



FIGHT

FOR YOUR FAMILY

DECLARING WAR ON OUR SIN

JAN 30 - MAR 1

(4) "Unforgiveness"

HIGHLIGHT: *Matthew 5:23-24; Luke 17:4; Colossians 3:13*

H

Below are excerpts from the overall passage for use with the APPLICATION and RESPOND. It will be beneficial for the group to read the whole passage to understand the entire context.

Matthew 5:23-24 (NLT)

23 "So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, **24** leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God."

Luke 17:4 (NLT)

4 "Even if that person wrongs you seven times a day and each time turns again and asks forgiveness, you must forgive."

Colossians 3:13 (NLT)

13 Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

EXPLAIN

E

The purpose of this section is to deepen everyone's understanding of the Word.

It's the hardest thing to give away
And the last thing on your mind today
It always goes to those who don't deserve

It's the opposite of how you feel

When the pain caused is just too real
Takes everything you have just to say the word...

Forgiveness
Forgiveness

....

It'll clear the bitterness away
It can even set a prisoner free
There is no end to what its power can do
So, let it go and be amazed
By what you see through eyes of grace
The prisoner that it really frees is you

Forgiveness, Forgiveness
Forgiveness, Forgiveness

Matthew West, *Forgiveness*

Matthew 5:23-24 A lady who was in conflict with another lady about a decision that had been made closed our conversation by saying, "I could forgive her if she had done the right thing" (wow!). The other lady thought she *had* done the right thing. The result was a wounded relationship that festered for years. Forgiveness "is the hardest thing to give away."

In this text about **presenting a sacrifice (offering your gift [ESV and NIV])—and remembering that someone has something against you** (it could be something that you said against them [see vv.21 and 22]), the responsibility for **reconciliation** seems to fall on the offender: **leave your sacrifice at the altar, be reconciled to that person, and then come and offer your gift.** Perhaps more important in these verses than *who* initiates healing, is the reality that reconciliation trumps all other duties—even offerings made to God. "What is more pleasing to the Lord: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:13-23). Reconciliation is better than all the tithes and offerings I bring to the church.

Luke 17:4 As in Matthew 18:21-22, Luke reminds us that forgiveness is not a matter of arithmetic; it is a matter of the spirit. "Jesus said (the tense of the verb indicates that he *kept saying it*), 'Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing'" (Luke 23:34). If ever anyone had a right to keep count, it would have been Jesus as He was nailed to the cross.

Colossians 3:13 The Christian **makes allowance for other's faults, and forgives.** He does so because the Lord forgave him of a great debt (see Matthew 18:21-35). We must not disgrace grace. Paul closes this section (3:5-17) with these words: "Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus..." (v.17). William Barclay gives some good advice here: "Can we do it calling upon the name of Jesus? Can we do it asking for His help...Can we speak it, and can we in the same great name the name of Jesus? Can we speak it, remembering that He will hear, and asking Him to hear" (p.191, *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*). Can I say NO to forgiveness, and ask Jesus for His help? Forgiveness is not easy. Maybe a good place to begin today is by confessing: "Lord, I'm not willing to forgive, but I *am* willing to be made willing."

A

APPLY

Be comfortable with some silence as people think back to the sermon or reread the text. Answer honestly. You don't have to answer every question.

1. What stuck out to you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text?
2. Why do you think Jesus is so adamant in the importance of forgiveness ?
3. Have you ever struggled with forgiving someone who wronged you? Why is that so difficult for us?
4. Why is it important to start with the fact that "the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others"? (Colossians 3:13)

R

RESPOND

Be comfortable with some silence as people think back to the sermon or reread the text. Answer honestly. You don't have to answer every question. (In some cases, like abuse or other seriously painful sin against you, it is wise to seek pastoral/Godly counsel when thinking about forgiveness. While we can truly forgive from the heart in those instances, some issues are complex and difficult to work through. We want to care for each of you as best as we can. Please reach out if you need any help.)

1. On the cross, Jesus forgave those who cursed him and killed him. Is there someone in your life you need to forgive? Ask God to forgive your lack of forgiveness towards this person. If appropriate, contact the person and forgive them directly. (If the person is unaware of your unforgiveness towards them, it may be wise to not bring it up to them. Maybe the person you need to forgive is no longer alive and the opportunity has passed. Don't beat yourself up. God's grace is sufficient to cover that. Seek his grace and repent of the unforgiveness.)
2. How often do you thank God for the forgiveness he has given you? Be intentional in thanking him. We have found it is a good practice to write out what you are thinking. Write a prayer of thanksgiving to God for his undeserved forgiveness. Thank Jesus for going on the cross. Include specific sins that you would deserve the wrath of God but have been forgiven for.