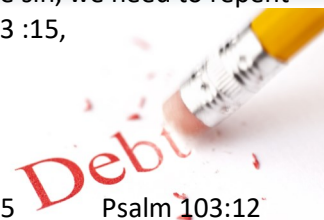


Introduction Forgiveness begins with an acceptance that right and wrong exist. When we sin, we need to repent 1 John 1:9. The major theme of the whole Bible is God restoring a fallen people. Genesis 3 :15,

What is real forgiveness?

1. Cancelling a debt owed. Luke 11 :4, Colossians 2 :14
2. A gift, unearned. Total grace. Ephesians 1 :7
3. Turning from revenge Romans 12 :19
4. An ongoing process, cannot forgive then go back and dig up what is forgiven! Isaiah 43 :25 Psalm 103:12
5. Wanting good for the offender Luke 6 :27-31



Forgiveness from God God is a forgiving God. Part of his character. Exodus 34 :6-7, Psalm 86 :5 Daniel 9 :9, Micah 7 :18-19 Jesus showed forgiveness Luke 23 :34

In Old Testament times The word Forgive is not a Hebrew word. There are several words used;

1. *Salach* Pardon Exodus 34 :8-9 Psalm 103 :3
2. *Kipper* Atonement or to cover Leviticus 4 :20 19:22 3.
3. *Nasa* To lift up, to carry, to take Genesis 32 :20 Exodus 34 :7 Sin is seen as a burden to be lifted Leviticus 16 :22 In forgiveness the weight is removed In OT times, sacrifices were part of the forgiveness process (Leviticus ch 4-6).
But God couldn't easily be 'bought off' Amos 4:4 Psalm 51 :16-17 God required a heart repentance.
Abraham found forgiveness through faith before the Law was given Galatians 3 :6-9



Questions

How would you define forgiveness?

What did Jesus achieve on the cross? The theory behind how we get our forgiveness from God

1. Expiation Expiation means the removal of our sin and guilt. Christ's death removes — expiates — our sin and guilt. The guilt of our sin was taken away from us and placed on Christ, who discharged it by his death. John 1:29, Hebrews 9:26

2. Propitiation Whereas expiation refers to the removal of our sins, propitiation refers to the removal of God's wrath. Hebrews 2:17, 1 John 4:10

3. Reconciliation Whereas expiation refers to the removal of our sins, and propitiation refers to the removal of God's wrath, reconciliation refers to the removal of our alienation from God. Romans 5:10-11:

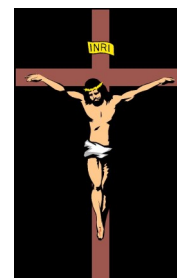
4. Redemption Our sins had put us in captivity from which we need to be delivered. The price that is paid to deliver someone from captivity is called a "ransom." To say that Christ's death accomplished redemption for us means that it accomplished deliverance from our captivity through the payment of a price. Galatians 3:13-14 Romans 3:24

5. Defeated the Powers of Darkness Christ's death was a defeat of the power of Satan Colossians 3:15

6. Substitution or '**Penal substitution**' Substitution is at the heart of the atonement. Christ accomplished all of the above benefits for us by dying in our place — that is, by dying instead of us. We deserved to die, and he took our sin upon him and paid the penalty himself. Galatians 2:20, 2 Corinthians 5:21

The totality of our forgiveness When God forgives, he does a proper job! Isaiah 43 :25, Psalm 103 :12, Romans 8 :1

After Forgiveness We are called to be agents of forgiveness. Col 3 :13 Matthew 18 :23-35 - Parable of Unforgiving Servant. We are called upon to be messengers of God's forgiveness Luke 24 :47



What is the unforgivable sin? Mark 3:28-30, Matthew 12:30-33, It is the Spirit that prompts us to repent. Blaspheming the Holy Spirit is a total rejection of God. If you are worried that you have committed it, that is evidence you haven't! When person rejects God they will never repent. Revelation 16 :9 Pharaoh hardened his heart, then God hardened it.

Practical Points

1. It's the people closest to us that are the hardest to forgive. "To live above, with saints we love, that will be glory. To live below, with the saints we know, that's quite a different story!" - Anon
2. As people can hurt & offend us, we hold them guilty before us.
3. We are called to forgive. Ephesians 4 :32 Colossians 3 :13
4. It's not easy! Luke 17 :3-4 but notice v5 comes next!
"Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive." - C.S.Lewis
5. There is no limit to our forgiveness Matthew 18 ;21-22
6. We should try and take the initiative with the issue Matthew 5 :23-24 However some people will never accept our forgiveness. The person who does wrong might feel guilty, The victim however is likely to feel bitter and wear the victim badge. Forgiveness is not reconciliation, that takes two. However, forgiveness opens door to reconciliation Sometimes we have to leave it with God Romans 12 :19
7. We need to even want to bless those who have hurt us Matthew 5 :44, 1 Peter 3 :9
8. The person you are forgiving may never accept they did wrong.
9. Forgiveness does not condone wrong. A crime needs to be addressed by the state. Forgiveness does not require a person to remain in an abusive or dangerous situation.
10. We need to keep remembering how much we constantly need forgiveness. John 8 :7
It's not about what people deserve, none of us deserves forgiveness.



Questions

How is God's forgiveness different from ours?

Grudges We have all been hurt by the actions of others, particularly those who are, or have been, close to us. To hold a grudge is a natural human reaction. Yet, God wants us to be a forgiving people, who do not hold on to our grudges, Matthew 6:12, Ephesians 4: 31-32. In fact, God commands us to even love our enemies Matthew 5:44
When we hold grudges we should;

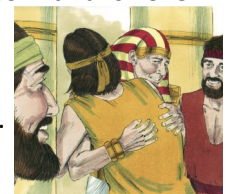
- A. Recognise what is in our hearts. Be honest with ourselves Psalm 139:23-24
- B. Admit it is a sin against God. He doesn't hold on to grudges against us.
- C. Maybe tell someone, who has nothing to do with the situation. James 5 :16
- D. Pray for the person who hurt you.
- E. Remember, there are many people who have had to cope with you over the years!



RT Kendall

How do we know if we have fully forgiven? Story of Joseph (From RT Kendall's *Proofs of Total Forgiveness*)

1. You don't tell others of what someone has done to you Genesis 45 :1-2 (unless crime)
2. Don't be afraid of the person, or instil fear in them. Genesis 45 :4
3. Don't let them feel guilty. Genesis 45 :5 You want them set free! Jesus on cross Luke 23 :34 I Corinthians 13 :5 (NIV inc in most translations) Keep no list of wrongs
4. You let them save face. Genesis 45 :5 - 'God did it' Don't rub their noses in it, not self righteous
5. Protect them. Genesis 45 :9-13 He told his brothers what to say, no mention of their bad deeds.
6. It's for life. Genesis 50 :15
7. You can bless the person Genesis 50 :19-21



Forgiving ourselves

1. God wants you to forgive yourselves. The Devil doesn't want you to. Revelation 12 :10 - accuser
2. If we don't forgive ourselves, we are not then accepting the forgiveness God offers.
3. We need to leave what lies behind Philippians 3 :12-14
"When we confess our sins, God casts them into the deepest ocean, gone forever-- Then God places a sign out there that says 'No Fishing Allowed'" - Corrie Ten Boom
4. When you have forgiven yourself, you will be better forgiving other people too.

Questions

Questions or comments?

Next time - Spending time with God