

PM Sermon:

Danny M. Matchniff

January 18, 2009

Overcoming the Struggles of Forgiveness

Introduction: Forgiving people often comes with a great deal of personal struggle. According to Jesus in Matthew 6:9-15, our forgiveness by God will be dependent on our forgiveness of others. It is a vital part of our communications/relationships with one another and with God.

- I. Settling the Score
 - A. Peter asked, "How many times must I forgive my brother?" (Matt. 18:21-35)
 1. The master's point is a good one: the amount doesn't matter.
 2. God doesn't keep score when we repent.
 - B. Genuine forgiveness doesn't keep a score.
 1. Is forgiving forgetting?
 2. God's view of forgiveness. (Jer. 31:34)
 - C. Forgiveness keeps no score because it understands. (cf. Matt. 18:32-35)
- II. There Are Difficulties in Forgiving, But Not Without Resolution
 - A. Resentment: The feeling that "I've been wronged."
 1. It's easy to hold a grudge, and hard not to harbor ill feelings.
 2. Without forgiveness, relationships are without reconciliation. (1 Jn. 4:20-21)
 - B. Presumption: Assuming that "they really aren't sorry."
 1. It's difficult not to assume when trust is broken by repetition. (Prov. 17:9)
 2. "If I keep forgiving them, they'll keep doing it."
 - C. Retaliation: "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." (Matt. 5:36-42)
 1. Jesus said to do the hard thing. (Matt. 5:44)
 2. Forgiveness is the true matter of justice. (Lk. 17:3, 4)
 - D. Subsiding our anger, hatred, spite, and contempt. (Luke 23:34; Col. 3:12, 13; Eph. 4:31, 32)

Conclusion: Is your relationship with others of a forgiving nature or do you keep a score of what others have done to you and harbor that against

them? Too many relationships are ruined because of grudges and a lack of willingness to forgive, and work in God's kingdom suffers from it.

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