

Forgiveness!

What does it mean to forgive? Some people claim that you haven't forgiven, if you haven't forgotten. This can be true to some and in some cases, but forgiveness is something that you do for yourself more than for others.

President Richard M. Nixon, before he resigned as President of the United States, met with his staff and gave one of the most profound speeches of his political career. This speech was drafted by his speechwriter and fit well for this occasion.

“Always do your best, never get discouraged, never be petty, always remember that others may hate you, but, they that hate you don't win, unless you hate them, and then you destroy yourself.”

This is a profound truth; forgiveness is something that we all must do. For we all have been hurt by someone at sometime, we all have at sometime in our lives been let down by someone's action or attitude.

We must also remember that unforgiveness will keep us out of heaven.

Jesus said in **Mark 11:26** **But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.**

Forgiving others benefits you more than the person that you are forgiving. And unforgiveness produces bitterness in the heart, and bitterness will destroy you.

While serving as a Senior Pastor of a church in Birmingham several years ago, I had a dear church member that on the outward appearance appeared to be fine. One Sunday morning God laid it upon my heart to preach a sermon on forgiveness, and at the end of the sermon she came to the alter for special prayer. This dear sister was probably about 70 years of age, and was at church nearly every service. When she came forward, I remember seeing her breakdown into weeping and deep moans, and said to me, Brother Mann, I need help with forgiveness!

She proceeded to tell me that her beloved sister was killed by a serial killer, and dumped like garbage on the roadside in rural Mississippi.

I looked at her and said that she needed to forgive, and let go. She said I have tried and tried, but I just can't do it! , I just can't forgive him. I told her that I would seek the face of God on her behalf, and I did. And God gave me an answer. The answer was given to this dear sister and she was finally able to forgive that man and let go. If you seek God for an answer, He will give it to you. Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone that asks, receives, he that seeks, finds, and he that knocks, the doors will be opened. My friend that is a solemn promise of God.

The answer that I received from God was a real delivering message. And it was very simple.

Forgiveness is an act, and not a feeling!
There is a book of Acts; there is not a book of Feelings!

When we are saved, we are saved by grace through faith. It really doesn't matter how we feel (I am not implying that feelings are not important, because feelings are important).

We are not saved by what we feel; we are saved because we believe God's word. The same is true when it comes to forgiveness.

Should we forgive all men for all things?
Should we forgive those the have abortion clinics?
Should we forgive those that take something dear from us?
Should we forgive Sex Offenders, and Murderers?
Should we forgive those that curse us, and despise us?

The answer is an emphatic Yes!

Jesus will forgive mankind of all offenses if we will ask, for he said that whosoever would call on the name of the Lord would be saved.
Jesus does, and will forgive abortionist, sex offenders, murderers, robbers and thieves if they will simply call on Him. And we must forgive them as well.

When they ask forgiveness, it will be given to them according to the word of God.
Jesus also said that whom the Son sets free is free indeed.

When the Pharisees came to Jesus with the woman caught in the very act of adultery he acted with compassion before the small judgmental mob. Jesus asks the question...you who have no sin cast the first stone.
No stone was cast that day, and the woman walked away free from the impending judgment. Under the Law of Moses that the Pharisees were referring too, a woman was to be taken outside of the city and be stoned to death. Jesus said to her..."Where are thine accusers?" she said "I have none Lord" then Jesus said to her "neither do I condemn thee go and sin no more"

Jesus said in John chapter 3: 16- 17

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

He did not come to condemn, but to save. He forgave us of our sins; we must forgive others for their offenses if we intend to make heaven our eternal home.

Luke 11:2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

Luke 11:3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

Luke 11:4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

Forgiveness then is therefore an essential element in the promise of eternal life.

Friend, I have been wronged before, and so have you. We must continue to ask God to forgive them that have caused offenses to us, those who have hurt us, and even them that hate us and use us spitefully. For it is very clear that if we don't forgive them, that God will not forgive us.!

It is very clear by looking into the scripture that we must forgive. And our own forgiveness is conditional...conditional some might add...forgiveness is conditional.

If we intend to be forgiven, then first we must forgive.

Look into your own heart and life - only you and God truly know what is in there- have you forgiven? Do you continue to hold a grudge? Is there an open wound of unforgiveness? If so, you need to forgive, and let the Lord pour in the oil and wine and heal that wound. Get forgiveness, and enjoy the forgiveness that God gives you.

Let us pray:

Father God look into my heart and search me like only you can. If I have unforgiveness in my heart toward someone, please take it away. I want to be clean before you today. I don't want anything to stand between you and me today. I want to pray as David prayed- "Wash me, and I shall be cleaned, Cleanse me and I shall be whiter than snow" I ask these things in the Precious and Holy Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen. AMEN.

God Bless You

Bishop Michael K. Mann