

Forgiveness

The ability to forgive no matter what the transgression is one of God's greatest qualities. His word lays out His personality as being merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and in truth. What many don't realize is that these are qualities that we all must have in order to regain access to the tree of life. Serving God is much more than keeping God's Sabbaths and dietary law and staying away from the pagan festivals. Today let's look at the attribute of Forgiveness.

Here are just a few examples of the Lord having mercy and being quick to forgive.

Isaiah 55:7

7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Isaiah 1:16-18

16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Psalms 86:2-5

2 Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.

3 Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.

4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Notice in these scriptures, as in all other scriptures, when God is talking about forgiving us for our transgressions He always gives us something to do!

Forsake our ways and thoughts, Learn to do well and seek judgment, be a servant and trust in Him.

In other words be obedient to His ways, not ours, and He will be quick to forgive us when we fall short.

Jesus broke this down and made it very plain for us. In order to be forgiven we have to go even further. We have to treat others the way we would have them treat us.

Matthew 7:12

12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even

so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

This includes how we handle a situation when someone does us wrong but then repents and asks for our forgiveness.

Jesus Himself taught us how to pray! But do we really know what we are asking the Father when we pray as Jesus taught us?

Matthew 6:9-14

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

Look at what vs. 12 says:

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

This is a covenant God, He always gives us something to do in order to receive something from Him. We are asking God to forgive us as we forgive others.

And Jesus says that we will not be forgiven if we do not forgive others.

Matthew 6:15

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

God tells us that we should have the same mind, or heart, or attitude that Jesus had and gives us an example of that. To be meek and humble not full of pride and puffed up. To be of help to others regardless of our status.

Philippians 2:4-8

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

As servants of God we are supposed to be using Jesus examples as a way to conduct ourselves.

1 John 2:6

6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

Jesus even forgave those that did not repent when they did Him wrong. Forgiving others is part of the mind of Christ.

Luke 23:33-34

33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

Now when Peter asked Jesus how many times He should forgive his brother that sins against him, Jesus didn't mean 490 times. Jesus was saying as often as he asks for forgiveness you should forgive him.

Matthew 18:21-22

21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

Then Jesus taught them this parable.

Matthew 18:23-35

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Jesus was really talking about our heavenly Father forgiving us the way we forgive others. Notice though that Jesus is talking about forgiving from the heart in vs. 35, to truly forgive not just go through the motions. We are all human and it is not always easy to let hurt feelings go. Sometimes we have to ask that God remove ill feelings from us. To take away our hate and wrath.

Jesus also said not to be angry with your brother or sister when he hasn't done anything to you.

Matthew 5:21-22

21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

And Jesus told us not even to pray if we know that our brother or sister is angry with us! That what we need to do is try to make things right before we come to Him.

Matthew 5:23-24

23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

God had it written to not let the sun go down on our wrath or let the day end if we know that we have an unresolved confrontation with one of our brothers or sisters. All this does is give us a reason to keep going over the wrong that was done and we will just get angrier and angrier until we get to the point that we will go out of our way to hurt others and sin against our God. If we at least reach out and acknowledge to our brethren that there is a problem and we are willing to rectify the situation, even if we put off any major communication until the next day, it stops the situation from getting worse and shows all involved a willingness to make things right again.

Ephesians 4:26-27

26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

27 Neither give place to the devil.

If a brother or sister does something that hurts us and acts in a way that is not according to a servant of God we are to bring this to them so they can see it. Then if they repent we are to forgive them. And we are to forgive them as many times as they ask for forgiveness.

Luke 17:3-4

3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

Remember what Jesus said, we are only forgiven by the Father as we forgive others.

Mark 11:25-26

25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

We are to always strive to have those attributes that God has.

Colossians 3:12-13

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

Our God is quick to forgive those who truly repent and turn to Him.

Ezekiel 18:21-22

21 But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

22 All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.

If we are to one day become just like Jesus and the Father, we have to have the same mind or heart that They have. This takes us constantly guarding our hearts or thoughts and making sure that we are walking, as best we can, as Jesus walked. We are constantly being proved in the flesh so that we may, at the appointed time, Become just like God! A big part of that is our willingness and ability to forgive others.