

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS WEEK SEVEN

STATEMENT...something goes wrong between people. We get hurt and we hurt others. Our minds are WAREHOUSES of unsorted grudges. It may've happened long ago but the memory of it still brings fire to our eyes. The only choice we have: to GET BITTER or GET BETTER. We have known times when we should have forgiven someone but didn't.

What held you back? Are you still carrying the pain?

HELD TO A HIGHER STANDARD... Forgiveness is a WAY OF LIFE consistent with who God is, what God wants us to be. Christians are held to a higher standard. Forgiveness isn't a NICE THING TO DO, an OPTION we can TAKE or LEAVE depending on the situation. By forgiving, we mirror what God has done for us. He shows mercy not IN SPITE OF HIS LOVE but BECAUSE OF HIS LOVE. Our author rightly states that Christianity isn't about GUILT but the FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

FORGIVE OR ELSE...when/where does the cycle of hurt/hate/revenge stop? It stops with JESUS: the one tied to a whipping post, whose blood was spilt, displaying God's love for the world. He exuded forgiveness in all that he said/did. He linked it to our relationship with God

Forgive us our debts as we've forgiven our debtors.

What if God forgave us as we forgive others? What we are saying is, "Treat me, God, the way I treat my neighbor" What we receive from God, he expects to share with others.

People in Our Debt...we pay a high price for not forgiving. Instead of admitting grudges, we bury them. Instead of righting wrongs, we keep track of them. We have a list of people in our debt: they owe us an apology, or a second chance, an explanation or a thank you. When we resent them, we become their slave. Those who owe us, own us.

WHAT FORGIVENESS IS...forgiveness isn't what we think. It isn't excusing bad behavior, letting others abuse us. It isn't a DENIAL OF OUR PAIN but a way to heal it. It isn't pretending that nothing happened or that what happened didn't hurt. Forgiveness is an attitude: walking humbly with God, staying calm, not overreacting, not allowing little sins to fester, and refusing to play the blame game. Forgiveness is hard work. That is why many of us beg off, find an easier way to cope with our pain. Jesus doesn't question our WOUNDS; he bore more wounds than we ever will. He doesn't doubt our pain; he felt more pain than we have.