

**The Last Sunday after Epiphany ~ Sunday, February 11, 2018**

**“Half Truths ~ To Err is Human, To Forgive Divine”**

**Matthew 18:21-35**

Although this saying isn't in the Bible—there's an element of \_\_\_\_\_ to it—in that it gives an accurate assessment of both the \_\_\_\_\_ of God and the nature of \_\_\_\_\_.

No matter how hard we try, we all \_\_\_\_\_—we all fall short of God's glorious \_\_\_\_\_.

Scripture is also clear that God is a God of mercy, grace; and \_\_\_\_\_.

“All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else. But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!” (Eph 2:1-4)

Even though we're human and we make mistakes—Scripture is very clear that God calls us to \_\_\_\_\_. He calls us to \_\_\_\_\_ this part of His divine nature.

“You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you? ...So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.” (Matthew 18:32-33)

Forgiveness isn't something we can \_\_\_\_\_ for ourselves—God \_\_\_\_\_ gives it to us in Christ, so that we can \_\_\_\_\_ give it to others.

“If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.” (Matthew 6:14-15)

We can often be like the unforgiving servant in the parable and want \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ for ourselves, and \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ for everyone else.

When we're wronged or hurt, our natural inclination often comes in two extremes:

- We are consumed with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and try to \_\_\_\_\_, make them pay, or demand \_\_\_\_\_.

- We \_\_\_\_\_ into ourselves, silently nursing our wounds and stewing in our pain

Forgiveness is an easy word to \_\_\_\_\_, but not so easy to \_\_\_\_\_; it's easy to \_\_\_\_\_, but not so easy to \_\_\_\_\_. Forgiveness is one of the most misunderstood, \_\_\_\_\_, and misapplied words.

**FORGIVENESS QUIZ**

- |  |          |          |
|--|----------|----------|
| #1. A person shouldn't be forgiven until he asks for it.               | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| #2. Forgiveness includes minimizing the offense and the pain caused.   | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| #3. Forgiveness includes restoring trust and reuniting a relationship. | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| #4. You haven't really forgiven until you've forgotten.                | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| #5. Forgiveness removes consequences.                                  | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |

“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation...” (2 Corinthians 5:18)

**FORGIVENESS IS NOT . . .**

- Forgiveness is not: \_\_\_\_\_.
- Forgiveness is not: \_\_\_\_\_.
- Forgiveness is not: \_\_\_\_\_.
- Forgiveness is not: \_\_\_\_\_.

Reconciliation =  
Reconciliation requires:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Forgiveness is not: \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_.
- Forgiveness is not: \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_.

**TRUE FORGIVENESS INVOLVES . . .**

#1. \_\_\_\_\_ **how much I have been** \_\_\_\_\_.

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:32)

The key here is \_\_\_\_\_. We are not forgiven because we \_\_\_\_\_ it or we've \_\_\_\_\_ it; we are not forgiven because we \_\_\_\_\_ never to sin again—we're forgiven because we've put our \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus.

However, you can't \_\_\_\_\_ what you don't have—if I don't feel \_\_\_\_\_, chances are, I won't be able to forgive anybody else.

"I tell you, her sins which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves, little." (Luke 7:47)

We can't \_\_\_\_\_ others what we have so willingly \_\_\_\_\_ for ourselves.

"Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive." (Colossians 3:13)

### **How much has God forgiven you?**

**#2. \_\_\_\_\_ up my \_\_\_\_\_ to get \_\_\_\_\_.**

"Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it is written, 'I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it,' says the Lord." (Romans 12:19)

This goes against our \_\_\_\_\_ inclinations and what the \_\_\_\_\_ teaches.

- Justice is \_\_\_\_\_. Justice is getting what you \_\_\_\_\_.
- Forgiveness is \_\_\_\_\_. It is getting what you don't \_\_\_\_\_.

"Mercy triumphs over judgement." (James 2:13)

Our God is a God of \_\_\_\_\_. When we give up our right to get even—when we extend grace and forgiveness—God will \_\_\_\_\_ the score—God will \_\_\_\_\_ all the wrongs.

### **Do you desire mercy for yourself and justice for others?**

**#3. \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_.**

Jesus calls us, not to respond in \_\_\_\_\_, but to come in the \_\_\_\_\_.

"Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you and pray for those who mistreat you." (Luke 6:27)

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:21)

When we come to the point when we can pray; "Lord, bless that person who hurt me," then we'll know forgiveness is \_\_\_\_\_ in our heart.

It is only God's \_\_\_\_\_, flowing through us, that can \_\_\_\_\_ us to offer true forgiveness.

### **How often do you bless and pray for those who have hurt you?**

**#4. \_\_\_\_\_ the process as long as \_\_\_\_\_.**

"Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.'" (Matthew 18:21-22)

Jesus' point is, we forgive as often as it \_\_\_\_\_—until we're able to \_\_\_\_\_; until the desire for \_\_\_\_\_ is gone.

### **Are you quick to forgive, yet still carried a grudge?**

If we don't seek to forgive— if we don't seek to \_\_\_\_\_ our pain—we will \_\_\_\_\_ it everywhere we go.

### **"Give as freely as you have received." (Matthew 10:8)**

### **Are you harbouring anger and bitterness because of the sins committed against you? Who do you need to forgive?**

#### **Ten Reasons Why We Don't Forgive**

**Jesus calls us to forgive as we have been forgiven. Here are 10 reasons we struggle to forgive. Can you relate to any of these?**

- Pride—forgiveness makes me look weak.
- I don't want to give up my excuse-making system (my coping mechanisms). When I don't forgive, I am in control. I remain able to manipulate others.
- I may get hurt again.
- If I ignore it, the problem will go away.
- Revenge—the other person has to pay for it. They need to learn a lesson.
- Failure to understand God's love and forgiveness for me.
- Failure to receive forgiveness myself—sometimes called "forgiving yourself." Before I can truly forgive others, I must forgive myself.
- It seems too easy and unfair. It seems I'm overlooking or condoning their sin.
- I am waiting for the person to come to me first.
- I am waiting for a "feeling."