

If We Don't Forgive God Will Not Forgive Us ■

by Tim Conway

This sermon delves into the uncomfortable teaching of forgiveness in the Bible, challenging the common notion of salvation by grace through faith. It explores the if-then clauses in forgiveness, emphasizing the importance of forgiving others as a reflection of true faith. The sermon highlights the necessity of God's help in enabling us to forgive and the deep faith required to truly believe in the forgiveness we receive from God.

Scripture: Mark 11:25, James 4:8, Philippians 2:12, Ephesians 4:32

Topics: "Forgiveness", "Faith in Action"

Description

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Transcript

Whenever you stand praying, forgive if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses. Now you see, this teaching makes us uncomfortable.

Why? Because anybody that knows their Bible halfway well has issues with this. We say, well, we're saved by grace through faith. What is this? I mean, what's happening here? Many can't hear these words.

This feels so wrong. I mean, you look at the order of things. What's the order of things? This is one of these if-then type clauses.

If this happens, then this happens. Anybody troubled by if you forgive, then God forgives? Anybody troubled by that order? Anyone uncomfortable? I mean, in fact, think about the parable. Just think about the parable that Jesus just told that we looked at in Matthew 18.

You know what it sounds like it's saying? Well, you got a guy over here. He goes to God. He asks for forgiveness.

Forgiveness is granted. Then he doesn't forgive. Then the king unforgives him.

Anybody uncomfortable with that? But see, this is the way Jesus teaches. I mean, listen, this is what he is saying. And the thing is this, if you and I, I mean, I would just ask you all this question.

If you and I, based on the doctrine we have of how to be saved, the doctrine of salvation, would you teach unforgiveness this way? Would you do this? Would you say what he says? Or would you be so afraid that you were going to cause people to have a wrong idea? You see, Jesus doesn't flinch at teaching like this. What do we call it when you have to do something in order to be forgiven? Works. Anybody saved by works? So was Jesus, what, wrong? No.

I mean, doesn't Jesus know how people are saved? Lord, why would you teach like this? Don't you know how wrong that sounds to our, by grace through faith you've been saved ears? Don't you know how uncomfortable that makes us feel? I mean, I'm not saved by works. And you know what? That's absolutely correct. I am not.

And the Bible teaches we are saved by grace through faith. So how do I explain this? First, just this way. Human responsibility is often presented to us this way in scripture.

What I mean is this. Some passages of scripture show us what God does. Some passages of scripture show us what our responsibility is.

You say, what do you mean? Just this. Scripture says, draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Does it not teach that? It puts the initiative upon you.

You draw near if you draw. It's one of these, if then, it's these conditional statements. If you do this, God will do this.

But does the Bible also tell us that no one can come unto Christ unless the Father draws us? You see, there are texts that say God has to initiate. But then there are texts that are not meant to show us what God's doing behind the scenes so much as they're meant to tell you what your responsibility is. Sometimes you get them joined together in the same place.

How about Philippians 2? We are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Why? Because God is working in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. Now listen, this matter of forgiveness is also inverted in other places.

For instance, be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgive one another as God in Christ forgave you. Now see, we feel more comfortable with that order, right? And yet Jesus has no problem reversing it. And you know, why doesn't he? Well, because of this.

Listen, our theology, we know that parables are meant to teach a basic teaching and you don't want to press them, squeeze them too tightly or else you'll end up erroneous. What Jesus is basically teaching is what he says everywhere about forgiveness. He says this, You may have called out to the Lord to forgive you.

You may continue to ask him that. But what it's basically saying is this, there is something very wrong with you if you're not able to forgive others. Everything, everyone and everything.

Because what it really shows is that there's something vital lacking to your Christianity. It shows that something's not there. And listen, to forgive other people, you desperately, desperately need the Lord's

help.

Brethren, I will say this. This matter of forgiveness is indeed a matter of faith. You say, what do you mean? It's not works.

He's not giving us some works formula here. This is really faith. You say, what do you mean? Well, just this.

Think about this verse from that parable. One was brought to him who owed him 10,000 talents. You know, I just did some quick numbers based on day wages was what a denarius per day.

Looking at your minimum wage here in the UK. Basically, he owed 4.3 billion pounds. Now, here's the thing.

We're dealing with faith here because the issue is really this. Do you believe what scripture says? And see, as you're on your face before this King and you're recognizing, Lord, I owe so much. I can't possibly pay this.

And he says, your sin, not in part, but the whole, it's nailed to the cross. You're free. Go.

If you can turn around and lay your fingers around the throat of anyone else, you don't really believe any of that. See, this is really a matter of faith, not works. Do you really believe? That you're that sick and you're that far in debt.

This excerpt was taken from the full sermon, The Christian Secret Life Part Four, Forgiving Others by Tim Conway. Tim is currently laboring as a missionary in Manchester, England. If you're in the UK and want to visit their meetings, find out more information on GFManchester.com.

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