TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

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

#453 Love Lifted Me
#643 Sowing the Seed of the Kingdom

Scripture Reading by: Parker Balch
#354 I Gave My Life for Thee

Communion Devotional by: Bobby Rader
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#535 The Glory-Land Way
Sermon: "Revive Us Again"
2 Chronicles 34:1-3

#650 Send the Light
#/895 I'll Live in Glory
Closing Prayer by: Gus Tristan

Don Taylor's small group will meet today at
5:00 p.m. at the building

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

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

Jan. 19, 2025

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Reflections on Forgiveness

As Christians, we are people who are forgiven by God; as a result, we are to be people who are forgiving. The forgiveness we extend to others is a result and reflection of the forgiveness God extends to us. Paul puts it: *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.* (**Ephesians 4:32)**. Of course, that is easier said than done. How do we put aside our hurt? Our pride? The key is in that verse: through Jesus. Consider what he teaches about showing forgiveness in **Matthew 18**.

Frequency of Forgiveness
We should understand the context first. **Matthew 18:15-20** records Jesus' teaching on how God's people should respond to a brother or sister caught in sin. You approach the offender privately; if that fails to produce repentance, you take a couple of others to encourage them and act as witnesses to the discussion; if and only if that fails, you go to the church. The key here is not to focus on some mechanical procedure, but the goal: at every stage, this is all about reconciliation and restoration.

That discussion probably caused Peter to wonder just how far we take that. *Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.* **(Matthew 18:21-22).** Peter did not pull that number 7 out of thin air. Some scholars say the rabbis taught to forgive someone 7 times; I've also seen more frequently that they required 3 times. And these were even the "liberal" rabbis—some taught you only needed to forgive <u>once</u> and no more! So Peter is not asking for less, and may have even been one-upping Jewish tradition.

But Jesus said we are to forgiven as many as 70 times 7! Obviously, that's not literal: the point is to keep on forgiving. Go far beyond what people think is enough. <u>Forgiveness is to be a way of life.</u>

The Unforgiving Servant
Jesus then drives it home with the parable we usually call the Unforgiving Servant. Pick up your bible and read **Matthew 18:23-35** so we don't take up too much space printing it here. Go on, I'll wait…

To put the numbers in perspective, a talent equaled 6,000 denarii; the denarius was a day's wage for a skilled laborer. In other words he owed 60 million denarii. The wages for 60 million days of work. You would have to work every single day for 164,000 years to pay that off. So when he says *have patience and I will pay you all of it*—he won't. It's absurd. It's impossible. And the master KNOWS it is impossible; he will NEVER repay it. So his debt is forgiven. He was forgiven of a debt he could not possibly have ever paid.

That should have moved him with gratitude to deal just that kindly with others. Of course, that wasn't the case. He found a fellow servant who owed him 100 denarii. Do the math again: that's 100 days of work. Less than 4 months. If we think of $100 as an easy, round number for a day laborer right now, we are talking $10,000 versus about 6 trillion dollars. That's an astronomical difference. The whole picture is ludicrous. And that's precisely the point.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Sharon Lartigue fell a week ago.

Winona Angelle has been placed on hospice.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Steve Ward, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Donna Wilson, Jo Ella McKewen, Oscar Cantu, Jennifer Stelly, Dr. Hugo Thomas, Steve Ward, Geri Cryer, Gloria McKelroy, Linda Frank, Scott Overton, Rickey Lucas, Debbie Lynn

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

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

Our Missionaries

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

Upcoming Activities

No Elders, Minister meeting this week.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, Feb. 4th at 8:00 a.m.

Food Bank

We served 116 families on Thursday, Jan. 16th at our food bank. That equals to 379 individuals. We had 15 volunteers.

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

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

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Website: libertycofc.org Facebook page: Liberty Church of Christ

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Extending Forgiveness

So what about us? We spend a lot of our lives focusing on what others have done to hurt us. That was the attitude of the unmerciful servant—and Peter, for that matter. But the parable challenged him, and us, to consider how God treats us. God could make a long list of all the things we have done to hurt him, and our debt would be as overwhelming as the unmerciful servant's. Thankfully that is not at all how he deals with us.

Just as the kindness of the master should have motivated the servant to mercy, God's kindness should motivate us to forgive each other. That's the point of the parable. But it's not enough to just consider that abstractly. We must apply it to ourselves. We are called to forgive as God forgave. *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

Paul stressed this same thing to Titus. He instructed him to challenge the church in Crete, *to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people* **(Titus 3:2).** That must have been a struggle—the Cretans had a bad reputation (cf. **Titus 1:12** – "Cretan" is an insult in English for a reason!). How could they get along with people like that? Well, Paul reminded them they were once like that too. *For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.* **(Titus 3:3).** But God, in kindness and love, showed them mercy anyway. *But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.* **(Titus 3:4-7).**

Those brothers and sisters in Crete were treated better than they deserved. They were expected to treat their neighbors in kind. And that same thing applies to all of us. We have all been treated by God better than we deserved. Therefore, we are to *be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

Remember: there is a direct link between how we treat others and how God treats us. The last verse of the parable says, *So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.* You could think here too of the Lord's Prayer: *Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors…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.* **(Matthew 6:12, 14-15).**

Do we really want God to forgive us like we forgive others? Can we honestly pray that prayer? If we hang on to those wrongs, God will too. And if he does—we are lost.

Bryant Perkins