

“The Peril of Unforgiveness”

2 Corinthians 2:5-11; Ephesians 4:32; Psalm 103:12; Jer. 31:34

East Berlin Community Church

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April 11, 2021

Introduction

- People hurt people.
- Refusing to forgive may be harmful to our physical health.

“The Peril of Unforgiveness”

A. What harm is there if we refuse to forgive?

1. Refusing to forgive is harmful to one’s physical health

2. Refusing to forgive is harmful to one’s spiritual health and wellbeing.

a. Case Study: Church of Corinth

- 2 Corinthians 2:5-11-- *“But if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me, but all of you to some extent—not to be too severe. This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, so that, on the contrary, you ought to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. Therefore, I urge you to reaffirm your love to him. For to this end I also wrote that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. Now, whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.”*

1) The goal of church discipline is restoration

- Galatians 6:1-- *“Brother, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself let you also be tempted.”*

2) Jesus outlines the procedure for church discipline in Matthew 18

3) The offense at Corinth which needed to be repented of?

4) Some church members refused to forgive and restore the repentant brother.

- 2 Corinthians 2:6 -- *“This punishment which was afflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man.”*

5) The first step for restoration is forgiveness

- 2 Corinthians 2:7 -- *“So that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow.”*

b. Unforgiveness is one of the schemes of Satan

- 2 Corinthians 2:10-11-- *“Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.”*

3. Additional Questions to consider

- What is forgiveness? What is meant by “forgiving” another?*
- Why should I forgive, especially if the hurt is deep or the offenses have been numerous?*
- What if I refuse to forgive? What specific spiritual harm can it do?*
- How can I genuinely forgive someone who has hurt me or hurt others close to me?*

B. What is Forgiveness? What does it mean to “forgive” another?

1. Forgiveness is first of all an ATTITUDE of GENEROSITY.

- Ephesians 4:32 -- *“And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”*
- a. Greek word -- “charizomai” -- means to *“give freely or to give graciously, to bestow grace upon an offender.”*
- b. **Forgiveness is a gift that we give, not something which the offender earns.**
- c. **Our model: Forgive as God for Christ sake has forgiven us.**
 - Ephesians 2:1-9-- *“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”*
 - Titus 3:5-7-- *“But when the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace, we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”*
- d. **Since forgiveness is a gift, it is possible for us to forgive any offense or offender.**

2. Forgiveness is secondly an ACTION of PARDONING

- a. Greeks had two additional words both translated “forgive”
 - 1) “apoluo” – which means *“to release, to let go, to remove the guilt resulting from wrong doing, to pardon”*
 - 2) “aphiemi” – which means *“to send away or pardon”*
- b. **Our Model: God Himself who . . .**
 - 1) **Separates the OFFENSE from the OFFENDER**
 - Psalm 103:12 -- *“AS far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”*
 - 2) **Then FORGETS the FORGIVEN OFFENSE**
 - Jeremiah 31:34 -- *“For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sins I will remember no more.”*