



CELL GUIDE 2015

Theme	Jubilee – Year of Forgiveness
Topic	Forgive as the Lord Forgave You
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Message Summary

Forgive as the Lord Forgave You

Forgiveness is a prominent theme in the Bible. However, it does not come easily to many of us because we think un-forgiveness is a form of self-protection; we recoil when we are injured. In reality, it actually harms us and others while forgiveness sets us free. This sermon is about the principles behind forgiveness, the reasons why we should forgive and how we can do it.

The Principles, Reasons and Ways to Forgive

Forgiveness comes from the Greek word “Aphiemi” which means to let go. It is a commitment to release one’s feelings of resentment that come between oneself and one’s offender. It therefore hinges on four principles:

- 1) Refusing to punish.** When we are wronged, we feel the need to punish the other party because we want them to experience the hurt we went through. The feelings of anger and injustice are greater when the offender repeatedly offends and has no conscience about this wrongdoing. However, in Deut 32:35a, God said that it is His to avenge. When we leave it to God and forgive, He will bless us.
- 2) Being aware of what someone has done and still forgiving them.** Forgiveness does not mean that we deny the wrongdoing or excuse it. In fact, we cannot forgive a person fully unless we acknowledge the issue.
- 3) Not telling others about what the offender did.** It is okay to let others know what a person did wrong to us provided that we do not have a bad motivation behind it. However, many of us do it precisely because we want others to side with us and get others to think less of the wrongdoer (vicarious anger), which is an attempt to punish.
- 4) Keeping no record of wrongs.** Forgiveness is a part of love. Therefore, as in 1 Cor 13:5, we forgive by releasing our resentment towards the wrongdoer.

We also need to know why we should forgive. **Firstly, it is God’s command.** Matt 6:14-15 clearly states that we should forgive others just like what God did for us. To add on, in Matt 5:43-48, God tells us that we should be like Him – the Lord who is perfect and merciful – that we may be His sons. Because this command comes from God and not an earthly authority, we should all the more obey it. **Secondly, we should not give Satan a foothold.** When there is un-forgiveness in our heart, we allow demonic activity in our lives. In fact, un-forgiveness is often what gives Satan the most ground in our lives. We should be crushing Satan instead of getting crushed by him. **Thirdly, un-forgiveness has been shown to hurt us psychologically and physically as well as our relationship with others and most of all, our fellowship with God.**

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Although we do not lose our salvation when we do not forgive, we break our fellowship with God (Matt 6:14-15). What right do we have to ask for His forgiveness when we cannot find it our heart to do so for others? **Lastly, we should follow Christ's example.** Christ gave us the ultimate example of forgiveness through Jesus' death on the cross. Our forgiveness cost Him *everything*. The parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt 18:22-35) bolsters this point. Jesus' forgiveness towards us can be likened to a large sum of money that we can never repay. Yet, God forgave us despite knowing this. The offences of others towards us can never be compared to our offence towards Him. Why then can we not forgive others when we have been received such undeserving grace from Him?

Lastly, we need to know how to put forgiveness into action for there is no point in knowing what and why if we do not then apply. When we realize how much we are forgiven, we will then be able to forgive others. Here are four steps to forgiveness.

- 1) **Decide now.** We should not depend on our feelings alone. Instead, we should decide to do it for God. When we decide to do it straightaway, we will not keep the wrongdoing in mind.
- 2) **Depend on the Holy Spirit.** Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit to draw strength from him and to teach us how to forgive (John 14:26; 2 Tim 4:16-17). God wants us to be joyful and whole so surrender completely to Him.
- 3) **Devote ourselves to prayer.** We are instructed and taught to love and pray for our enemies.
- 4) **Do good to others** and bless those who curse you (Luke 6:27-28).

To conclude, forgiveness *is* possible no matter how tough it seems and we should forgive not just for our total freedom but also our love for God.

Questions

Share about an incident in which someone you know really offended you. What happened after that?
(Fill In Answer Here)

Which principle of forgiveness do you feel is the most difficult to practise or understand? Why do you feel it is so?

(Fill In Answer Here)



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Four reasons were given for why we should forgive others. In what ways do you think un-forgiveness has affected your life?

(Fill In Answer Here)

Knowing the four steps to forgiveness, what are practical ways that we can practise this intentionally everyday?

(Fill In Answer Here)
