

Forgiveness

In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God. Amen.

Aim

- † The forgiveness of our Father
- † Asking for forgiveness
- † Forgiving others

Key verses

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16)

"...For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight..." (Psalm 51:3-4)

Lesson

Have you ever been really angry with anyone? Has anyone ever hurt your feelings? Have you ever felt like you weren't treated the way you deserved? I'm sure we all have felt these strong feelings, but the question today is what do we do about it as Christians? So, let's just think about our own lives, am I still sad or angry with someone? Do I still have negative feelings towards someone deep down inside me, even if I try not to show it?

Keeping your heart filled with these feelings is surely not good for you physically, emotionally and most importantly: spiritually. So there must be away of getting rid of this evil, before it gets comfortable and grows into hate...does anyone have any ideas?

[CLASS DISCUSSION]

Forgiveness! Forgiveness is a nice word that we hear a lot, but what is it? Do I need it? Do people deserve *my* forgiveness? So today we're going to talk about forgiveness and there are three points to discuss:

- (1) The forgiveness of God
- (2) Asking for forgiveness
- (3) Forgiving others

(1) The forgiveness of our awesome God!

- ❖ Every time we hurt someone, every time we commit a sin, whom are we really sinning against other than God?
- ❖ King David said it best in psalm 51 (v3-4):

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*“...For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. **Against You, You only, have I sinned** and done this evil in Your sight...”*

- ❖ From the very first sin of Adam and Eve, to the sins which will be committed in the future, our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ has already forgiven these sins. These sins which we committed AGAINST HIM, He forgave; but not only that...because the “wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23) He willingly paid this price with His own pure blood. He gave it as a free gift to all who will receive it, because there is no way we can ever pay it back, nor does He want us to!
- ❖ This is something we don’t think about often enough. My God, the creator of all that I can and can’t see in the entire universe, past present and future, has forgiven ME, nearly 2000 years ago for everything that I have ever done and will ever do!
- ❖ What is this? This is Love! God is Love....

[Read John 3:16]

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”

- ❖ Jesus Christ said He is “The Way the Truth and The Life!” God, who has done everything for us, despite our undeserving nature, came to show us the way to heaven, the way to love, the way to live in eternal happiness with Him. One of the things He also taught us is how to pray...

[QUESTION: who knows what prayer Jesus taught us to pray?]

The Lord’s Prayer (Matt 6:9-13).

- ❖ *“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us...”* This leads us to the second important point for today:

(2) Asking for forgiveness

- ❖ Is it hard to say you’re sorry? Is it easier to just convince yourself that you’re not wrong? Even if you’re not wrong, why is it so hard to say sorry?
- ❖ Maybe we don’t really know the meaning of sorry? So what does “sorry” mean?

[CLASS DISCUSSION]

- ❖ Here’s something you can try and use from now on. Whenever you feel someone’s angry or sad because of you - try saying “forgive me” instead of sorry. That way you can think about what you’re really asking for. This is not easy, it takes a real strong man to admit when he’s wrong, but it takes a humble man to squash his ego! Hang on...what am I meant to be squashing? What’s an “ego”?

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[Ego: Inflated opinion of yourself: “an exaggerated sense of your own importance and a feeling of superiority to other people”]

- ❖ Just like you can go to the gym to build up your muscles, you need to build up your spiritual muscles too; otherwise you'll be surprised how weak you'll look if you're a grown man with an even bigger ego! The best exercise is actually what we should all be doing anyway when we pray.... That's asking God for forgiveness! Remember what we said about saying sorry...? Who knows what feeling sorry about the sins you've committed is called? [→ Repentance]
- ❖ What's the formula for squashing a sin?
Repentance → Confession → Holy Communion
- ❖ It's quite easy: God I'm really sorry about this sin I've committed, please forgive me and help me to over come it! Going to your confession father then allows you to empty the trash you've collected over time and putting it out there, it might be shameful but getting it out is the only way to overcome it rather than carrying around for the rest of your life! Finally, we are given the grace of partaking in the Holy Body and Precious Blood of our dear Saviour: the same Body and Blood which overcame sin and paid its price!
- ❖ What's cool is that we know God already forgave us, so all we have to do is ask with our hearts, you have to mean what you say. There is one condition, though...where God doesn't forgive us our sins, and unfortunately we all break it too often:
- ❖ Remember the Lord's Prayer: “FORGIVE US our trespasses AS WE FORGIVE those who trespass against us”....let's go back to Matthew 6: 14-15...there it is! We actually say the condition to God, ourselves, everyday!! This brings us to the final point for today's lesson:

(3) Forgiving others

- ❖ Question: if God's forgiven you and everyone else for all their sins, who are you to not forgive someone for what they've done to you, no matter what it is?
- ❖ How many times will you forgive the same person for doing wrong to you? St Peter once asked this question, let's see what answer is...

[Read Matthew 18:21-35]

“Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ Then the master of that servant was moved with

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compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, '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?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

- ❖ What is that story telling us? Look at how willing God is to forgive us all for even the biggest of sins!! Ten thousand talents is worth millions or even billions of dollars in today's currency, and 100 denarii could be worth about \$1000. There's a big difference, and what the wicked servant did may sound pretty silly, but isn't that what we do each time we don't forgive others, compared to what we owe God, which is not even possible to pay back!??

Conclusion

God is awesome! He is merciful, He is gracious and HE IS LOVE! He has done so much for us, and He doesn't ask for us to pay Him back, but instead, to share His love and to enjoy it with Him! When you do something wrong, be a man, and ask for forgiveness. If someone is doing wrong to you, don't let evil win and grow by retaliating with evil, but ask for God's help to turn the other cheek. This way, you'll be the real man, you'll be God's kind of man, and you will squash your ego and the ego of the person who did wrong to you - all this by the humble power of forgiveness!! People notice this in Christians, and it's something that makes us stand out. What other religion teaches of loving your enemies?

Glory is to God, forever. Amen.