

Jesus: The Pattern of Forgiveness

Intro: 1 Pet 2:21 – Jesus left an example, that we should follow in His steps. Nowhere is this more true than in His issuing of forgiveness.

1. Jesus' Willingness to Forgive

- A. The forgiveness of others' sins – Mk 2:3-12; Lk 7:47-48; Jn 8:11. Remember that all sins are against Jesus, for He is divine.
- B. Sins directed against Jesus personally – Lk 9:51-56 (Samaritans); Lk 22:31 (Peter's denial); Lk 23:34 (executioners).
- C. The most heinous crime ever perpetrated by the human race was the death of Jesus: blasphemed, falsely accused, physically abused, sun darkened, earth quaked and His life was gone. Yet these are the first people offered remission of sins under the terms of the new covenant – Ac 2:36-38.

2. Our Ability to Forgive

- A. Undoubtedly, we can be tremendously hurt by others. **Illus:** How hard was it for Jerusalem brethren to worship with Paul after his persecutions of their family?
 - 1. We must forgive in order to be forgiven – Mt 6:12, 14-15. Our ability to put personal feelings aside and grant forgiveness is based upon our own forgiveness from God. See parable Mt 18:21ff.
 - 2. We cannot carry grudges, bitterness; we cannot avenge ourselves of wrongs suffered. Such reactions are inwardly corrosive; they will destroy us.
 - 3. Yet how many churches split and families feuded over inability to forgive?
- B. Not only forgive, we must actively seek benefit, good of enemies – Mt 5:43-48; Rom 12:17-21. To fail in this is to be “overcome by evil.” The ultimate aim is to win our enemies' souls.
- C. The biggest challenge: learn to **forgive ourselves**. **Illus:** Christian sister who killed roommate while driving drunk (before conversion). How do you forgive yourself of the death of someone unsaved? Paul never forgot his role as persecutor of the church, *but he didn't let it prevent him from serving God and desiring heaven.*

3. Forgiveness: An Act of Strength

- A. Was Jesus **weak** because He freely forgave? No, He had the power to be uncon-

cerned about His personal interests. It is *weakness* that holds grudges, shoulders chips and grinds axes.

- B. Forgiveness is not merely overlooking the faults of others – Mt 18:15. Where a brother or sister needs to make correction for their soul, **go to them** (don't **wait for them to come**). If it is a matter of inadvertent, thoughtless slight or social blunder, ***forgive it, forget it and move on!***
- C. How much happier, stronger, more well-adjusted and peaceful we would be if we would learn to forgive as Jesus did!