

WHAT WE BELIEVE – God Forgives

Psalm 103:1-13

We are currently offering a class here at church called “Getting Started”, which is the class people take when deciding about becoming a member...

Last week I shared with the class “Reasons to leave a church!” Strange right? Why I share this with the class & reference it today, is because at some point every one of us will ask, or entertain, the question “Should I leave the church?”

Often the reasons for wanting to leave are: The pastor said... someone did... someone wouldn't... I heard about... my loved one experienced... that decision...

There are valid reasons for leaving a church, but an unwillingness to forgive is not one of them! And yet it is one of the main reasons people walk away!

Ask yourself, “Have I ever considered leaving a church because of someone else, or something someone said/did that made me angry & want to leave?”

If the answer is “yes”, then why are you still here? It's most likely b/c you chose to forgive, or someone chose to forgive you & it made all the difference!

Forgiveness can heal the deepest wounds! But unforgiveness is like a stick of dynamite in a church... a family... a place of work... a neighborhood...

I want us to think about a few questions on this topic of forgiveness today:

- Why is it so hard to forgive?
- Who are the hardest people to forgive?
- When does it get easier to forgive?
- What can we do to work towards forgiveness in our lives?

1) Why is it so hard to forgive? _____

Sin done against us hurts... Sin within us deceives... & Sin among us divides...

2) Who are the hardest people to forgive? _____

Those closest to us... Greatest hurt... Repeat offenders... Should know better...

3) When does it get easier to forgive? _____

Not tomorrow... Not when you feel like it... Not even when they ask for it...

4) What can we do to work towards forgiveness in our lives? _____

Receive God's forgiveness... Choose to forgive as we have been forgiven...

Trust God as the all-knowing, all-righteous, all-gracious, all-loving Judge!

You might be thinking, “This all makes sense, but it's not that easy!”

It isn't easy, but it's possible with the help of the One who never holds on to unforgiveness... And the One who perfectly models forgiveness for all of us!

If anyone had good reason to find it hard to forgive it would be God!

He created us... Called us His own... Sent us a Savior... Reconciled us... & yet...

We turn away... Kill... Reject His gift of salvation... Hold on to unforgiveness...

But God shows us a different way... Micah 7:18-20... The Jesus Way!

It couldn't have been easy for Jesus to forgive... Consider all He endured on His journey to the cross, & yet He chooses forgiveness! Video - Forgive

Can you imagine forgiving, and asking God the Father to forgive, the people who treated you in such ways? Nothing that's been done to me compares!

And Jesus didn't wait for a time when it would be easier... He forgave while hanging/suffering/dying on the cross! What does that teach us about timing?

So who do you need to forgive... today... no matter what they've done... even if they aren't asking for it... But simply because you have received forgiveness, from the same One who can empower you to forgive others!

Remember, Jesus forgave his firing squad... His friend who denied Him... tax collectors... His persecutor (Saul)... adulterers... His own unfaithful bride (Church)...

So who do you think you can't/shouldn't/don't want to forgive, but know you need to, because God calls all of us to forgive as we have been forgiven?

GOD FORGIVES... We believe God grants forgiveness, to those who confess their sin & trust in the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the cross. In Him, we are not only set free from the penalty of our sins, but also from the bondage of our sinful nature. The forgiveness of sins is at the heart of the gospel & the eternal hope of every Christian!

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Often the reasons for wanting to leave are: The pastor said... someone did... someone wouldn’t... I heard about... my loved one experienced... that decision...

There are valid reasons for leaving a church, but an unwillingness _____ is not one of them! And yet it is one of the main reasons people walk away!

Ask yourself, *“Have I ever considered leaving a church because of _____ or something someone said/did that made me angry & want to leave?”*

If the answer is “yes”, then why are you still here? It’s most likely b/c you chose to forgive, or someone chose to forgive you & it made all the difference!

Forgiveness can heal the deepest wounds! But unforgiveness is like a _____ in a church... a family... a place of work... a neighborhood...

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But God shows us a different way... **Micah 7:18-20**... The _____

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Sermon Questions for God Forgives

Have you ever left a church? If so, what were your reasons?

Has “unforgiveness” ever been the cause of broken relationships in your life (in the church, in your family, at work, or in your neighborhood)?

How have you dealt with conflict between you and other people in the past, and how does that differ with how you deal with it today? What role did/does forgiveness play?

What did you put for your answers to these sermon questions:

- Why is it so hard to forgive?
- Who are the hardest people to forgive?
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How does God show us a different way in Micah 7:18-20?

How does Jesus’ words on the cross give us a model to follow when we are faced with “unforgiveness”?

What role does confession of sin, repentance, and faith play in our experience of God’s forgiveness?