

Dealing With Forgiveness: It Is a Mentality and Process

Main Scripture: “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (**Matthew 6:14-15**)

I. Introduction & Recap of Previous Specified Ideas

1. The initiation process of entering the Kingdom of God is knowing that persecution of all kinds comes to all who decide to dwell with God. We looked at how God is suffering and in the suffering. He does not initiate any suffering, but He allows suffering
2. Potential Opposition in the Kingdom of God (in the church)
3. Judging others and loving enemies
4. Matthew 5:11 – Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account

II. Seven Types of Ways People Will Persecute You Inside and Outside the Church

1. Level 1 – someone attempts to strike your character without your knowledge (covert confrontation)
 - a. Man with Withered Hand (Matthew 12:9-14) – “But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, how to destroy Him” (14).
2. Level 2 – someone attempts to strike your character with your knowledge (overt confrontation)
 - a. Jesus’s Authority Questioned (Matthew 21:23-27) – “When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as

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he was teaching, and said, ‘By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?’” (23).

3. Level 3 – someone unfamiliar or familiar attempts to harm you through verbal confrontation or physical contact
 - a. Levels 1 and 2 were gossip
 - b. This level is the beginning of hate
 - c. The Woman Caught in Adultery (John 8:1-11) – “The scribes and pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, ‘Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?’” (3-5)
4. Level 4 – someone unfamiliar attempts to hackle you through continual verbal abuse
 - a. Pharisees constant questioning (Matthew 22-23) – question of lawful practices of paying taxes, the question of the resurrection, the question of the greatest commandment, and the question about the Messiah being David’s son
5. Level 5 – an unfamiliar person attempts to physically or emotionally abuse you
 - a. Jeremiah in the pit (Jeremiah 38:1-6) – “So they took Jeremiah and threw him into the cistern of Malchiah, the king’s son, which was in the court of the guard. Now there was no water in the cistern, but only mud, and Jeremiah sank in the mud” (6)

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- b. Jesus experiences stoning (John 8:57-59) – “Then the Jews said to Him, ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Very truly I tell you, before Abraham was, I am.’ So, they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.
6. Level 6 – a friend, relative, or a close person betrays you through physical or emotional abuse
 - a. Laban and Jacob (Genesis 29:25-27) – “When morning came, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, ‘What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?’ Laban said, ‘This is not done in our country – giving the younger before the first born. Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years.’”
 - b. Jesus at His Hometown (Luke 4:28-30) – “When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were very angry. They got up and forced Jesus to go out of town. Their town was built on a hill. They took Jesus to the edge of the hill to throw Him off. But He walked through the middle of the crowd and went away.”
 7. Level 7 – a friend, relative, or a close person betrays you through attempted murder or murder
 - a. Jesus and Judas (Matthew 26:48-49) – “Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying ‘The one I will kiss is the man; arrest Him.’ At once he came up to Jesus and said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ and kissed him.

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III. Jesus's Teachings for the Church in Response to Common Cruelties

1. Anger

- a. "You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder'; and whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that if you are **angry with a brother or sister**, you will be liable to judgment; and if **you insult a brother or sister**, you will be liable to the council; and **if you said, 'You fool,'** you will be liable to the hell of fire" (Matthew 5:21-22).
- b. "first, be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. **Come to terms quickly with your accuser** while you are on the way to court with him" (Matthew 5:24-25)
- c. Result: bitterness

2. Retaliation

- a. "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also" (Matthew 5:38-39).
- b. Injustice on you requires a response of humility and a love offering

IV. The Believer's Response

1. The Answer: Forgiveness

- a. "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15)

2. What happens when forgiveness does not occur?

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- a. Awareness: heart is evil prior to unforgiveness and will remain unchanged if no forgiveness is present
 - 1) “The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse – who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9)
- b. Bitterness/anger/hate will remain in heart
 - 1) “Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow” (Galatians 6:7)
 - 2) “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21)
- c. Choice: To Forgive **OR** Not To Forgive?
 - 1) “No one can serve two masters; for the slave will either hate the one and love the other or be devoted to the one and despise the other (Matthew 6:24)
 - a) Context: about God and wealth
 - b) Spiritual Behavior: unrepentant/unforgiving heart versus repentant/forgiving heart
- d. The Response: Seek God
 - 1) “But strive first for the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6: 33)
 - a) God will speak to your pain
 - b) God will reveal the issues with your heart
 - c) God will correct the issues with your heart
 - d) God will train you in the ways of righteousness

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- e) God will show your victory through revelation
 - f) God will put you in a position in the presence of your enemies
(Psalm 23)
 - g) God will place you in a position to forgive your accusers
 - h) God will give you grace in the forgiving process
- e. Forgiveness is a process
- 1) “Then Peter came and said to Him, ‘Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘Not seven times, but I tell you, seventy-seven times’” (Matthew 18:21-22).