

30th of December 2018

Forgiveness Pt2 Motivation for forgiveness – obedience

This is our second study on “forgiveness”. We previously established that (1) in relation to God “forgiveness” means – sins are covered and not remembered, (2) for Israel “forgiveness” did not mean they were cleared of guilt, and (3) in relation to brethren – “forgiveness” means – comfort and letting go such that Satan does not get an advantage over us, and “forgiveness” includes repentance. In this study we establish that motivation to forgive our brethren stems from – (1) obedience to God, (2) Christ’s forgiveness of our sins and (3) compassion for our brethren.

Scriptures upon which this teaching is founded.

1. We forgive our brethren in obedience to the commandment to –

“be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another” (Eph.4: 32). See also Lk.17: 3 & 4, Col.3: 13.

2. We forgive others because Christ forgives us.

“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Col.3: 13). See also Eph.4: 32.

Interestingly – Christ taught – if we “do not forgive men their trespasses neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses (Matt.6:12–14). See also Matt.18: 35.

3. Compassion for our brethren moves us to forgive their sin.

“Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt” (Matt.18: 27).

Interestingly – God forgives because of His compassion for us – “But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity” (Ps.78: 38).

An illustration to help apply the teaching to our life today.

Our previous teaching looked at the meaning of the word “forgiveness”, and asked how can anyone not understand what it means to forgive another person. And we identified that non-believers struggle with the concept because they have no knowledge of God’s forgiveness because they reject God, hence there is no law and no need for repentance. Perhaps that is why God commands those in the body of Christ, to – prefer one another (1Tim.5: 21) and marry in the Lord (1 Cor.7: 39).

Question to think about.

When a husband and wife (in the Lord) trespass against each other (and they inevitably will) – they both come to the scriptures to reconcile, and the one that has sinned, confesses,repents and the other forgives. How does forgiveness and reconciliation take place in a marriage where they are unequally yoked?

Our answer from the scriptures.

The believer is motivated to forgive – seventy times seven, because –

* they are commanded to do so (albeit toward their brethren – Matt.18: 21 & 22), and

* they are forgiven by Christ.

But the unbelieving spouse does not believe the scriptures (other wise they would be a Christian) hence they would not be motivated to forgive out of submission to God, nor because they are forgiven, but only because of compassion for their spouse (if they understand the need to forgive). Consequently Paul teaches that for those couples where one is a believer and the other not – “if the unbelieving depart, let him depart” (1 Cor.7: 15), and “if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband” (verse 11). And for reconciliation forgiveness is needed, which is motivated by – obedience to God, because Christ forgives us, and compassion for our brethren.