

THEME: WHO I AM IN CHRIST

TOPIC: I AM FORGIVEN

TEXT: PSALM 103:12; 1 JOHN 1:9; COLOSSIANS 2:13-14, EPHESIANS 1:7

INTRODUCTION

We continue our series study on “Who we are and what we have in Christ”. Today we are looking at the topic of “I am forgiven”. To be certain of God’s forgiveness, you need to understand Jesus’ death on the cross.

1. God's Forgiveness

God’s love is stronger than our sin. Jesus undid what Adam did! There is no offence in our lives that can separate us from the love that is so much stronger than any of us can conceive.

We can strive to stay away from temptation and try to be good, but there are areas where we are still challenged. We may harbour bitterness, lose our tempers, or make hurtful comments to others. But God calls us to confess and repent to receive His forgiveness.

- True repentance involves regret, mourning, and commitment not to continue in the sin.
- God doesn’t keep a record of our sins. Our forgiveness is total and complete. (Isaiah 43:25).
- First we must have a repentant heart, stop the sin, and ask for God’s forgiveness (1 John 1:9)
- God doesn’t withhold the opportunity for forgiveness from anyone (Psalms 86:5).

Q: What is your understanding about whether faith and forgiveness are like a hand and a glove,. Do they fit together perfectly?

2. Self-Forgiveness

Once we receive forgiveness from God, we also need to learn to forgive ourselves. If God doesn’t hold a sin against us, why beat ourselves up over it? We all make mistakes. Once we repent and ask forgiveness we must forgive ourselves and move on.

- There is nothing we can do to change the past, but we can affect our future. Harboring regret and negative emotions will make us bitter and resentful.
- We need to resist dwelling on things we can’t take back and accept God’s forgiveness (Micah 6:8).

Q: As a believer what are the implications of not forgiving oneself?

3. Forgiving Others

Jesus stressed that the appropriate response to God’s forgiveness is to extend it to others. When someone hurts us we never recover until we forgive.

- Unforgiveness causes deep pain and leads to hideous bondage resulting in bitterness, rage, anger, and malice (Ephesians 4:31).
- Choosing unforgiveness is a life of bitterness and torment leading to a life of bondage, addictions and compulsive behaviours in the hope of alleviating continuous emotional stress.
- Forgiveness is a choice—a spiritual decision—not to hold a sin against a person any longer. It is not based on what is deserved, but on grace.

- A tremendous release occurs when we are able to forgive. We must forgive others before requesting forgiveness from God. (Matthew 6:14-15).
- Forgiving does not mean you can't say something was wrong. You can encourage a compassionate willingness to forgive, yet retain the vigour of conviction that everyone must be fully accountable for their behaviour.

Q: Is forgiving others an absolute necessity or something optional?

Conclusion

The question to ask is that "Do you know about the true forgiveness of God?" As believers in Jesus we know that the work of Jesus on the cross was enough for God and that we can and are fully and truly forgiven. Sometimes, I think we hold onto our sins, replay and remember our shortcomings and failures towards ourselves and others. The holding on is the enemy wanting us to feel inadequate and unforgiven. God wants us to live as His children fully forgiven and restored by His Son. Today as you meditate on God's forgiveness seek to let go and let God transform you with His forgiving power.