



ENCOUNTER
SUNDAY NIGHTS 6PM

Christianity &

HUMAN

WHOLENESS



Exploring the questions of Life

WEEK 2: HOW DO I FORGIVE?

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The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

“²¹ 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, cancelled 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 cancelled 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.”

Matthew 18: 21 – 35 (NIV)

The word “forgive” is understood to mean when we stop feeling angry or resentful towards someone for an offence, flaw or mistake. To forgive is to no longer feel angry about, or wish to punish the wrong done against you. It is to cancel a debt.

The passage illustrates the king’s total forgiveness and the servant’s unwilling choice to forgive. The essence of the message to be drawn from the text is that as God forgives us, we are to forgive others – even ourselves.

The inability to forgive says, “They owe me”. He/she did this to me, therefore:

- They will pay,
- I won’t talk to them,
- I will ignore them,
- I’ll tell others what they have done to me.

Choosing to forgive someone does not minimize what they have done to us, but forgiving frees us. It frees our mind and our actions. Choosing to forgive makes our heart glad.

Not matter what my background was or what happened to me in the past; I am now fully responsible for what I do about it. To forgive and let go or to hang on to it and remain a victim, is a choice I make.

Un-forgiveness creates a debt. We can create a debt even to ourselves. Whenever we ask for forgiveness, God forgives us. He forgives and forgets it, It is important that we do the same. But, sometimes we hang on to un-forgiveness and create a debt for ourselves. This we do by requiring more of ourselves than we are able to achieve i.e., we do something and tell ourselves it could have been better. When we are disappointed in what we have done, we don't enjoy what we have accomplished.

Doing more or better should be our desire, but when we are never satisfied with what we do, we are holding un-forgiveness in our heart towards ourselves. We are relentless in making ourselves pay.

To fully understand what Jesus meant in the text, we must look at the context of the whole of chapter 18, for Jesus was speaking not only about forgiving one another but about Christian character, both in and out of the church.

The Jewish rabbis at the time taught that forgiving someone more than three times was unnecessary, citing Amos 1: 3 -13 where God forgave Israel's enemies three times, then punished them. By offering forgiveness more than double that of the Old Testament example, Peter perhaps expected extra commendation from the Lord. When Jesus responded that forgiveness should be offered seventy times seven, it must have stunned the disciples who were listening. Although they had been with Jesus for some time, they were still thinking in the limited terms of the law, rather than in the unlimited terms of grace.

We need not harbour un-forgiveness to others and to ourselves. Holding un-forgiveness in our hearts long enough, conditions us to believe that we are trapped and there is no way to escape. It is important that we deal with un-forgiveness immediately. At the very heart of un-forgiveness is pride. At the very heart of pride is "I / me" and yet at the very heart of forgiveness is: joy, love and peace. We are to make the choice to be kind, gentle, patient and forgiving.

Will you and I choose this day to put on a new heart? And let this be the choice we make every day.

Jesus is our great example. He asks us to go and do likewise. He forgave us all we could ever do against Him. He forgave us while we were still sinning. We are only capable of this type of forgiving spirit because the Spirit of God lives within us, and it is He who provides us the ability to offer forgiveness over and over, just as God forgives us over and over again.

CHRISTIANITY AND HUMAN WHOLENESS

19 June **“Can I be perfect?”**
(Pete Grassow)

26 June **“Does God heal today?”**
(Pete Grassow)

3 July **“How do I Forgive?”**
(Similo Sanqela)

10 July **“How is my body ‘a temple of the Lord?’”**
(Sam Bennett)

17 July **“What about Suicide & Depression?”**
(Similo Sanqela)

24 July **“What are your addictions?”**
(Pete Grassow)

31 July **“How can I be free?”**
(Similo Sanqela)

7 Aug **“Do you need Healing?”**
(Pete Grassow)

BMC YOUNG ADULTS

ENCOUNTER (Sunday Nights)

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