TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Daniel Balch Opening Prayer by: Don Taylor
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#453 Love Lifted Me
#705 A Common Love

Scripture Reading by: Joseph Girard
#701 My Jesus I Love Thee

Communion Devotional by: Zach Arthur
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#469 Faith Is the Victory
Sermon: "Faith Loves"
James 1:27

#911 Bring Christ Your Broken Life
#7044 Bind Us Together
Closing Prayer by: Gus Trisan

Small Groups

Our Small Groups will meet tonight.
Ken Coleman's group will meet at the building at 5:00 p.m. If you have signed up and not been contacted, get with Bryant or one of the

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

Mar. 5, 2023

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Forgiving One Another

In looking at some of our everyday problems—inspired by our sermon series in **James**—last week, we considered anger; today, let's think about the related problem of forgiveness. How do we move from one to the other?

As we begin, I think it is worth nothing what forgiveness is *not.* It isn't merely ignoring those who wrong us. That's fine if it's because the offender is ignorant of what they did, but not if it is because we hold them in contempt. Forgiveness is more than a refusal to get even. We might not retaliate and still hold on to bitterness and bad feelings. Forgiveness is not merely ignoring sin. God does not overlook it, and we shouldn't either; in fact, we are repeatedly charged to rebuke, not ignore. Forgiveness is not putting someone on probation while we talk about how bad their behavior was and promise we will forget it if they just toe the line from here on out.

If we want to know what forgiveness is, we need to see how God forgives. And we see that most clearly in the person of Christ. As Paul puts it, *Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you* **(Eph 4:32).** We are to forgive each other just as Jesus exemplified on the cross! But that's not easy. How do we put aside our pain and pride?

Jesus himself addresses this in a parable in **Matthew 18.** This is in the context of Peter approaching him with a question: he knew the Lord wanted him to forgive others, so he asked how often he should do that. He even came up with a number—as many as 7 times? Some of us can't even manage once, so Peter thought he was setting the bar pretty high, higher than the rabbis of his day, in fact. But Jesus responded that we are to forgive as many as seventy times seven. Of course, that does not literally mean to count up 490 times, but to keep on forgiving as long as there is a need for it, far beyond what humans think is sufficient. Forgiveness is to be a way of life for God's people, because it reflects God himself.

Then Jesus tells the parable to drive the point home. We usually refer to this as the Unforgiving Servant. It's about a king settling up accounts. One of his servants owed him 10,000 talents. That doesn't mean much to us, but a talent was valued at 6,000 denarii; a single denarius was the standard wage for a day laborer. Do the math—he owed the equivalent of the wages for 60 million days of work! That's over 164,000 years with no days off! So when the servant falls to his knees and begs, *Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything* **(v. 26)**, it's

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ka'Leisha Jones, Linda Frank, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Donna Wilson, Bryan Senegal, Cynthis Deblanc, Patricia Prater, Richard Prater, Edna Semien, Wilson Semien, Gloria Moore, Betty Spencer, Willie Spencer, James Wilson

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh, Lois Watts, Willo Dean Ellis

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique , Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Deacons, Minister meet Monday, Mar. 6th at 6:30 p.m.

We will have a meal this Wednesday night at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

We will have a Blood Drive on Monday, March 6th from 4-8 p.m. in the fellowship room. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, March 7th at 8:00 a.m.

Primetimers will meet to Las Compadres in Hardin on Tuesday, March 14th at 6:00 p.m.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Thursday, March 16th at 8:00 a.m.

Elders	Deacons	Minister
Ken Coleman	Zach Arthur	Bryant Perkins
Bobby Rader	Daniel Balch	
Don Taylor	Danny Balch	
Robert Ward	Walden David	
	Gus Tristan	

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

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absurd—it is literally impossible for him to ever repay the debt, and the master knows it. So his debt is simply forgiven; he is released from a debt he could not possibly have paid.

That should have filled him with gratitude, motivating him to extend that same kindness to others. Unfortunately, that wasn't the case. This servant found one of his fellows who owed him 100 denarii, and if you do the math again, that's 100 days of work. For simplicity, if we think of $100 as a nice, round number for a day laborer's wage, this is about 6 trillion dollars compared to 10,000. It's an astronomical difference—a ludicrous picture—which is precisely the point. The forgiven servant would not forgive this small debt owed to him and had his fellow cast into prison instead. When the other servants saw that, they made it known to the king, who cast the unmerciful servant into prison for failing to show the kindness he had received.

What about us? This parable challenges us to shift our focus from how others treat us to how God treats us. God could make a long list of all we have done to hurt him, and our debt would be as overwhelming as the unmerciful servant's. Instead, he forgives us fully and freely. And just as the servant should have been motivated by the act of his master to mercy, the kindness of God should motivate us to forgive one another. That's Paul's point in the text quoted above.

What we really need in a lot of cases is an attitude adjustment. We are all ready with our excuses:

I cannot forgive. God does not require the impossible! What we really mean is I WILL NOT forgive. We appealed to Jesus' example already. But what about others in Scripture, like Stephen or Joseph?

I forgive you, but I won't have anything more to do with you. But we are called to forgive as God in Christ as forgiven us. Certainly, God has not "forgiven" us in that manner! I'm not even sure how we could meaningfully call that forgiveness.

I forgive you, but I'll never forget it. But God not only forgives sin—he forgets. The great promise of the new covenant in **Jeremiah 31:31-34** is *I will remember their iniquity no more.* He removes our sin as far as the east is from the west **(Ps 103:12).** He casts it into the depths of the sea **(Mic 7:19).** If we are to forgive as God forgives, then we must do likewise. We might not be able to erase it, to jus wipe it from our memory like God can. But we can choose not to dwell on it or speak of it.

If we want to be like God, we must forgive fully and completely, and we must forget. Forgiveness means the sin no longer exists. Jesus teaches that God will deal with us in this area the way we deal with others—if we hang on to those wrongs, God will too. And if he does, we are all lost. May God help us to overcome the problem of unforgiveness.

Bryant Perkins