

Day 25 Colossians 3:13-14

Today we are going to talk about forgiveness. This is not an easy subject because when we talk of forgiveness it involves pain.

The thing so tricky about forgiveness is we have all been on both sides of it. We have all needed forgiveness - and we all have needed to forgive others.

Defining forgiveness in Christian terms is tricky because it can be somewhat brushed over as well, something we just do.

What is forgiveness? Forgiveness in a believer's life is trusting the Sovereignty of God in reference to His justice. It is giving up the burden of justice and trusting that it belongs to God. It is a process; it can often take time.

We do not have the power to undo what a person has done to us, and we don't have the power to make it right. That is a harsh fact. And even if we were able to extend our personal judgement on them, we would find ourselves in need of forgiveness, because we would be putting ourselves in the seat of God.

Justice belongs to God. It is just true.

So, what do we do? Jesus said it in the book of Matthew and Paul says it here. The way to begin the process of forgiveness is to hyper focus on the fact that we have been wholly forgiven. We have all needed forgiveness. It is our story of redemption.

We have been the recipients of God's mercy, grace, and love despite our injustice to His Name. We cannot predict or manipulate how He uses His attributes that we have been afforded in another person's life. This is our reality.

But we can hold people accountable, without holding them captive to our judgement.

- Forgiving someone does not keep them from having to square with God. We do not have the power to take their guilt away or absolve their sin.
- Forgiving someone does not mean that they are spared from consequences or our mistrust.
- We can be angry at injustice and still forgive. Anger is an emotion, not condemnation.
- Forgiveness does not keep us from the emotional pain that some has caused us. We still must work through pain.
- Forgiving someone does not have to end up in reconciliation. We still have the responsibility to protect ourselves and others emotionally and physically.
- Forgiving someone who has caused us loss can be the hardest forgiveness of all. Grief is the search for answers to unanswerable questions. It takes time to find peace, but it will happen.

Forgiveness is God's story and because of that it will be our story as well. We have His Spirit in us to assure we will get there, so don't give up. Our ability to forgive is His miracle. We can trust that He can do that miracle in us.

If there is any good reason to pray for the ability to forgive it is because Satan gets the glory if we don't. It's a harsh reality that evil puts chains on our own hearts if we refuse to start the process to forgive.

Forgiveness takes holding onto to our redemption so tightly that we begin to release the judgement of others.