

# Luke 17:3-10

## Guest Speaker: Pastor Marshall Fant

April 9, 2017

### **I Do, But I Won't: Forgiveness Within the Marriage Covenant.**

Have you ever dealt with a blocked pipe? Water cannot drain where it needs to; instead, all kinds of contaminants can seep into what was clean water. And it stinks, at that! If relationships are a pipe, sin blocks fellowship from flowing between two parties. Proverbs 28:13 says that concealing our sin prevents the Lord's blessing, but confession and forsaking sin clears our relationships with God and others.

### **Forgiveness is given to us by God.**

We must get our primary relationship with God right before we can seek or grant forgiveness to others. When we turn to Him in repentance and trust, God promises to cleanse us from unrighteousness, to remove our sins, and to remember them no more. (See John 1:9; Psa. 103:12; Isa. 43:25; Jer. 31:34; Heb. 10:17.) This truth is a great help when we are called to forgive others or ask forgiveness.

### **Forgiveness is given to others by us. (Luke 17:3-10)**

You must approach the offender (verse 3).

- Christians must be “approachable.”
- One that is “approachable” is open to hearing from the Word of God, the Spirit of God, and those that love them.
- Husbands and wives must be “approachable.”
- Scripture does not allow for sin to go unchecked or unaddressed. (See Matt. 5:21-26; 18:15-20.)

You must forgive the offender when he or she asks forgiveness (verses 3-10), even if they ask 7 times a day!

- Common excuse #1 (verses 3-4): “I will forgive when I see the fruit in their life.”

People often use Matthew 7:15-20 to support this excuse, but that passage is found in the context of false teachers. This is an unbiblical excuse because we must accept offenders' repentance based upon their word, not their actions. Fruit takes a long time to grow, and we must be patient.

- Common excuse #2 (verses 5-6): “I just do not have enough faith.”

The disciples' response to Jesus essentially says, "You've got to be kidding!" They thought it would require an immense amount of faith to forgive seven times a day. Yet this excuse too is

unbiblical because forgiveness is not a matter of faith; it is a matter of obedience. Jesus was concerned that they had faith, not with how much.

- Common excuse #3 (verses 7-10): “I do not feel like forgiving them. You do not understand how much they have hurt me.”

This excuse is unbiblical because it is not a matter of feeling, but a matter of obedience. The servant obeyed his master against his feelings. We are still responsible to forgive those who sin against us as a continuous pattern. This is not to say that we keep trusting them; that is a different issue that is dealt with separately.

### **Forgiveness is given to us by others.**

When we have sinned, we must first go quickly to God. It is primarily Him we have wronged (Luke 15:18). Thankfully, He is both all-knowing and all-loving!

Then we must go quickly to the others whom we have offended. Disrupted relationships must be taken care of before we can worship. (See Mark 5:23-26, 1 Peter 5:8, and Revelation 12:10). Face to face is the best way to do this.

Remember that asking forgiveness is different from apologizing; it is a transaction. If it is difficult to humble yourself, remember the forgiveness we are given by God.

### **Application Points**

- Is there sin disrupting your fellowship with God? Ask His forgiveness for these things first.
- Keep your heart right for worship by asking forgiveness from anyone you have wronged. Take the "legal pad challenge": Write a list of everyone you can think of whom you have offended. Then ask God to bring them your way. As you have opportunity, tell each person that you have sinned against them and against God and ask them to forgive you. You will be amazed at how God brings people into your path, and at the grace, joy, and peace that will result from restored relationships!
- God's standard for forgiveness is high. We must forgive even if the same person offends us 7 times a day! Are you holding sins against anyone? Do you have a list, mental or physical, of ways people have offended you? Ask God to give you the grace to let these go, and then do so.
- What if the person who has offended you is out of reach? What if they don't ask for forgiveness? Our responsibility is still to stand ready to forgive. Meditate on these verses: Ephesians 4:32, Psalm 86:5, and Mark 11:25.

## **A Hymn to Encourage: "Whiter Than Snow"**

Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole;  
I want Thee forever to live in my soul;  
Break down every idol, cast out every foe—  
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

*Whiter than snow, yes, whiter than snow,  
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

Lord Jesus, look down from Thy throne in the skies,  
And help me to make a complete sacrifice;  
I give up myself, and whatever I know—  
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Lord Jesus, for this I most humbly entreat,  
I wait, blessed Lord, at Thy crucified feet,  
By faith for my cleansing, I see thy blood flow—  
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Lord Jesus, Thou seest I patiently wait;  
Come now and within me a new heart create;  
To those who have sought Thee, Thou never said'st "No"—  
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.