

## **CCC FORGIVING LIKE JESUS P1**

### **Why You Should and How You Can**

#### **Welcome and Good to be Back**

I want to thank Pastor Joan and everyone else who stood in the gap for me as I took sometime away to spend focusing and just resting and drawing closer to our Lord. My time away was great for me and I thank you all for that time. The time away was a time of recommitment to my Lord.

And over the next several weeks I want to share with what I experienced with our Lord during this time away. See it wasn't just for me what I experience it was for the entire church and I really feel I need to share it with each one of you. So I encourage you to stay connected in the next several weeks.

Today were going to first look at forgiveness. I feel that is where God took me first, forgiveness. Were going to take time and share Communion together this morning and let that be our focus also, forgiveness. But the forgiveness that I want us to focus on is the forgiveness that comes from Jesus life. It was his pattern... forgiveness

See I didn't realize but I had a lot of resentment, unforgiveness in my life that had build up over time and yes I thought I had forgiven those people... but no I hadn't... and for me to go where God was inviting me to go with Him I would have to forgive them as Jesus forgave me. So when seeking to draw closer to God the first thing God revealed to me was, Bill you need to forgive these people, who have hurt you, who have harmed you as you desire me to forgive you right now... So today I want to

share with you... Why you and I need to forgive and how you can forgive.”

When you came in you received bulletin and in the middle you will find notes... I want to encourage you to take them out and follow along with me. Are you ready for this journey today with me of what God has for you?

### **Let's pray**

My guess is there's not a person in here today that doesn't need to hear something about forgiveness. See it's easy to just look past things in life and never really deal with them in the area of forgiveness... We just hold on to it and never deal with forgiveness thinking maybe someday it will just fade away... but what really happens is yes it fades away but the effects it leaves become harmful to all around you... you become something you really aren't and

something you really don't want to be... See forgiveness was Jesus' pattern of life.

In God's word, the bible in Luke chapter 23, Luke 23:32-34 says “... *When they arrived at a place called The Skull. They crucified him .... Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them because they don't know what they are doing,' and they divided his clothes and they cast lots.*”

The main passage I want us to look at today is – “*Father, forgive them because they don't know what they're doing.*”

In this we get a picture here of Jesus praying for those who have hurt him, those who have brought pain into his life and what do we see Jesus doing... asking God to forgive them. Jesus was praying on their behalf to the God, Father. I think that this is a remarkable picture for all Christians to

imprint on their mind... those who are followers of Jesus Christ, those who call themselves Christians, this is a remarkable picture.

This wasn't a one time thing this was the pattern of Jesus Life... forgiveness. This was His life; this was His pattern of life. And listen carefully... if I m going to become what Jesus wants me to become, if I am going to become a follower of Christ, if I call myself a Christian it must become my pattern for life also... So today were going to look at: **Forgiving like Jesus: Why you should and how you can.**

### **1. Forgiveness is the pattern of Jesus.**

Early in Jesus ministry He displays and shares with us this pattern of life of forgiveness, he says to us, *"I tell you:*

*Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."*  
Matthew 5:44.

Is he talking about those who have hurt you deeply is he talking about those who have brought pain in your life and the answer is yes. That what he means when he says love your enemies, pray for those who hurt you, who bring pain in your life, who persecute you.

Jesus isn't the only one in the Bible who at his death actually prays and asks God to forgive those who are killing him. In the book of Acts we see a man name; Stephen is being killed, he is being put to death for his faith in Jesus Christ, he is being put to death for standing up for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, for proclaiming the good news of Jesus, and he is being put to death being stoned. As they're stoning him, it tells us in Acts chapter 6, *"He called out 'Lord, receive my spirit.' Then he knelt down*

*and cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not charge them with this sin.' And saying this fell asleep."* He died.

So why would someone... why would Stephen do this?

Because it's was the pattern of His Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ to forgive.

Jesus speaks about it so much; he uses some very strong words actually in what is called the Lord's Prayer. He says, *"For if you forgive people their wrong- doing, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well. But if you don't forgive people, your Father will not forgive your wrongdoing."* God forgives you... so can you forgive others and be set free.

I'm convinced that if you teach people how to be forgiven and how to be forgivers that their lives will be so changed by the power of the gospel that people will be

attracted to them because they're different people in Christ, They are loving, why because they are loved, they are forgiving, because they are forgiven. It will change who they are. People crave the freedom. And Jesus has come to set you free.

So the obvious question is how?

### **How Do I Follow Jesus In His Pattern?**

How can you? We'll not sure how long you have been a Christian but if you haven't notice here is a great place to see it God most of the time leaves the choice to you. It begins with you making a decision.

#### **2. You have to decide to forgive.**

It's an act of your will. I don't know if you have noticed this yet but if you're a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ most times you have to make the first move then God takes

over... Here you have to make the first step, you have to decide to forgive then God will come along and help you. God will provide the supernatural power you will need to forgive those who have hurt you and have brought pain into your life. But you first have to decide, yes, I am a Christian, yes, I am a follower of Christ and I want my life to be like Jesus' life, a pattern of forgiveness. Why do you do it? Not because it's easy and certainly not because it's natural, because it's neither but it is right for Christians to do... Amen! And you will need His supernatural power to complete it. God calls you to give the gift of forgiveness because He gave that gift of forgiveness to you and forgave you.

