



3. Hear from Heaven Pt. 2

When Forgiveness Knocked

Behold! See! Lo! If you hear and open, I will come... Revelation 3:20

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says".

Revelation 3:22

"Lord, increase our faith that we may thus forgive, and may neither offend nor be offended." ~John Wesley

Luke 17:1-5

"Be on your guard (give attention to, take heed)! If your brother sins (misses the mark, errs, does wrong), rebuke (warn, straightly charge, sternly tell) him; and if he repents (changes his mind, amends with abhorrence to his past sin), forgive (let go, let be, yield up, send away) him. (NAS)

► **ORIGINAL Context:** What is the *historical & scriptural context* that the scripture was written in? (Luke 17:1-10) _____

► **CURRENT Context:** What does this *imply* or what lesson is being taught for us today? _____

► **My RESPONSE:** What will I do to *apply* this teaching to my life right now? _____

Oh, how many tragedies could have been avoided in relationship, if we only had the courage to confront one another in love!

Let's look at Luke 17:1-10 together...

► Vs. 1 - Offenses will come.

- Jesus actually says; "It's impossible but offenses will come"! Welcome to the real world!
- MORE SCRIPTURE: Matthew 18:7; Romans 14:13, 20, 21; 1 Corinthians 8:13

"Such is the corrupt state of the human heart that, notwithstanding all the influences of grace, and the promises of glory, men will continue to sin against God;" The Adam Clarke Commentary

► Vs. 3 - Take Heed! Pay Attention!

- The phrase 'take heed' in this passage, stands strategically in the middle of two thoughts. We need to take care that we:
 - Aren't the cause of sin & stumbling. Jesus warns us sternly to not be found to be the enticer or enabler of sin especially to 'little ones'. Little ones have been translated to refer to not only children, but weak or young believers. Jesus even rebuked Peter for being a stumbling block to Himself! (Matthew 16:23)
 - Don't ignore another's sin against us. We do not serve each other well when we do not buffer one another with loving correction. The Amplified Version actually says "be on your guard [looking out for one another]". I like that!

► Vs. 3 - If a brother sins, rebuke (reprimand, reprove, admonish) him.

- I believe this to be one of the reasons that the church at large has lost so much of the effect that God intended us to have. We have lost the ability and courage to be integral with each other; trusting each other enough to bear one another's burdens – hurts, failures, and even fall-outs.

Galatians 6:2 says: Bear (endure, carry) one another's burdens and troublesome moral faults, and in this way fulfill and observe perfectly the law of Christ (the Messiah) and complete what is lacking [in your obedience to it].

- We must always keep the whole counsel of God in front of us. Everything that we do is to serve God and to love. But love, is not always permissive. Love corrects and reproves, because love believes in the good of the person it loves.

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds." Hebrews 10:24

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- Even though a rebuke may hurt, it may be one of the greatest displays of love that we can give a friend ... that we actually believe in them enough to go out on a limb for them. You see, love corrects, but it also stays because it is unconditional.

Hear what Solomon says in Proverbs 27:6: "Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses."

- This passage does refer to 'a brother' which implies a relative, a friend, a fellow believer. There is wisdom in what we say and to whom. Some translations actually add the phrase "if a brother sins against you". We do not need to be sticking our nose into other people's business ... the Holy Spirit does that really well without us 'becoming a stumbling block' too. And remember, not everyone wants to be corrected. (Proverbs 9:8; 17:10)

MORE SCRIPTURE: Psalm 141:5; James 5:19-20; Proverbs 27:5

► Vs. 3 (still) - If he repents, forgive him.

- We need to make forgiveness our expectation! Our goal in rebuking is to help lead someone we love to repentance. It is never to prove a point. Silence is better if you really don't have love as your motivation. Don't be like Jonah! (Jonah 4:1-3) Be like a child.
- There are no options. If someone truly repents, we must truly forgive.
- READ Luke 6:35-38. (In context look at Luke 6:27-42).
 - When we show forgiveness we show that we are truly children of the Most High. We bear good fruit.
 - Forgiveness benefits us as it keeps us humble. We remember to give what we've been given.
 - There is an eternal reward for forgiveness given specifically to us by the Father! (Luke 3:35)
 - We reap what we sow. (Luke 6:38)

► Vs. 4 - Forgive repeatedly.

- "And even if he sins against you 7 times in a day, and turns to you 7 times and says, I am sorry, you must forgive him (give up resentment & consider the offense as recalled and annulled)"
- SOUNDS LIKE ... Peter in Matthew 18:21-22. Jesus is basically responding to Peter by saying that there is no limit to forgiveness.
- We really don't have any options here, do we? This is our spiritual duty before God. In essence, this is one of our spiritual acts of worship (Romans 12:1) in that we are

so grateful for what we have been given. We bring God honour by passing on to others what He has so freely lavished on us. If we read on in this passage, we read this: "we have only done our duty" (Luke 17:10)

READ the parable illustrating this in Matthew 18:23-35.

What does it mean to 'forgive from your heart'? _____

► Vs. 5 - Ask God to increase your faith.

- "This work of pardoning every offense of every man, and that *continually*, seemed so difficult, even to the *disciples* themselves, that they saw, without an extraordinary degree of faith, they should never be able to keep this command." (Clarke Commentary)
- This is only possible through Christ...

In Conclusion...

I'd like to think that the act of forgiveness 'from the heart' is something that becomes easier over time as our knowledge of and relationship with God grows, our faith increases, and we see the fruit that forgiveness brings. Initially it may simply be our act of obedience to God, knowing that it is our duty and He will reward us in due time.

Forgiveness is not ignorance, but in contrast may actually be very informed as the impact of the violation may have had deep, hurtful consequences that the forgiver is fully aware of.

Forgiveness releases judgment to the rightful judge... God. And to this I say, THANK YOU God!!

The bottom line here is that true forgiveness is an act of the will *AND* an act of God through our will. One does not work without the other.