

I STILL Believe (Part 6)

Sunday, September 13, 2020

SERIES TEXT:

Luke 18:8 (NIV)

8 ...I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

As we continue our series about foundational principles of faith and the importance of holding on to them; I want to remind you of what we have said so far...

1. **I Still Believe** in the One, Eternal, Self-existent God, creator of the heavens and the earth, all that is seen and unseen; His love of and desire to reveal himself and have relationship with those whom he has created.
2. **I Still Believe** in the Trinity of the Godhead as being revealed as embodying the principles of relationship and association as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. **I Still Believe** that sin separates us from God and that the result of that sin is death or eternal separation from God in Hell
4. **I Still Believe** that God's remedy for Sin is Salvation by grace, through faith in Jesus and His work upon the cross.
5. **I Still Believe** that we are called to walk, by that same faith, in relationship with Jesus Christ, allowing the presence of His Holy Spirit to transform us into a new creation
6. **I Still Believe** that The Bible is God's Holy Word. That The Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct.
7. **I Still Believe** that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues is the gift Jesus promised to all who believe
8. **I still Believe** in The Church
9. **I Still Believe** in The Ministry and its offices as given by God to the Church
10. **I Still Believe** that God Answers Prayer
11. **I Still Believe** in Divine Healing
12. **I Still Believe** God Provides

I Still Believe (Part 6)

I Still Believe God wants us to Forgive

KEY TEXTS:

Colossians 3:12-13

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **13** Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. **Forgive as the Lord forgave you.**

Matthew 6:14-15

For if **you forgive other people when they sin against you**, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

I still believe that God wants us to forgive. The issue of forgiveness is foundational to our Spiritual life.

“Forgiveness is God’s invention for coming to terms with a world in which, despite their best intentions, people are unfair to each other and hurt each other deeply. He began by forgiving us. And he invites us all to forgive each other. Forgiving seems almost unnatural. Our sense of fairness tells us people should pay for the wrong they do. But forgiving is love’s power to break nature’s rule. To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.”

– Lewis B. Smedes, **Forgive and Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve**

Thoughts on Forgiveness

Forgiveness is Gods will for our lives

- This isn't optional
- Our key texts make it clear that this is a command of God
- When we refuse to forgive, it breaks the heart of God. How do I know this? Because I am a parent and I know how much it breaks my heart when my kids are angry with each other, when they refuse to forgive and when they are not walking in right relationship with each other.
- But I want you to remember that God will not ask us to do anything that He will not give us the power to do. While we may not be able to forgive in our own strength, God will give strength to those who are willing to walk by faith in obedience to His word even when they may not know how it will be accomplished.

Matthew 19:26

26 Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

Sometimes forgiveness is easy

Sometimes Forgiveness is incredibly difficult

- How many times (Repeat Offenders)

Matthew 18:21-22

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but **seventy-seven times**

- Jonah (Violent and Vicious Offenders)

Jonah 4:1-3

4 But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. 2 He prayed to the Lord, “Isn’t this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. 3 Now, Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.”

Forgiveness means clearing someone’s debt

- As we forgive our debtors

Colossians 2:13-14

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.

Forgiveness does not mean minimizing the offense

Forgiveness is not justification of their actions

“When we forgive evil we do not excuse it, we do not tolerate it, we do not smother it. We look the evil full in the face, call it what it is, let its horror shock and stun and enrage us, and only then do we forgive it.”

— **Lewis B. Smedes**

Forgiveness is not dependent on someone else receiving it

- We don't focus on what the other person has done or what they will or won't do but on what we can do

Romans 12:17-21

17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. **18** If it is possible, **as far as it depends on you**, live at peace with everyone. **19** Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. **20** On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." **21** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Forgiveness does not mean that relationship will be restored

- The greatest example of this is the forgiveness that God has offered us in Jesus Christ. The relationship aspect of the forgiveness is dependent on our asking for that forgiveness and our ongoing desire to walk in relationship with him
- God is not asking you to sacrifice your own safety and well-being to walk in relationship with someone who refuses to repent or change but He does want you to forgive them

Not forgiving is detrimental to our lives

- Health

Whether it's a simple spat with your spouse or long-held resentment toward a family member or friend, unresolved conflict can go deeper than you may realize—it may be affecting your physical health. The good news: Studies have found that the act of forgiveness can reap huge rewards for your health, lowering the risk of heart attack; improving cholesterol levels and sleep; and reducing pain, [blood pressure](#), and levels of anxiety, depression and stress. And research points to an increase in the forgiveness-health connection as you age.

"There is an enormous physical burden to being hurt and disappointed," says Karen, director of the Mood Disorders Adult Consultation Clinic at The Johns Hopkins Hospital. Chronic anger puts you into a fight-or-flight mode, which results in numerous changes in heart rate, blood pressure and [immune response](#). Those changes, then, increase the risk of depression, heart disease and diabetes, among other conditions. Forgiveness, however, calms stress levels, leading to improved health.

- Our relationships

- Our prayers

Matthew 5:23-24

²³ “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

- Our own forgiveness

- Our Spiritual Strength

“Offended people still may experience miracles, words of utterance, strong preaching, and healing in their lives. But these are gifts of the Spirit, not fruits. We will be judged according to fruit, not gifting. A gift is given. Fruit is cultivated.”

– **John Bevere, The Bait Of Satan: Living Free from the Deadly Trap of Offense**

- Our testimony and someone else’s salvation

Unforgiveness is a weapon the enemy uses to destroy our lives

Forgiveness can be a long process

Forgiveness means letting go of the past and saying goodbye to the pain

Forgiveness doesn’t absolve people from the consequences of their actions

Forgiveness is in great part determined by our understanding of how much we have been forgiven

“A PERSON WHO CANNOT FORGIVE HAS FORGOTTEN HOW GREAT A DEBT GOD HAS FORGIVEN THEM.”

– **John Bevere, The Bait of Satan: Living Free from the Deadly Trap of Offense**

1 Corinthians 2:12

What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us

- Freely you have received freely give

Matthew 10:8

8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.

- Communion

Ephesians 1:3-8

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding,

Ephesians 4:31-32

31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. **32** Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.