



Gospel-Centered Life Class

Session V: Forgiveness

Bible Conversation

Matthew 18:21-35

The Gospel Empowers Us to Forgive

The beginning:

The gospel begins with God's movement _____ us. _____ God takes the initiative though he is the offended party. He _____ to reconcile the relationship "while we were God's enemies" according to Romans 5:10. He had every right to condemn us, to resist us, and to sever the relationship, but he did not. Instead, _____ toward us. Romans 5:8 says, "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Our response:

However, reconciliation with God requires our repentance. God extends the offer of reconciliation, but reconciliation is not complete until we _____ and receive his forgiveness by _____.

Notice how both dynamics are reflected in 2 Corinthians 5:19-20,

“God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore God’s ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.”

Ephesians 2:8-9 says,

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

So we might summarize God’s forgiveness this way: By moving toward us, God _____ and _____ us to move toward Him.

The natural outflow of forgiveness:

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you” (Eph. 4:32). Scripture assumes that if we have truly experienced God’s forgiveness in the gospel, we will be radically forgiving toward others.

Our forgiveness of others is intended to _____ the forgiveness God has given us. We are to take the initiative. Matthew 5:23 and 24 is clear on this. “If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”

Our heart’s desire is not simply to forgive the offense but ultimately to see the other person _____ to God and to

us. We want to see _____ power over this person destroyed. We cannot make this happen, but:

- we are to pray for it,
- long for it, and
- welcome it.

The gospel empowerment:

When we say, “I just can’t forgive that person for what he did to me,” we are essentially saying, “That person’s sin is greater than mine.” Our awareness of our own sin is very _____, while our awareness of another’s sin is very _____. Our underlying feeling is that we _____ to be forgiven but the person who offended us does not.

But when we embrace a gospel perspective on our own sin, we recognize that the sin debt God has forgiven on our behalf is greater than any sin that has been committed against us.

As the significance of Jesus’ work on the cross grows in our consciousness, our willingness and ability to seek restoration with others will also grow. After all, if God forgave the massive offense of our sin against Him, how could we not forgive the sin of others – which, though it may be severe, pales in comparison with our own guilt before a holy and righteous God?