

2/5/23 “You!” Matthew 6:7-15, MEV

INTRODUCTION:

Context: prayer...pride vs. *intimacy* with God, vain repetition vs. *intimacy*

Forgive: to dismiss; to let go from one's power; to release a debt; to give up, keep no longer; to pardon; to relax

Consider: Must someone ask to be forgiven to be forgiven? Must one admit wrong to be forgiven?

Visitor watches old farmer plow with mule. Says, “I don’t like to tell you how to run your business, but you could save yourself a lot of work by saying, ‘Gee’ and ‘Haw’ to that mule instead of just tugging on those lines.” Sweating heavily, farmer says, “Reckon you’re right, but this animal kicked me five years ago and I ain’t spoke to him since.” Moral: A grudge is harder on the one who holds it than the one it is held against.

MAIN IDEA: Forgive for freedom. How? Here are 2 things to do.

I. First, follow God’s example (9)

NOTE: “Our Father” because He forgave us at salvation

A. forgiving everything (& living with consequences)

EX: people we hurt, ways we wronged Him

B. not bringing up what’s been forgiven

C. being patient with those forgiven (*can be quick to anger*)

ADVISORY: Sometimes we must apply healthy boundaries. (**Ex:** someone strikes you in anger)

ILLUSTRATION:

II. Second, make every effort to stay free (12-13)

A. daily asking God to hold us accountable to forgive

B. daily keeping our heart soft toward God

1. want God’s forgiveness more than vengeance or justice

2. unforgiveness is a temptation that appeals to us

3. unforgiveness gives the enemy opportunity

2Cor. 2:10-11, NLT: ¹⁰ When you forgive this man, I forgive him, too. And when I forgive whatever needs to be forgiven, I do so with Christ’s authority for your benefit, ¹¹ so that Satan will not outsmart us. For we are familiar with his evil schemes.

B. daily forgiving from the heart

1. might keep forgiving but no relief

2. might forgive because “it’s right”

3. must forgive from the pain in our heart

Matthew 18:32-35, NLT: ³² 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. ³³ Shouldn’t you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?” ³⁴ Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt. ³⁵ “That’s what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart.”

ILLUSTRATION:

CONSIDER: 1) Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling. 2) It requires expressing the pain so we can heal. 3) It is necessary to keep right with God and free from bitterness.

APPLICATION: Pray this prayer: **Lord, I forgive (name of person) for (say aloud everything the person did or said that hurt you, and say aloud how it made you feel).**

When you’ve done that, say this prayer: **Lord, I release this person to You, and I release my right to seek revenge. I choose not to hold on to my bitterness and anger; and I ask You to heal my damaged emotions. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.** (*from Neil Anderson’s Steps to Freedom*)

CONCLUSION: Must someone ask to be forgiven to be forgiven? Must one admit wrong to be forgiven? We forgive for our sake.

Corrie ten Boom: Forgiveness is like letting go of a bell rope. Pull rope to make bell ring. Bell keeps ringing after rope is released.

ALTAR: Need healing? Come forward to pray. (paper)
