

Forgive Yourself

Pray and Record

Good morning!

You have heard me, and others I am sure, preach about forgiveness. As mature Christians we know and we are told to forgive others because Jesus has forgiven us.

Do you know what doesn't get a lot of air-time in the pulpit?

Forgiving Yourself

I personally have experience this pitfall. We can forgive others for their transgressions against us, but so many of us will not forgive ourselves.

Spoiler alert! You get past this through diligent introspective prayer and acceptance of God Grace.

Some have secret strongholds. There are some who feel:

- That they have failed as a parent
- That they have in some way failed their spouse
- They have failed themselves through abusing drugs
- That they have made choices that have hurt others and they cannot seem to forgive themselves
- The need to take on the responsibility for another's actions
- There are some who commit "secret sins" such as Internet Porn or Cheating on their spouse
- Guilty because another was injured or killed in a car accident
- ... and the list goes on.

Now, for some people there is significant growth inside themselves and they have learned to forgive others. It is never easy, but they have managed to do it.

But... Forgiving ourselves is not quite the same thing. For the non-sociopathic among us we keenly feel our responsibility and guilt over our actions. Many will try to lie to themselves of justify what they have done, but we truly know inside ourselves when we have done wrong.

Who is responsible for a careless word or two that has hurt a friend?

We absolutely know that we have hurt another person. Their demeanor and countenance change as does the very level of your interaction. It is obvious to anyone who is not self-absorbed.

Perhaps we have undercut our friend for a job promotion or lied about another's actions. Regardless of the circumstances we have hurt another person and they may forgive us but we as human beings typically want to hold tight to the guilt. We feel that we must atone for our actions and so hold contempt for ourselves. Many think that in doing this, maybe I make right what they did.

You may even hear:

- "I don't deserve to be forgiven"
- "Christ's sacrifice can't cover what I've done"
- "They are dead now and I can't fix this"
- "All my parents wanted was for me to visit"
- "No one is as bad as I am"
- "I can't get my life back"
- "I hate myself"
- "I hate my life"

The good news is that if you are struggling today with not being able to forgive yourself, Jesus is faithful and just to forgive us all our sins and to cast them as far away from us as the east is from the west.

Faith is an important component in self-forgiveness. Do we believe that Christ blood was not enough for us? That our sin is in some way greater than any others or that He does not have the ability to forgive us?

You know what is scary... people will actually take their guilt and self-loathing as punishment from God. For many Christians it is time to become knowledgeable about God.

The first part is in believing:

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

The second part is in truly understanding the following scriptures:

John 3:17

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved

Romans 8:1

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Friends, in essence we are a social society and we have bought into many things that society has told us such as:

- Negative or uniformed images of what God is like
- Authority figures that have hurt us
- Childhood trauma
- Negative self image through presenting an unrealistic expectation
- If we don't have X we are a failure

Let us turn now to the book of psalms chapter 103 and verses 10 to 14. This scripture will give all of us a picture of what God is like with regard to our sins...

He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

Do you remember the great works of Jesus at the cross?

- Propitiation – He took our place
- Justification – He legally justified us
- Redemption – He bought us with the price of his blood
- Reconciliation – He brought us back into right standing with the Father

God is Forgiving! Our debt was paid! We are free!

Galatians 5:1

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage

No more sacrifice is required

Hebrews 10:17-18

"And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.

Conclusion

Many people struggle with guilt and torment themselves needlessly, because God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. Give them to Jesus and don't take them back!

Don't insult God and his sacrifice by saying it was not sufficient for your sin.

When you mess up, make it right. Learn from your mistake and let the journey make you stronger.

Condemnation is of the Devil; conviction is of God.

Jesus died for you. You are free. His grace IS sufficient for you.

This morning with every head bowed and every eye closed, if you want to let go of whatever is causing you guilt, then I ask you this morning to raise your hand. I will not be asking you about it nor will I be singling anyone out. This is simply you saying okay God, I am ready to forgive myself.

Every eye closed, heads bowed and hands lowered, we are going to pray now.

"Dear heavenly Father, I know that your forgiveness is sufficient for me. I have faith that you are faithful and just to forgive my sin. Almighty God I give all to you that would cause me to doubt or to condemn myself or even have self-loathing.

This morning I accept your freedom in Jesus name!"

This morning let's all say: "Thank you Jesus"
"Thank you Jesus"

If you are struggling this morning and would like additional prayer, the altar is open for you. If not, you are dismissed. Go with God and May our Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.