



True Love Forgives

last week's message

In shopping for perfume, there are perfume testers to help us know that we are buying what we really want and whether it is the real thing. In a similar way, true love will also be tested. The test of true love is forgiveness because without it, love is not genuine!

Forgiveness is Unconditional

Forgiving others is a conscious choice that we make and extend to others. David's life illustrates how true love forgives. Despite all the hardships and threats to his life, he never once tried to overthrow King Saul. David did not hold any bitterness and even mourned the death of his good friend Jonathan and of King Saul (2 Samuel 1:11-12). He decided to forgive even though Saul never asked to be forgiven. David looked for a member of Saul's family whom he can show kindness to (2 Samuel 9:1) and fulfilled his promise to his good friend and Saul's heir, Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:14-15). This is the kind of love that Christ demonstrates towards us. In Romans 5:8 it says that "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." God through Christ showed us grace — unmerited favor — that even while we were still lost in our sin and even before we ask for forgiveness, God's forgiveness is already available for us.

Forgiveness is Undeserved

David showed kindness and gave up his right to get even with Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson. Mephibosheth was undeserving of David's kindness for two reasons: (1) He belonged to the family of Saul and was a political threat to David, and (2) he was helpless — he hailed from a pasture-less land called Lo-Debar, had no economic contribution because of his condition, and was heavily dependent on others for his daily needs. Luke 23:34 tells us that on the cross Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." We were helpless because of sin, yet God showed us unmerited favor through Christ on the cross. David experienced God's kindness and in return he wanted to extend it to Mephibosheth. When we understand the forgiveness of God in our lives, we can pass it on to those who need it.

this week's memory verse

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve,
and to give His life as a ransom for many.

MARK 10:45



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Forgiveness is Unlimited

In Matthew 18:21-22, Peter asked Jesus “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.” According to Jewish teaching, you could forgive people up to three times, which means that Peter was boasting when he more than doubled the required three times in his conversation with Jesus. However, Jesus set a higher standard on forgiveness by saying that we are to forgive 70x7. In other words, we are to forgive beyond what we could count. Ephesians 4:32 tells us, “Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” Forgiveness means “favor that cancels.” It is not based on the merit of the one asking or needing forgiveness. David showed this kindness to Mephibosheth as he restored Saul’s land to him and let him eat at his table like one of his sons. Jesus extends the same invitation to us in Revelation 3:20 — He invites us to experience His grace and forgiveness.

May God’s love fill our hearts and overflow that we may be able to set ourselves and others free by extending the same forgiveness that we received from God (Matthew 6:12). Let us also practice seeking forgiveness from those we have sinned against and may have hurt and seek to improve the way we show love to others by God’s grace.

discussion questions

What do you struggle with most about forgiveness?

Are there people whom you have not yet forgiven for their offenses against you? What will you do about it?

Are there people from whom you need to ask forgiveness? What will you do about it?

With whom will you share what you learned today about forgiveness?



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