no one in that house understood. Some were offended at that sight. Some were shocked. But that didn't stop her.

She wasn't perplexed by what people thought about her. Nor did she try to cover up her tarnished image. Instead, she had come to an understanding of her sinfulness and was seeking mercy. That is why she came to Lord Jesus Christ.

## MERCIFUL SAVOUR

Why the Lord Jesus? We read in the scriptures, that he is God (John 1:1, Titus 2:12). This woman came to the realization and conviction of the Person of the Lord. He was no ordinary man, but God incarnate (John 1:14)! It had become evident to her that she was far away from God due to her sins.

The consequence of her sin was death according to God's holy standard (Rom. 6:23). Her works or religious piety would not please God. She was helpless to save herself.

The only way was to come in all faith and repentance before the Lord. We see in her actions, her heart's broken condition due to her sins and her acknowledgment of the Lord's power to save her.

The Lord's purpose of coming into the world was not to destroy lives but to save them (Luke 9:56). In order to make possible this salvation, he had to once and for all settle the problem of sin.

Sin is not something that God can simply

wink His eyes to. Its wages, that is eternal death, is a must for the sinner unless one takes his place. Jesus Christ became that exchange, that substitute for every man. He took upon Himself the punishment of our sins and died in our stead.

But being God, death could not hold Him. He rose again on the third day from the grave, defeating sin and death. Thus, having perfected the work of salvation, He provides in Himself an ever-present and efficacious cleansing for sin.

## FORGIVENESS AND PEACE

The Lord told that woman, “Thy sins are forgiven... Thy faith has saved thee; go in peace.” Her sins which were many were forgiven in that very moment, and she went with her heart freed from the burden of sin and having peace with God.

Thus, we see that when we come in faith to the Lord Christ Jesus, we can enjoy forgiveness

of sins and an eternal assurance of salvation.

Do you know it's important to set your relationship right with God in this present life? Do you know that only in the Lord Jesus we can enjoy forgiveness of our sins? Would you be free from your burden of sin? Come to the Lord Jesus and be forgiven and free.

### Worthy Quotes:

# FORGIVENESS

*“Forgiveness of sins is the very heart of Christianity, and yet it is very dangerous thing to preach.”*

*- Martin Luther*

*“To err is human, to forgive divine.”*

*- Alexander Pope*

*“Doing an injury puts you below your enemy; Revenging one makes you but even with him; Forgiving it sets you above him.”*

*- Benjamin Franklin*



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