

2010 Lenten Series: "Teach Us to Pray That We May Not Be Tempted"—Lord of Life, Westfield, IN – 3/24/10

Title: "Forgive as we also will forgive"

Text: **Luke 23:33-34:** When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. <sup>34</sup>Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

Intro: Video clip – "Kid's Talk Forgiveness"

### *Practical reasons to forgive*

- The world is a broken place and forgiveness gives a healthy way of dealing with it
  1. Evil exists within all corners of the earth – including our homes– including our hearts
    - a. Bad/evil people had to be put to death – a cruel and gruesome place called "The Skull" had to be designed to fit the crime with an "evil punishment," and sometimes, innocent people get ground up in gears of "evil justice"
    - b. **Illus.:** Men do not differ much about what things they will call evils; they differ enormously about what evils they will call excusable. **G. K. Chesterton, Illustrated London News (10-23-1909)**
  2. Only One, the perfect son of God could come and undo the cycle of evil which we do to each other and ourselves
    - a. We could not remove the consequential results of that sin
    - b. *Sin came into the world through one person, and death came through sin. So death spread to everyone, because everyone sinned. . . . It's even more certain that those who receive God's overflowing kindness and the gift of his approval will rule in life because of one person, Jesus Christ. Romans 5:12,17*
- Forgiveness becomes the most effective way to reflect "the Father's" deliverance plan from the evil of sin
  1. Jesus handled the evil, sinfully and selfishly done to him, by turning it over the Father's insurmountable mercy
  2. *But You are a God of forgiveness, Gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness; And You did not forsake them. Nehemiah 9:17*
  3. Imagine the witness to the people, the soldiers, the thieves crucified on either side --to those around us
    - a. *"Surely, this was a righteous man!" (47) "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." (42)*

### *God's reasons for forgiving*

- God doesn't want us to forgive because we have to forgive; rather because we are convinced that they are forgiven
  1. Not asking God to forgive "as" we forgive (otherwise God would never forgive us)
    - a. We are in to the "eye for an eye" even in our most saintly moments of forbearance
    - b. *Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Colossians 3:13*
  2. Forgiving because "we and they" are already forgiven *Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:13*
    - a. *But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. 1 John 2:1-2*
    - b. Objective justification – there is no more crime to be paid for because sentence already served
- God in his mercy for us doesn't want us to be consumed by bitterness over another's callous, repetitive sin
  1. How do you handle when someone doesn't care and they keep hurting you?
    - a. Jesus is sinned against by the gambling for his clothes even while he is praying for their forgiveness
    - b. We think: I'll forgive but not forget—I can't forgive them for something they did so many times – I have been hurt too deeply and they don't deserve to be forgiven . . . **REALLY, DO YOU, DO I, DO WE DESERVE IT?**
  2. God wants us to release the sin so that the poison of bitterness does not consume us
    - a. *Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:31-32*
    - b. God had Jesus forgive it once for all so that we could "let it go," "send it away," be freed from guilt/shame/rage
  3. Tonight we recommit ourselves to the blessing of forgiving others as we are forgiven, because we are forgiven, and for the sake of the One who brought us that forgiveness
    - a. **Illus.: Hydraulic Fluid Holiness** There was quite a mix-up at the Duke University Hospitals in Raleigh and Durham, North Carolina. Sometime in November 2004, maintenance workers had drained hydraulic fluid from the hospital elevators into empty detergent drums and then didn't get rid of the drums. Through a strange series of events, the drums were mistakenly redistributed to the people who clean surgical instruments. It took two months and 3,800 surgeries before anyone figured out something was wrong. Washing the instruments in hydraulic fluid was not an effective means of sterilization. The biggest question is, what kind of damage has been done to the patients? No one was sure what the petroleum residue might do to people. The hospital's head honcho assured the public, "We want to give people the message that we care about our patients," and no doubt they do. But if their instruments weren't safe, they were a threat to their patients no matter how much they cared. A church careless about holiness is like that! We may care about our people, but we're a danger to them nonetheless. It isn't enough to share the gospel with the lost; we must also be sure we act in holy ways and teach holiness as a way of life, lest we harm the people of God. **Associated Press (6-13-05)**