

The High Cost Of Forgiveness

2 Cor. 5:18; "And all things are of God, **WHO** hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation..." How did he do that? (Jesus became debtor to God in our place and made our debt his own.) How foolish it is to see the Lord's churches and preacher brethren all crossed up with each other. There is no church or individual that stands squeaky clean before God. If we had the ability to add up all the sins that we commit against our brother and against God; each one is so much in debt to both for their wrongs, that nothing short of swallowing pride and forgiving from the heart, is going to allow God to hear our prayers. Jesus said that offenses would come, but WOE by whom they come. How crowded our path to assemble together into the church due to the presence of so many offenses. Matt. 7:1-5. A spirit of criticism and bitterness and envy in the heart toward each other goes to make a dead and unburdened church. When dealing with church offenses and a person truly repents and asks the church for their forgiveness; do we forgive from our heart? When any person rejects all of the instruction of Jesus and he won't hear the person who tried to reconcile him, the witnesses that every case might be established, then wouldn't hear the church; what is the church supposed to do? Consider him a heathen!! He's is lost and needs to be witnessed to. Our offenses are so grievous to God, that he tells us not to let the sun go down on our wrath. "As much as lieth in you; live peaceable with all men." Christ left us the example. 1 Pet 2:23. "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not;-but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." We are to watch over one another with brotherly love. Thou teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Do not commit Adultery, doest thou abhorrest Idols, doest thou not commit sacrilege?"

Matt. 5:44; "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." "God's own example for us.

Matt. 18:15-17 (READ) Explain context

In scripture; trespasses are said to be **debts**. In Luke 11:4; Jesus taught when we pray we are to ask forgiveness of our sins; for we also forgive everyone that is **indebted** to us. Matt 6:12; "and forgive us our **debts** as we forgive our **debtors**." Verses 14, 15; "For if we forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly father will also forgive you: But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." The same is said in Mark 11: 25, 26. "And when you stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. V. 26. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." (Release a debt) When a debt is incurred; someone **must** pay; whether it be the one who owes the debt or the one that the offence is against. If the offended cannot collect the debt; then he must "take the hurt to himself. That is the reason we must always be **READY** to forgive. The offense remains until the offender **ASKS** for the offense to be forgiven. Why would we deprive ourselves of answer to prayer, if we won't be ready to forgive. Matt. 18:6 Offending little ones. Luke 17:3,4. God put His love in our heart to love with, so he gets all the glory.

READ- Matt. 18:21-35.

Here we see Jesus answering Peter's question about how much forgiving needs to be done. A King taking accounts of his servants, has one servant that owed him a massive amount of debt. He couldn't pay, so the King demanded that he was to be sold as well as his wife and children and all that he had. The servant fell on the mercy of the king and ask him to have patience and he would pay him all. (The King knew he would never be able to repay the debt. It was too much.)The lord of that servant was moved with **COMPASSION** on that servant and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. The King was going to "cancel it." So what the slave owed was absorbed by the King.

That same servant went out and found a fellow servant that owed him a very small amount by comparison and caught him by the throat and demanded him to "cough it up." His fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him to be patient and he would pay him all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. The fellow servants were grieved about this and went and told their lord what had happened. His lord called him and said unto him, "O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not that thou also have had **COMPASSION** on thy

fellow servant even as I had pity on thee?" And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, **if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.** **Those who have been forgiven, must forgive. As representatives of Christ; we are never more like him than when we forgive.**

Illustration: Philemon

Philemon was a member at the church at Colosse. He had a slave named Onesimus who apparently stole from his master and ran away. He went to Rome and for some reason was arrested and put in the same jail as the Apostle Paul. Under the preaching and teaching of Paul; Onesimus got saved. Paul had so much confidence in Onesimus, that he wrote a letter to Philemon and sent it by Onesimus back to Colosse. Onesimus could have ran away again, but he was a different person. Paul used his love, age and the appeal to Philemon to remember that he owed Paul for the salvation of his eternal soul. So Onesimus must not be received as a slave but as a "brother." Paul had reminded Philemon that the loss that he had suffered from this slave was only a temporary possession, but what Paul had blessed Philemon with; was of an eternal possession. Paul had promised he would pay what Onesimus owed. V.18 If he hath wronged thee or oweth thee ought, put that on my account. "Not just as intercessor, but Paul became the debtor for what he did not owe.
(This is an example of owing Ten Thousand talents of Gold and owing one hundred pence.)

