

Mt. 10:8b [Jesus speaking] Freely you have received, freely give.

Eph. 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

QUOTE President Abraham Lincoln was asked how he was going to treat the rebellious Southerners coming back to the Union of states after they had finally been defeated in a bloody civil war. The questioner expected that Lincoln would take dire vengeance upon them, but he answered, "I will treat them as if they had never been away."

1. the forgiveness of God

QUOTES William Arthur Ward wrote, "We are most like beasts when we kill. We are most like men when we judge. We are most like God when we forgive."

Someone has said, "Forgiveness is symbolized by the fragrance a plant gives off when it's trampled. Are you a rose or a stinkweed?"

being a part of the nature of God

Ex. 34:6-7a And he [the LORD] passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.

Ps. 86:5 You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you.

Dan. 9:9 [Daniel is praying] The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him;

Mic. 7:18 Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.

Jer. 5:1 [the LORD speaking to Jeremiah] "Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem, look around and consider, search through her squares. If you can find but one person who deals honestly and seeks the truth, I will forgive this city.

under the old covenant

Gen. 3:21 The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

Lev. 4:20 and do with this bull just as he did with the bull for the sin offering. In this way the priest will make atonement for them, and they will be forgiven.

under the new covenant

Jn. 1:29 The next day John [the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Eph. 1:7 In him [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

Heb. 9:26-28 But now he [Christ] has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Mt. 26:28 [Jesus speaking] This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Heb. 9:22b and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

as modeled by our Lord Jesus Christ

Lk. 23:33-34a 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. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

Ro. 12:17-21 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Ac. 7:59-60 While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.

received by those who turn to him

Ps. 32:3-5 When I kept silent [about my sin], my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. *Selah*

Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD” – and you forgave the guilt of my sin. *Selah*

Mk. 4:11-12 He [Jesus] told them [his disciples], “The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, “they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!”

2Chr. 7:14 if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

1Jn. 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us

from all unrighteousness.

STORY A certain prophet had been gifted with revelatory insight into people's lives. During an evening service he ministered to a Presbyterian pastor and his wife. By the Spirit, he revealed the couple's past, uncovered their present situation and then disclosed to them what was to come. This work of God greatly impressed the couple, and as the prophecies were fulfilled, one month later the Presbyterian minister brought two other pastors, each with their wives, to another service.

The second minister and his wife marveled at the accuracy and truth in the prophetic ministry, as did the husband of the third couple. Then the man of God turned to the third minister's wife. As he began to speak of her past, suddenly he stopped. Then he said, "There was a very serious sin in your past." The woman, with her worst fear seemingly coming upon her, turned pale and closed her eyes. The prophet continued, "And I asked the Lord, 'What was this sin that she committed'? And the Lord answered, 'I do not remember!'"

Although many times this minister's wife had asked for cleansing, still she could not believe the depth of God's forgiveness. From everywhere but the prison of her own mind, her sin had been paid for and removed. And now, in his great mercy, God was removing it from there as well.

Is. 43:25 "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.

Heb. 8:12 For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.

Ps. 103:12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

2. the great need for believers to forgive

Mt. 18:21-35 ²¹Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?"

²²Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

²³"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. ²⁵Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

²⁶"The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me, he begged, and I will pay back everything.' ²⁷The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

²⁸"But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.

²⁹"His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'

³⁰"But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.

³²"Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all

that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' ³⁴In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

³⁵"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

NOTE: In the currency of the day, one denarius was equal to one day's wage paid to a common laborer. It was also the price of one sheep. One talent was equal to 6,000 denarii. So the first debt of ten thousand talents – mentioned in verse 24 – the one forgiven by the king, was equal to 60,000,000 days' wages, or the price of 60,000,000 sheep. The second debt of a hundred denarii – mentioned in verse 28 – the one which was not forgiven by the main character in the parable, was equal to 100 days' wages or the price of 100 sheep.

[.....the second request, "Be patient..." seems fair, but the first request would have been very unreasonable – almost pitiful...]

Ps 37:21 The wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous give generously;

application

SONG He paid a debt he did not owe. I owed a debt I could not pay. I needed someone to wash my sins away. And now I sing a brand new song, amazing grace! Christ Jesus paid the debt that I could never pay.

Eph. 1:7-8 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

Eph. 2:4-5 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved.

Col. 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Ac. 16:35-40 When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: "Release those men." The jailer told Paul, "The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace.

But Paul said to the officers: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out."

The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and encouraged them. Then they left.

Mt. 6:14-15 [Jesus speaking] For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Lk. 6:37 [Jesus speaking] “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Mk. 11:25 [Jesus speaking] And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”

other teachings of Jesus on forgiveness

Mt. 6:12 [Jesus teaching on prayer] Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Lk. 11:4 [Jesus teaching on prayer] Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.”

