

LHCF Sermon Discussion Guide

Pastor Barry Tuggle



Connecting with God: The Lord's Prayer—Part 5B The Importance of Forgiveness

"Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors"
Matt. 6:12

1. Why should I forgive? Matt. 18

- Because I've been forgiven *"The servant's master took pity on him, canceled his debt, and let him go."* Matt. 18:27
"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as in Christ, God forgave you." Eph. 4:32
- Because Un-forgiveness only hurts me *"Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you? In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured..."* Matt. 18:33-34
"To worry yourself to death with resentment it would be a foolish, senseless thing to do." Job 5:2
- Because I need forgiveness everyday *"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."* Matt. 18:35

2. Barriers to forgiveness:

- My anger protects me
- It's not fair/just
- Forgiveness sends the wrong message...it's OK

3. Four steps of forgiveness Psalm 69:

- Hurt *"Save me, O God, for the floodwaters are up to my neck. Deeper and deeper I sink into the mire; I can't find a foothold. I am in deep water, and the floods overwhelm me. I am exhausted from crying... My eyes are swollen with weeping, waiting for my God to help me. Those who hate me without cause outnumber the hairs on my head. Many enemies try to destroy me with lies, demanding that I give back what I didn't steal."* Psalm 69:1-4
- Anger *"Pour out your fury on them; consume them with your burning anger. Let their homes become desolate and their tents be deserted. To the one you have punished, they add insult to injury; they add to the pain of those you have hurt. Pile their sins up high, and don't let them go free. Erase their names from the Book of Life..."* Psalm 69:24-28
- Healing *"The humble will see their God at work and be glad. Let all who seek God's help be encouraged. For the LORD hears the cries of the needy; he does not despise his imprisoned people."* Psalm 69:32-33
- Honoring *"Praise him, O heaven and earth, the seas and all that move in them. For God will save Jerusalem and rebuild the towns of Judah. His people will live there and settle in their own land. The descendants of those who obey him will inherit the land..."* Psalm 69:34-36

Small Group Life:

Remember the Bible's antidote to resentment is forgiving those who have wronged us...

Four steps of forgiveness found in Psalm 69:

- Hurt: *Psalm 69:1-4*
 - David starts by feeling...hurt.
 - Notice the terms he uses “I, me, my”.
 - He is exploring the wounds within himself.
 - Vulnerable stage.
 - Why forgiveness often doesn’t “stick”! We haven’t looked and acknowledged thoroughly our wounds.

- Anger: *Psalm 69:24-28*
 - This is the stage where we saying all the things to the person that we couldn’t or wouldn’t say to their face...battle field!
 - Only problem is we are in the battle and only exhausting ourselves.
 - Notice the terms David uses...them, their, they
 - Goes so far as to ask God to banish them to hell...
 - Remember the Bible says to be angry, and sin not
 - Helpful to have a safe person, to offer a listening ear
 - This stage not as painful, why many get stuck here

- Healing *Psalm 69:32-33*
 - This stage David now having eyes to see God at work.
 - Notice the terms used now are “God at work... God’s help... the Lord hears”
 - Three things David does in this stage:
 - #1Notice “humble” who will see their God at word and be glad
 - Pride is always behind unforgiveness...Pride says
 - I don’t care
 - It didn’t bother me
 - I demand justice
 - Remember swallowing your pride isn’t easy, but it is not as hard as we make it
 - #2 “Let all who seek God’s help be encouraged...”
 - Not sure if we can truly forgive the big offenses on our own
 - Seeking God’s help not the same as asking “why did it happen?”

- Ask Jesus to help you let it go
 - #3 “...the Lord hears the cries of the needy”
 - Common after hurts to become needless/wantless
 - We begin to isolate, avoid, distance
 - Hope is realized in of Ro. 8:28 “*We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who are called according to His purposes*”.
 - This stage reveals the emerging confidence in God’s nature and that things will be blessed regardless of our circumstances.
-
- Honoring: *Psalm 69:34-36*
 - Final stage we see evil-doers as God see’s them.
 - Terms “Jerusalem...towns of Judah...His people...descendants” refer to God’s heart of love, honor and respect toward all the peoples of the earth.
 - Old saying that if I can’t see value in someone that God loves than I have a vision problem.
 - Read Jesus words in Matt. 5:43-48.

"You're familiar with the old written law, 'Love your friend,' and its unwritten companion, 'Hate your enemy.' I'm challenging that. I'm telling you to love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the energies of prayer, for then you are working out of your true selves, your God-created selves. This is what God does. He gives his best — the sun to warm and the rain to nourish — to everyone, regardless: the good and bad, the nice and nasty. If all you do is love the lovable, do you expect a bonus? Anybody can do that. If you simply say hello to those who greet you, do you expect a medal? Any run-of-the-mill sinner does that. "In a word, what I'm saying is, Grow up. You're kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you.

Mission or Ministry as appropriate – Who can you invite to your group or minister to that are having trouble trusting God...don’t let them battle that alone, help them get in a small group and open up!