

Pt 6 - **Offering God's Grace to others**

"Forgiveness is a great idea until we have to practice it!"

...Theme

We need to be gracious to others, to forgive others who've hurt us because God has been gracious to us. If we can't forgive, we need to pause a minute and realize we will never have to forgive anyone else more than Jesus Christ has already forgiven us. It is better to forgive and forget than to resent and to remember!

The more grace you receive from God the more gracious you're going to be to others.
The more forgiven you feel by God, the more forgiving you're going to tend to be toward others.

1 Corinthians 11:23-24

What is the undercurrent of this passage? **"LOVE!"**

If we want to see love at its best – then we must see it in the time of adversity.

Will our love stand the strain of conflict?

The difference of opinion?

Will our love stand the strain of betrayal?

The strain of a broken trust?

1 Peter 4:8 *...love that covers the multitude of sins.*

The love of Christ stands out here so clearly in this passage.

Are we quick to see other people's wrongdoing and bring condemnation?

... Forgiving the unforgivable.

C.S. Lewis said *"We all agree that forgiveness is a beautiful idea until we have to practice it."*

Is there anything as unforgivable as the ultimate Betrayal of our friends that leads to death?
Christ forgave it and refused to let it stand between Him and His disciples.

We forgive to the degree of our love.

Jesus was able to forgive Judas right there and then, knowing all. We need to understand that Christ does the same to us. He is willing to express His love to us when we do something wrong.

... Refuse to let wrongdoing destroy relationships.

Jesus refused to let the sin of betrayal stand between Him and the disciples.

Jesus' response was that He forgave which reveals His gracious nature and heart.

How do we respond to people who betray or wrong us?

Do we let it stand? Do we form a grudge?

You know the heaviest load any of us can carry on our back is a pack of grudges.

Are we willing to let it go? Do we set conditions?

... Forgiveness is not an emotion; it is a decision of the will!

The best way to get even is to forget! It is far better to forgive and forget than to resent and remember!

1 Peter 5:8-9

If we allow unforgiveness to take root, then the enemy will have a territory to stake a claim.

Unforgiveness is like a cancerous growth, once discovered it needs to be cut out, otherwise it will spread and the results will be disastrous.

Forgiveness is not an occasional act; it is a permanent attitude.

Matthew 18:15-21

Peter asks the Lord, "How many times"? I wonder who Peter needed to forgive?

Peter was feeling pretty generous this day! He was willing to forgive 7 times. In the Jewish law you forgave 3 times then wrote them off!

Every day we are candidates to being wronged against. We all have people who hurt us. The issue is Not whether we get knocked, hurt or wounded! The issue is, ARE we going to forgive them.

Peter was stunned by Jesus' reply. (See v:22)

Jesus was hoping Peter would develop a habit of forgiveness.

Jesus wants us to develop this attitude. **Forgiveness is not an occasional act – but a permanent attitude!**

Mark 11:25 (nlt) *But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too."*

Ephesians 4:32 (nlt) *Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*

Colossians 3:13 (nlt) *You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.*

The bigness of a man and women is in the number of little things they are able to over look in others.

What is our attitude today?

Do we occasionally forgive? Or,
do we live in an attitude of forgiveness?

Mathew 18:15

Maybe you need to go to the person you need to forgive and bring reconciliation.

Refuse to allow unforgiveness to destroy relationships. Jesus said on the Cross "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

... Take home point

When we forgive, we may not change the past in anyway – but we sure can change the future!