Lk. 17:3b-4 [Jesus speaking] “If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him.”

the example of Joseph

Gen. 50:18-21 His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him [Joseph]. “We are your slaves,” they said.

But Joseph said to them, “Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.” And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

3. forgiveness explained

curse it - being angry (vexed, chafed, & irked) → ulcers, high blood pressure, nervous disorders, etc.

nurse it - we stroke ourselves / wallow in pity / tell ourselves how dreadfully we've been treated, how sorry people should feel for us, and how miserable we have the right to feel...
- When you throw a pity party for yourself, the devil brings the cake & the balloons!

rehearse it - What's playing in the theater of your mind?
- like picking a scab again and again so that it never has a chance to heal

reimburse it - plotting revenge / Gangster movie: “I don't get mad; I get even.”

disperse it - let go of it / forgive

let God reverse it - When we **don't** forgive, God's hands are tied in dealing with the other person.

testimony #1 In an oriental nation, a man walked into the pastor's office after a church service. He had a sharp dagger, and he told the pastor he was going to kill his wife, his father-in-law, his mother-in-law, and then he was going to commit suicide. When the pastor asked him why, he replied, "I am a dying man. I have incurable tuberculosis. I am constantly coughing. During the war, I was a bulldozer operator, working on the front lines risking my life to make bunkers and roads. I sent all the money I made to my wife, and when the war ended I barely had enough money to come home. But she had run away with another man, taking all my savings. When I begged her to come back to me, she adamantly refused."

The man did receive Christ as his savior, but he could not bring himself to forgive his wife. The pastor told him that the best way of forgiving his wife was for him to bless her. "Pray to God that He will open the door of heaven with blessings for her," he counseled.

The man flatly rejected that advice initially. But after more encouragement, he started to bless his wife, with clenched teeth at first. He prayed, "O God, I bless... my wife. Bless... her. And... give her salvation. O God, give her a blessing."

As he kept on blessing her in prayer, his heart changed. In less than a month he was completely healed of the incurable tuberculosis, and his countenance was transformed. He was praising God that through these circumstances he had found Jesus!

See, when we have unforgiveness, anger, vengeance, hatred, or any other kind of bitterness in our spirit, it's absolutely amazing what that can do to our physical bodies.

testimony #2 A minister from the South was teaching a large group of people on prayer. After he taught on "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors," he encouraged the people to forgive all those who had wronged them, and the whole congregation prayed a prayer of forgiveness. A woman testified that when she forgave, God immediately opened up her right ear, so that she could hear again. Months earlier at a sports stadium, someone had set off an air horn next to her ear, and since then she had been deaf in that ear. When she forgave that person, God healed her.

No one prayed the prayer of faith for healing over her / anointed her with oil in the name of the Lord / laid hands on her / At the moment of her healing, **she** wasn't even asking God for healing...

testimony #3 In India there's a man named Yesu Paddam Bandela, whose name means "sitting at the feet of Jesus." He had just come home from the university as a young man and stepped into the prayer chapel where his father ministered. Although they had been there for many years, only 125 people had come to know Christ out of Hinduism.

His dad was praying for an Indian with a big turban on his head. Yesu Paddam Bandela stepped through the door in time to see this man reach under his shirt and pull out a knife. While Yesu's father was praying with his eyes closed, the man raised the knife and plunged it deep into the chest of the elder Bandela. Yesu could not stop the man because he was too far away. Yesu ran to his father. As he held him in his arms, the words he uttered were, "Yesu, you must forgive him," and then he died.

At the trial, Yesu sat on the witness stand and the judge said, "Is the murderer of your father in this room?" Yesu pointed to the man and said, "Yes sir, that is the man. He's the man who raised the knife and murdered my father." And then he said, "Your honor, my family and I have made a decision that we do not hold this man accountable for his deed. We forgive him on the wishes of our father and by our own desire. We forgive this man for what he's done."

The judge could not believe it. The courtroom sat stunned. Then the judge said, "Well, sir, you can forgive him but the state of India will hold him accountable to the minimum

degree of the law.” Twenty-four months later he was released from prison.

When he got out, the man raised the hand with which he'd murdered that man of God and with hand raised high, he boasted, saying, “With this hand I killed the father of Yesu Paddam Bandela.” Those were the last words he spoke when his hand began to curl up, his arm pulled against his chest, his right side became paralyzed, and he fell over and died in the presence of the family of Yesu Paddam Bandela.

That incident spoke to the city of Figuwada, and a church with 125 people now has 40,000 members – 40,000 people who from every drop of one man's blood would find a cause and a rally cry to stand and say, “If he could forgive, we can forgive and we can be forgiven.”

4. forgiving from the heart

Ro. 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Ro. 8:18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

2Co. 4:17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.