Joseph

It would be very hard to find a man of such noble character as Joseph. He was an humble son of Jacob. God had favored him with the ability to interpret dreams. Jacob made him a coat of many colors and his brothers being jealous; sold him to traders going to Egypt. His brothers had rejected him; scoffed at him and he was constantly being harassed by them. But to sell him as a slave?? How dirty can men be to men?? Joseph was an humble trusted, dependable, moral man.
Having been put in very responsible situations; he was lied about by his master's wife. He went into jail and suffered the indignities thrust upon him. But God brought him through all of his troubles and exalted him to be second only to the King. He interpreted dreams that Pharaoh had and revealed there was going to be seven years of plenty and seven years of famine. When all of the surrounding nations came to buy from Joseph; there was a need for his brothers to come. After some strange events took place; the brothers had a reviving of memory of how they had treated Joseph. They were convicted by the charges brought against them was a result of their bitter; mean spirited hatred against their brother. Being some twenty years later from them selling him; it seemed to be as fresh in their minds as if it were yesterday. When Joseph saw their hearts had truly been humbled: Joseph forgave these grief stricken men all of the hurts and troubles they had caused him. How could these men repay what they owed him? No way, so he took the loss to himself.

The Lord's Table

If what we have discussed does not make our own hearts sting, then consider this: No greater expression of the high cost of forgiveness can be made that when we stand before the Lord's Table. It immediately seems to say, "I paid a very high price for your salvation. Look at this pale bread that represents my body. It did have life, and while I was alive; this body was bruised by you; it was rejected by you. You were ashamed of me, cursed and lied; saying, "I know not the man. The agony of the thorns and the whips hurt so badly. But it was the weight of sin that was so unbearable that I feared I wouldn't be able to pay what you owed. My blood was what paid the price for your sins. My life was in the blood and without the shedding of my blood; there was no remission of sins. When I was walking through the deepest waters of sorrow for you; I cried above the shouts and jeers of wicked men to my Father. It seemed that all heaven was silent. Abraham heard the Father calling him to stop before Isaac would be killed. I heard no voice begging for relief for me or to stop as my soul was being crushed, while I was treading the wine press alone.

“ While Jesus was suffering so much; he did not pray for himself; he said, “Father, forgive them for they know what they do.” He did not say here, “If they repent.” But he s ready to forgive those who repent and ASK. When our brother repents of the wrong done to us; God has demanded that we forgive from the heart.

The Lord’s table is saying that he has already publicly paid for your brother’s sins. So if God has forgiven him; why can’t we? We must forgive our brother through the same spirit that Christ forgave us. Having made complete payment for your sins through this unspeakable suffering; would you like to set down and compare what you owe him and what your brother owes you?? All would have to agree that there is no comparison.

Is this message from the Lord’s Table understood among his churches? Is that not the reason for us meeting together at the Supper, to remember his dying love for all the guilt of those who were his killers!! We must remember that **UNLESS WE FORGIVE OUR BROTHER; GOD WILL NOT HEAR OUR PRAYERS.** Offences will come, but **WOE** unto them from which they come! Luke 17:1,2.

Think what it cost him to forgive us, and what it costs us to forgive our brother.

Jesus could not say, “Father, forgive them until every debt we owed was paid. He nailed all our sins to the cross. They went into death with him and are drowned in the sea of divine forgetfulness, and are forever gone.