

Forgiveness – Why bother and what does it look like?

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How good are you at showing forgiveness?

What is forgiveness?

OT ... idea of atonement

NT ... “to deal graciously with” “to send away”.

“to release” ... “pass by”.

... it is not therapeutic.

Forgiveness = our response as an offended party to pardon an offender and to seek reconciliation with that offender.

Why bother?

Firstly... “forgive us our debts as we have also forgiven our debtors” (Mat 6:12) verse 14-15, “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins”.

Secondly, “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from the heart”... Mat 18:35

So where do we start?

1) Know how much we have been forgiven

... we are much bigger offenders than we will ever be victims.

2) Look at Jesus

Not cheap

- Hebrews 9:22 ... “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness”.

Requires repentance

- ‘repentance for the forgiveness of sins’**
- see Luke 3:3, 5:32, 24:47, Acts 5:31, 11:18, 13:24, 19:4, 20:21, 26:20**
- ... prepared beforehand.**
- Romans 5:8-9 “While we were still sinners Christ died for us”.**
- His heart desire is to show us compassion, to lavish his grace on all who repent.**

Both loving and humbling

...he had to humble himself, in order to become like us,

... because of his love for us.

So what does forgiveness look like for us?

i) Even though we are not Jesus, forgiveness is still for us to do.

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Ephesians 4:32... “be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving others like God has forgiven us”.

ii) We should expect forgiveness of others to be costly.

iii) We should be prayerful, asking God to help you forgive.

iv) We should already be loving others and be humble before we are wronged.

v) Forgiveness of big things when repentance is shown, is often a journey.

vi) Real genuine and sincere repentance does not mean that everything is restored to what it was.

Serious questions

Question 1 - Where is your heart? Do you harbour unforgiveness?

Question 2 – In offering forgiveness, how do I know if repentance is real?

- **What are reasons for the concern that repentance is not genuine that the person offering forgiveness have?**
- **What (long term) evidence is there of real genuine repentance?**
- **What are the potential dangers getting it wrong will have?**

Question 3 – What are the limits to forgiveness?

Question 4 – What do I do if the offence against me is NEVER repented of but it is eating away at me and making ME bitter?