

Title: When you pray forgive
Passage: Matthew 6:12, Matthew 18: 21 - 35
Date: 2 July 2017
Speaker: Jason Hoet
Series: When you Pray

[PPT]

Read Matthew 18: 21 - 35

[PPT]

If you had a chance to make up a new religion what would it be like?

For me - it would include beach front locations, plenty of energetic crazy fun, less talking more doing, and Bono and U2 leading worship. But I would not include a God of grace who readily forgives those who don't deserve it.

No-one would include that. It's just completely unnatural.

- We teach our children wrong actions have consequences.
- In a just world, you shouldn't get away with sin. No-one would predict a God who forgives.

[PPT]

Yet, this is the heart of the Christian message.

An incredible, fundamental truth – God in his grace forgives our sins completely, through Jesus.

Check how well you understand the outrageousness of it all - consider these categories:

Not too bad

- You get angry and yell at your family on the way home from church. Forgiven?
- Because of your anxiety you are controlling and demanding
- You are incredibly critical - very negative towards others

Not good

- You have an addiction that grabs your life for many years - drugs, alcohol, pornography
- You completely ignore God for years - pretend he doesn't exist
- You mess up your marriage, hurting your partner, your kids and yourself.

Really bad

- You live your life loathing God and Christians.
- You kill an unborn child by abortion.
- You take a precious child and sexually abuse him or her over years.
- You rape and murder an old lady.
- You raise a vigilante group to torture and brutally kill Christians.

When would you stop forgiving?

Where is your line?

[PPT]

God's capacity to forgive challenges us. We would never guess how amazing God's grace is. It has to be revealed by God - through Scriptures, in Jesus, by HS.

- David & Bathsheba
- Peter and Denial
- Paul and persecutor
- Jesus and Cross - Father forgive them for they don't know what they're doing.

This is incredible. Seemingly no line drawn. God's forgiveness is offered freely, but not cheaply. Jesus death covers every sin. It defies the natural processes around us. It's so foreign. It's so unfair. But if



it's not true, then frankly we are all in trouble.

[PPT]

In our reading the first servant owed 10 000 Talents - an impossibly great debt. This is the reading of Jesus on our lives with God. We are deep trouble.

We ought drop to our knees and beg.
Paul "all have sinned"

If there is no grace, it is not simply the ethically and morally depraved who are in trouble, we all are!

Jesus urges us to pray to our God to "Forgive us our debts".
This is deeper than simply financial debt trouble

This week - things I say, do, feel...
Worry, frustration, time and attention, tone

But aren't we all the same. We're just broken people. For example:

- don't trust God to really have the best for us - how experienced so many times
- feel that we have to do God's work - achieve things - earn his acceptance
- forget that life is a gift - get so bogged down with worries and pressures
- move away from God so easily
- give in to the same temptation when know it's wrong and damaging

Debt upon Debt upon Debt.

We may fall on our knees, beg "and I will pay back everything" - useless, where do you even start?

Shows clearly we fail to appreciate the sum of our debts

I can easily acknowledge I have a few sins. But it is my many sins which bring into focus being forgiven much

Instead of begging, Jesus teaches to fall on our knees and pray, "Forgive us our debts Lord"

Jesus believes it so important we understand the fulness of this, he singles it out for comment after teaching his disciples to pray:

Matt6:14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

[PPT]

The issue here is whether the forgiveness sought from God is mirrored in the attitude of those pray.

In the parable of Unmerciful Servant - 18:23 God's forgiveness comes first, but is withdrawn when the person forgiven fails to forgive another. If we believe it is perfectly fine to withhold forgiveness from another, and yet at the same time seek God for mercy, God will see it for what it is - hypocrisy.

The frightening lesson here is the person who is unwilling to forgive will meet their equal in God.

We forgive because we seek reconciliation.

Note Jesus says we forgive the 'debtors' not debts - God's concern and ours is with reconciling personal relationships.

- This is not to say forgiveness does not have consequence - David & Bathsheba & child
- This is not to say forgiveness does not have boundaries - relationship may never be the same again [ie marriage and now want to move on]

But forgiveness takes the first step towards reconciliation

Forgiveness is not forgetting - it is a different way of remembering.

We remember what has happened, but we no longer hold it against the person

Jesus teaches us is that God will not be reconciled with us if we will not reconcile with others.



God in love withholds forgiveness so we might deal with our sin of an unforgiving heart.

[PPT]

300 years ago Puritan preacher Thomas Watson reflecting on the Lord's prayer wrote this regarding what it means to forgive others.



“When we strive against all thoughts of revenge; when we will not do our enemies mischief, but wish well to them, grieve at their calamities, pray for them, seek reconciliation with them, and show ourselves ready on all occasions to relieve them.

(Thomas Watson, *Body of Divinity*, p. 581)”

A bitter challenge - esp for badly wounded.

NAIDOC? - easier if went for Justice week, not reconciliation week

This is why we pray

We not only seek the forgiveness of God, but also the capacity to forgive others

Often the people who hurt us the most are those closest to us
Our life partners, family, friends
UPBC is like a village. You people have history together. Hurt history. Painful history. Misunderstood history.

Where might unforgiveness lie for you?

Could it be your distant/restlessness with God is because of unforgiveness?



[PPT]

Response/Prayer/Connect cards

