

Matthew 6:14-15 *For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*

Matthew 22:34-39

The Pharisees asked Jesus “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

Jesus replied “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and the greatest commandment. And the second is like it; love your neighbor as yourself.”

C.S. Lewis “Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea until they have something to forgive.”

Forgiveness

- Forgiveness is simple, but seldom easy.
- Forgiveness is right but often does not feel fair.
- Forgiveness is not forgetting. You may have a scar that reminds you of the hurt.
- Forgiveness is not justifying or excusing or even understanding. It does not mean what was done was okay.
- Forgiveness is our response to the offender.
It may not be in our power to pardon.
But we can choose to forgive. But
they will have to face the consequences of their actions.
We can only cancel the debt they owe us.

Matthew 18:21-35 *Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”*

²² Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. 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 ten thousand 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. 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. 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.³⁵ “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Corrie ten Boom Let go of the rope.

Corrie ten Boom describes forgiveness like letting go of a bell rope. If you have ever seen a country church with a bell in the steeple, you will remember that to get the bell ringing you must tug for a while. Once it has begun to ring, you merely maintain the momentum. If you keep pulling, the bell keeps ringing.

Corrie ten Boom says forgiveness is letting go of the rope. It is just that simple. But when you do so, the bell keeps ringing. Momentum is still at work. However, if you keep your hands off the rope, the bell will begin to slow and eventually stop.

It is like that with forgiveness. When you decide to forgive, the old feelings of unforgiveness may continue to assert themselves. After all, they have lots of momentum. But if you affirm your decision to forgive, that unforgiving spirit will begin to slow and will eventually be still. Forgiveness is not something you feel, it is something you do. It is letting go of the rope of retribution. It’s time to let go of the rope.

Can you think of a person you need to ask for forgiveness?

Do you need to extend forgiveness?

Have you asked Christ to forgive you?