**We forgive because Jesus forgave you.** That forgiveness comes not naturally to us but supernaturally. I can only

forgive because Jesus has forgiven me. This is both the reason and the means of forgiveness.

When we look at it we begin to see Jesus' pattern is our practice. Forgiveness is who God is. It's why Jesus came. And it's what Christians do, forgive, that's not the totality of the message but that's a central part to the message. Forgiveness is who God is. It's why Jesus came. And it's what Christians do.

Look with me at Psalm 86:4 *"For you, Lord, are kind and ready to forgive, abundant in faithful love to all who call on you."* I said a minute ago it's who God is. Why do I think that? It says right here: for you Lord are. You are two things – kind and ready to forgive. God by his nature is a forgiver. It's who God is, it's why Jesus came and it's what Christians do.

Ephesians 1:7 tells us why Jesus came. It says *“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins,* [Circle those three words: “forgiveness of sins.” We have forgiveness of sins.] *in accordance with the riches of God’s grace.”* It’s who God is; it’s why Jesus came, so that he might forgive us through the work of Christ shedding his blood on the cross in accordance with the riches of his grace. His grace is unimaginable. It’s immeasurable. But it leads to the practice. It’s who God is. It’s why Jesus came. But it’s what Christians do.

Colossians 3:13 says *“...Accepting one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so also you must forgive.”* Circle “just as”. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so also – circle “so also” – you must forgive. When you get that you begin to understand. We begin to

get hold of it’s who God is. He’s a forgiver. It’s why Jesus came. He died. It’s what Christians do.

So why then do I forgive, Why do I do it, because Jesus forgave you. But also it’s part of you living and feeling free.

### **3. Because you need to be set free.**

If Jesus forgave me, that’s powerful. But you also need to forgive others... Why? because you need to be set free. It sets you free and god has given you the supernatural power to do so. Listen, If you don’t forgive, the person who hurts you... it retains a hold on you.

There are some strong words and stark pictures in the Bible about our need to forgive others and what happens when we don’t.

Matthew 6:12 says, *Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.* [That’s a scary prayer to pray. Lord,

forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Verse 14 says...] *For if we forgive people their wrongdoing, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well.*

*But if you don't forgive people, your Father will not forgive your wrongdoings.*" Let's take a moment and think about this... Where is your life right now, where is your peace, where is your freedom. Do you have those who you need to make the choice and ask god to forgive them as you forgive them.

I know it gets more difficult as the offense grows. I know it does. Some of you have been wronged in unimaginable ways. I know that, but still the forgiveness that Jesus gives us is the motivation and the means that we have for the ability to forgive others.

I have been wronged in a pretty terrible ways. I don't need to share it with you. It would distract from what

I want to share with you. But here's the thing – I want you to understand. The reason that I need to forgive, is because one, Jesus calls me to, but two is because Jesus wants to set me free from the bitterness that comes from that unforgiveness and he changes me when I forgive others.

It doesn't mean that it's easy. It really doesn't. But I need it to be set free and you need it to be set free. Are you tired today of all that has happened in your life and you want to be set free. God is talking to you right now. And Jesus wants to give you the power so you can forgive. So you can be free.

You say, they don't deserve to be forgiven. You are right. But neither did you. They may not deserve to be forgiven. But you need to be free in Christ. And that freedom comes from supernatural forgiveness.

Forgiveness is who God is and it's why Jesus came, and yes it's what Christians do.

**4. We can forgive for its own reward.** Part of forgiveness is forgive for its own reward.

The Bible is not apologetic about this. Jesus is unapologetic about this. He tells us in Luke 6:35 *“Love your enemies. Do what is good. Lend and expect nothing in return. Then your reward will be great.”* Loving you enemies is part of what it means to forgive. The Bible is unapologetic. Jesus is unapologetic saying your reward will be great. If Jesus says there's a reward in doing this I want to say there's a reward in doing this.

What is your reward? Personal freedom. You're not bound to the person who hurt you. I think many of us right here, right now, we're trapped in a prison of unforgiveness. It's killing you. It's got you trapped.

I've met hundreds of people who are trapped in a prison of unforgiveness. I've met hundreds of people who have forgiven the unforgivable and are unimaginably free in Christ. It gives you clearer thinking. It's conforming you to the life of Christ. Christ's pattern is now your practice.

You know what else happens when we start forgiving? Forgiving multiplies. Experiencing forgiveness convinces you to share it with others. When you get forgiven you love more. You forgive more.

Finally, and I'll close with this. You know what it means when I say, "I'll close with this"? Absolutely nothing. What are you going to do?

**5. Forgive those who don't deserve it.** This is the hardest of all. When somebody doesn't see that they were wrong or refuses to acknowledge the pain they caused you, it gets harder; but you can forgive them. You know why? Because you didn't deserve to be forgiven either.

Prayer and Communion:

This is going to require trusting in God. It's going to require a unique measure of faith.