



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC Assurance of Forgiveness

SPEAKER Gary Koh

THEME Five Assurances for Every Believer:
2 Tim 1:12-14

DATE 29 & 30 June 2019

MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Speaker Gary Koh established his sermon based on the foundational truth that our God is a good God. God is good all the time. When faced with difficult situations, God is still good. In all that He does for us, and all that He asks of us, God's goodness remains constant. He forgives us because He is good, and He calls us to forgive because it is good.

THREE DIMENSIONS OF FORGIVENESS

1) JESUS FORGIVES US

God has forgiven us our sins through Jesus Christ. Two biblical instances in Luke 7:36-50 and Luke 5:17-26 of Jesus' pronouncement - "*your sins are forgiven*" – to the sinful woman and the paralyzed man respectively demonstrates His authority to forgive sins.

Sin is a condition of the heart. The paralyzed man may not be able to move physically. Regardless, his thoughts and his heart can still fall into sin. God has forgiven us through Jesus Christ in our vertical relationship with Him.

1 John 1:9-10 assures us that the requirement for forgiveness is the confession of our sins. God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from our unrighteousness. Subsequently, we need not walk around carrying the burden of our sins anymore. Guilt (from our sins) holds us back, but forgiveness releases us to face the future.

2) WE FORGIVE OTHERS

God is so big on forgiveness not just because He is concerned about us, He is also concerned about our relationships with others.

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." – Colossians 3:12-13

In Matthew 18:21-22, Jesus tells us to forgive (even that one, single sin) not just seven times, but seventy times seven times. Forgiveness can be unfair, and unnatural. However, not forgiving others can also be lethal. We should be clear that forgiving someone is not saying that what the other person did was acceptable, but forgiveness halts the cycle of blame and pain and loosens the stranglehold of guilt in the perpetrator. It is primarily a choice that is taken to choose to forgive, and God reminds us of how much He has already freely forgiven us, even as He calls us to forgive others.

Gary exhorts us to continue to walk closely with the Lord as it is that close walk from which we will continually experience the overflow of grace, hope and forgiveness from God. It is this overflow experienced in a right vertical relationship with the Lord that spills over these same elements into our horizontal relationships with others. We can choose to forgive others readily over seventy times seven times when we fully realise just how much God has forgiven and continues to forgive us.

3) WE FORGIVE OURSELVES

"One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." – Matthew 22:35-40

Often, people do not love themselves for who they are. From the second commandment, our ability to choose to forgive other people hinges on our ability to forgive ourselves. Just as God has already forgiven us, Jesus also reminds us that we need to let go of our past and forgive ourselves first.

CONCLUSION

Our sins are forgiven regardless of what we have done. Our debts have been paid by Christ alone. As we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from our unrighteousness. From the overflow of a life filled with grace, hope and forgiveness experienced in a right vertical relationship with the Lord, we can readily forgive ourselves and the other people in our lives.

As we walk through these three dimensions of forgiveness in our daily lives with Jesus, others and ourselves, we experience true joy and freedom from sin.

QUESTIONS

1. List the three dimensions of forgiveness. Which area do you struggle with?

2. Share an experience of God's forgiveness and how it has transformed your life?

3. In the area you struggle to forgive, how does the realization of God's forgiveness in your life enable you to have a breakthrough?