

Do I have to forgive?

Illustration

- 2 friends business, 1 managed the other accounts
- Accounts falsified document, fraud.
- Forged the signature of his friend, that signature on the documents
- Friend found out, but the forger had no regret.
- Is that friend bound to forgive?

[Show slide]

Psychological View of Forgiveness

- “How do I cope with feelings of resentment, anger, etc. when someone has done something wrong to me?”
- Primarily about me dealing with my feelings.

Transactional View of Forgiveness

- How do I deal with the **wrong** that has been done to me? [Show slid]
- The view that the Bible presents.
- What does it mean to forgive a debt? Cancel. Lord’s Prayer

Two words in the original Greek text translated “forgive”.

Aphiemi. [show slide]

- Common word with a large range of meanings.
- Often indicates some form of separation.

[Lord’s prayer with the word “cancel”.]

- Closer to the grammatical usage of aphiemi.
- It is clear what is being acted on – the debt and not us.
- God is not being asked to deal with his feelings towards us.
- Bank example re feelings.
- Not us but for our benefit. Clear in other languages.
- Asking God to do something we can’t do for ourselves – bank.

What are we asking God to do with our sins? [Show Psalm 103]

- Remove
- No longer associate us with our sins – No longer hold us accountable for our sins.
- God’s motivation is not about removing resentment but acting out of love.

Looking at what is forgiven.

- Debts – metaphor
- Sins
 - Any departure from a righteous way of life.
- Trespass
 - Breaking of a rule or commandment.
 - “Transgression” would be a better word.

The other word – charizomai [slide]

- Grant, bestow, graciously/freely give.
- Focus more on the character of the person who is forgiving.
- In Gospels used in two situations
- ²¹In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he **bestowed** sight.¹
- ⁴¹“A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴²When they could not pay, he **cancelled** the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?” ⁴³Simon answered, “The one, I suppose, for whom he **cancelled** the larger debt.” And he said to him, “You have judged rightly.”²
- Paul uses this word exclusively. Why?
 - Generous act
 - Usually involves positive action
 - Goes beyond the separation
 - ⁶For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, ⁷so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. ⁸So I beg you to **reaffirm your love for him**.³ [Slide]
 - ¹³And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.⁴
 - Forgiveness costs

Do I have to forgive?

- No moral obligation
- In an age of entitlement, we can have the expectation that the person who we have wronged is obligated to forgive what we have done to them.
- For the Christian:
 - It is an act of obedience.
 - There are consequences of not forgiving. See Lord’s Prayer and Jesus follow-up.
- Forgiveness is predicated on repentance.
 - Repentance not always required (“for they don’t know what they are doing”)
 - ³⁰The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent,⁵
- Retention of sin (for an unrepentant person) is permissible.
- ²²And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”⁶

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Lk 7:21). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

² [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Lk 7:41–43). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

³ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (2 Co 2:6–8). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

⁴ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Col 2:13–14). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

⁵ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Ac 17:30). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

⁶ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Jn 20:22–23). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

Forgiveness costs

- Debt – you no longer have the money to which you are entitled.
- God's forgiveness costs
 - Sacrifice
 - ²² Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.
 - ²³ Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. ²⁵ Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, ²⁶ for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, ²⁸ so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. ⁷
- What is the cost to you. Giving up a sense of justice. They are no longer accountable for the wrong done to us.
 - You have forgiven the wrong the person has done to you. Now you have deal with your own feelings as a result. Premised on dealing with the wrong that has been done

What about not forgiving?

- Forgiving or not forgiving is not about dealing with our emotions, it's about our love for the person.
- It is wrong for us to hold onto resentment or anger.
- ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰ To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head."⁸
- If we determine that the person should be held accountable for wrong done, then forgiveness is not appropriate.
 - Leave the matter in God's hands.
 - It is God's business to punish – "retribution is mine, I will repay."

Two things:

- You have wronged another person. You express your sorrow for what you did. Is that person required to forgive the wrong done. No. They may still hold you accountable for it.
 - Genuine repentance involves a willingness to be held accountable.
 - If you are forgiven, do you see it as a gracious act freely given by them
- The person has wronged you. At what point would you say, I no longer hold them accountable for what they have done.

⁷ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Heb 9:22–28). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

⁸ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Ro 12:19–20). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

- No about resolving our hurt feeling, but dealing the actual wrong that has been done.

Forgiveness costs

- The money owed you in a debt is no longer yours.
 - There may be things you can no longer afford.
- Forgiveness costs God.
 - Sacrifice
 - “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.” Hebrew 9:22
 - “he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” Hebrews 9:26
- “If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.”
- Giving up your rights to justice and being generous to the person who has wronged you. May involve some emotional difficulties.

Not forgiving

- Forgiving or not forgiving is not about dealing with our emotions, it’s about our love for the person.
- It is always wrong to hold onto resentment or anger.
- To not forgive, is to continue to hold a person accountable for what the wrong they have done to you.
- God will deal with the wrong that has been done to us.
- “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”

So now

- Are you aware of a way you have wronged another person?
 - What does repentance involve?
 - What can you expect from the wronged person?
 - To be held accountable
 - To be forgiven
- Are you aware of a wrong that has been to you?
 - Are you clear about the wrong is?
 - Are you willing to forgive?
 - On what grounds would you forgive?
 - Have you dealt with feelings of bitterness and resentment?

Merciful God,
we have sinned in what we have thought and said,
in the wrong we have done
and in the good we have not done.
We have sinned in ignorance:
we have sinned in weakness:
we have sinned through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry.
We repent and turn to you.
Forgive us, for our Saviour Christ’s sake,
and renew our lives to the glory of your name. Amen.