



Week 4 - Message of forgiveness

KA Culture: Honour, Generosity, Authenticity, Acceptance, Courage

Acceptance: *demonstrate kindness, patience and forgiveness to all*

Matt. 18:21 Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” 22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. 24 When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ 27 And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. 28 But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ 29 So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ 30 He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. 31 When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. 32 Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ 34 And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers <tormenters>, until he should pay all his debt. 35 So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

1. Understand the extent that we have been forgiven

a) Our immense unpayable debt of sin has been forgiven BY GRACE (v24 & 27)

Ex 25:17 21 And you shall put the mercy seat **on the top of the ark**, and in the ark you shall put the testimony <law> that I shall give you. 22 There I will meet with you... above the mercy seat

“God has moved us from the level of law up to the level of grace” John Arnott

b) God deals with sin so thoroughly that we never run into it again (v27)

Psa. 103:11 as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

c) Jesus deals with the sin and the cause of the sin

1John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to **forgive** us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

d) when sickness is rooted in sin it is also dealt with (note: not all sickness is a result of sin - John 9:2)

Matt. 9:2 he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are **forgiven.**"

2/ Understand the extent that we are called to forgive

a) **Our own forgiveness is tied to our willingness to forgive others (v35)**

b) **Our forgiveness is not to be surface level but from the heart (v35)**

c) **Our forgiveness is to extend repeatedly – it's not optional (v21)**

d) **Our forgiveness must extend until we can truly love and bless those who have wronged us "forgiveness = to cut/release"**

Matt. 5:43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, **Love your enemies** and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Note: forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation. Reconciliation is restoring the relationship and requires repentance from the offender but forgiveness does not.

e) **If we do not forgive we deliver ourselves over to the tormentors (v34)**

When we refuse to forgive we move ourselves back to the level of law

f) **Our forgiveness must extend to ourselves**

Matt 22:39 "love your neighbour as yourself" If you don't love yourself then God help your neighbour" Peter Jackson

*"The only possible way to bring the kingdom of heaven is to give heaven and only heaven. As long as we give any hell we will be in the hell we give. Perfect love wills and works no evil to anyone but all possible good to everyone. The golden rule is a revelation of how to be what you want to be - by giving what you want to be and **only** what you want to be. If the small doses of love that you have been giving out have not increased your union with Christ **then increase the dose!** Choose to give Him and his love to all. It is more blessed to give than receive. Why? **Receiving more than you give makes you a swamp.**" Rufus Moseley*

3/ Understand what forgiveness is not

Letting time pass

Being a door-mat or enabling an abuser

Dependant on feelings but it does involve feelings

Minimising (“the offense was not that bad”)

Excusing (“the offender wasn’t to blame”)

4/ Understand how to forgive – the process of forgiveness

So the Holy Spirit has convicted me that I have not forgiven someone ‘from the heart’ – what should I do?

Matt. 18:34 “if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

Stage	Example
Acknowledge the offense – get in touch with your feelings. Do not minimise or excuse.	<i>Father I recognise that my dad sinned against me when he didn't ever say that he loved me. Even though he had been brought up badly it was still wrong.</i>
Express your feelings to the person as if they were standing there in front of you. If it helps write them down first. Think about what effect their sin has had on you or others and tell them.	<i>Dad. You didn't ever show me any affection. You never told me you loved me. Why? How hard is it to say? I'm still dealing with it 30 years later. I feel so alone. Just a hug would have done wonders – you never even touched me.</i>
Speak forgiveness to them for this sin. Picture Jesus in front of you and hand the debt over to Him.	<i>Dad. I forgive you for never telling me you loved me. I release you and Jesus I give the debt to you</i>
Tell God that you give up your right to judge, condemn or get revenge.	<i>Father I lay down the right to judge, condemn or get revenge. I won't freeze Dad out any more or punish him with silence.</i>
Speak the truth to yourself to replace the lies. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak truth to you	<i><name>, you are not unloved. You are loved by God. You are precious to Him.</i>
Bless the person and ask that God will forgive them	<i>Dad I bless you. Father I ask that you forgive my Dad.</i>

Notes:

a) For some people who have sinned against you extensively you will have to repeat this process as the Holy Spirit brings other things back to memory that you have not forgiven 'from the heart'

b) Sometimes you will know that you also need to go to speak to the person to challenge their behaviour.

c) When you are in a relationship with someone who repeatedly sins against you you will have to learn to lay down healthy boundaries and possibly even withdraw from the relationship. You can still do this while loving and forgiving.

5/ Understand Some lies that keep us from forgiving

Lie	Truth	To do
The offense was too great – the pain is too deep	God can heal the wound	Work on learning to trust God and the power of the cross
I should withhold forgiveness until they ask for forgiveness – or they'll do it again	Forgiveness and reconciliation are not the same thing.	Learn to release and transfer the debt to God
Forgiving someone will make me look/feel weak	The desire to look strong and superior is pride. Pride will keep you in bondage	Confess and repent of your pride
It's too easy for them and unfair on me.	Just as it was easy for you to be forgiven by Jesus but costly for him. Do you really want fair?	Put them into the hands of God and trust Him with the outcome
If I forgive then I'm acting like a hypocrite because I don't feel forgiveness	I'm a hypocrite if I don't forgive because my real nature as a child of God is a forgiver like my Father	Learn about your new identity in Christ (Eph 4:24-25)
I can't forgive because I will never be able to forget	I may not forget the wrong but I will no longer remember the 'sting'	Give up the right to keep replaying the hurtful event. Trust God with your future
God has wronged me – I need to forgive him	God cannot do wrong. You can express your feelings of pain though (eg Psalm 22) but try to end in a good place of giving praise and expressing trust in Him.	Learn to focus not on what God hasn't done but on what he has done. You possibly need to also repent of self pity.

(adapted from Diane Spencer and Mary Jane Hall)