

How Do I Forgive Others? April 27, 2014
Exciting First Church of God, Pastor Peter Smith

Week 3 in our series: Forgiveness: The Real F Word.

How many of you would recognize the Lord's Prayer?

- in Matthew 6 & Luke 11
- "Our Father, Who art in Heaven..."
- **"forgive us our sins just as we forgive those who have sinned against us" in your outline**

[In Your Outline:] Here's what forgiving others is not—

Forgiving others is not: (quickly on these)

1. justifying their actions.

- "Well, they were under a lot of stress."
- "You know, they're going through a lot right now..."
- "I don't think they meant it that way."

2. trusting the passage of time.

- Anyone remember something from 5, 10, or 20 years ago that still stings? A lot?

3. denying that you are hurt.

- it didn't hurt, It doesn't matter
- I didn't notice anything
- It didn't affect me

4. confronting them personally.

- "give me an apology!"
- It's not seeking revenge / getting even
- **Forgiveness is not any of these!**

So what does it mean to really forgive others?

It is choosing to let the offense go. This is Forgiveness!

So where do we begin? Four steps.

Step 1 is to Remember how MUCH I've been forgiven

- Remember the Prodigal Son? It's **Our** story
- We've gone astray; we enjoyed sin for a time yet God welcomed **US** home
- And he forgives us completely!
- **Never forget where you came from / who you belong to!**

Isaiah 1:18 talks about God's complete forgiveness.

"Come, let us talk this over says the Lord. No matter how deep the stain of your sin, I can take it out and make you as clean as freshly fallen snow. Even if you are stained as red as crimson. I can make you white as wool."

Living Bible (TLB)

- **You have to get this step down first because only forgiven people can truly forgive others.**

Story of the Unforgiving Servant. Matthew 18

- A King is owed lots of money. Bring debtors in.
- 1st guy owes millions...I can't pay it
- Throw his family in prison! (**like missing a credit card payment!**)
- Be patient with me...I will pay it back!
- King was merciful and cancelled / forgave the debt. Basically he said, "You're FREE!"
- This man sees a person who owes him couple thousand \$\$: chokes him
- Man asks for mercy but NO!! Puts him in jail
- King finds out, throws 1st man in jail. With me?

Read the rest with me in your outline: It says,

"Then, the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, you evil servant I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me, shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant just as I had mercy on you? Then the angry king sent the man to prison until he had paid every penny."
(vss. 32-34, NLT)

Jesus adds this commentary: (Vs. 35)

"That's what my Heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters in your hearts."

Who do **YOU** need to forgive this morning?

How do I forgive Others? Step 2 is:

2. Release the person **entirely**.

“Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. . . 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 12:17, 19

- Who are you thinking about right now? Let it go!
- Release means to set free
- No more rehearsing over & over in your minds
- **It’s a choice, a decision, we have to make!**
- **I read this week that holding a grudge is like drinking poison and hoping the other person get’s sick. Have you ever done that?** Have you ever held a grudge?

“**But Pastor Peter**, what about my bitterness & resentment?”

- **This heals over time**
- **What starts it? When you and I release people**

But Pastor Peter, how do you release someone emotionally?

- **Write a letter to the person**
(explicit), seal it, never mail it
- **Talk to a chair, picturing the person there**
- **Hold a picture of that person and talk to it**
- **Then release them! “Say, I FORGIVE YOU! GOD, HELP ME LET THIS GO...”**
- **When we release, we give up our right to repayment and revenge.**

****Release or rehearse: you have the choice.**

[Live interview with Elaine Robinson here]

Step 3. Follow the way of Jesus

Listen to what God did for us in Jesus:

“You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.”
-Colossians 2:13-14, NLT

- You have been thinking of one person that has hurt you
- You want to forgive them today
- Will you cancel their offense today at the cross?

Jesus said forgiveness brings forgiveness.

“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 our sins.”
-Matthew 6:14-15

Strong language!! Find freedom today.

After we pray I invite you to take a step toward God:

1. Write down the initials of the person you need to forgive and their offense if you want
2. Fold the paper over
3. Nail it to the cross
4. Let the offense and pain go today!

Lets Pray