

ActNow! (Applying Christ's Teaching NOW) follows the weekly sermon series of TPMC, and challenges us to apply and put into practice the biblical truths we hear each week. It is the recommended Bible discussion material for TPMC's Connect Groups, and leader's notes are available to all Connect Group Leaders and at the Information Counter.

Sermon Series: TPMC Values Humility – To Be Forgiving

2 Chronicles 2:14

Miss Audrey Ong

SERMON SYNOPSIS

- It takes a **humble person** to forgive another because to forgive is to lay down one's rights to be offended and choosing to extend grace. This means firstly, that the person who extends forgiveness *is right* and is even justified to be offended, hurt, being upset and angry. And secondly, the person being forgiven *does not deserve* the mercy, grace & forgiveness that has been given. The person being forgiven *is* in the wrong and rightly *deserves* punishment and the rightful consequences with regards to his/her wrongdoing.
- To forgive is **not easy** as the pain, betrayal, hurt, and the distrust sown in our hearts are very real and can be deep. Thus, to forgive another is a **deliberate choice and decision**. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we have made our covenant and promise to God to follow Jesus, our Lord and Saviour in everything – Eg. in character, values, attitudes, perspectives, words, behaviour, that is, how we live – and this includes forgiving others.

When we forgive, we are not letting the offender get away with the wrongdoing, but we are really **letting go to God** *the person* who wronged us, *the wrong itself* and *all the emotions and thoughts* that come with it. The Lord who is holy, righteous and just is the Judge, not us. God desires us to be healed and *not* be consumed by the offender or the offense!

- By forgiving others, **we are following God and becoming more like Jesus** in being compassionate, gracious and kind towards others who have wronged us. For example, in 2 Chronicles 7:12-14, God promises to hear, forgive and heal His people and their land when they humble themselves, pray, seek God's face and turn from their wicked ways – even when they *have tasted* God's steadfast love repeatedly from generations after generations!

Similarly, we commit high treason against the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the holy Almighty Sovereign Lord when we sin against God in any way *today* – whether we are pre-believers or are already believers in Jesus. All of us do *not* deserve His forgiveness, mercy and grace, YET God *hears* our prayers and confession, *accepts* our repentance (wholehearted change) and *forgives* us. Now that Jesus has come, died and rose from the dead, and God *lavishes* on all His Children forgiveness for all our sins, even future ones! Jesus Christ died once and for all and there is no need of any other sacrifice for sins (Hebrews 7:27, John 5:24) – Jesus paid it all.¹ We are beneficiaries of God's amazing love when we do not deserve God nor His lavish grace & mercy!

In the parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matthew 18:23-35), Jesus Himself taught us, His disciples, to forgive others as we are *first forgiven* by God. **Our forgiving nature is a unique mark of a Christian,**

¹ **Hebrews 10:26-31** – This does not mean we sin deliberately since Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross cancelled out all our sins. The stern warning against disobeying intentionally when we know and have received God's truth and grace in Hebrews 10 is plain and clear.

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a disciple of Jesus. Forgiveness is the key identity of a Christian. So, if we cannot forgive, it is likely we have *not* experienced God's grace and forgiveness yet.

- As disciples in TPMC, we were exhorted to *choose* to extend forgiveness and grace to others:
 - ✓ **Let go of the offense** – After letting go of the offense & offender to God, do not entertain feelings & thoughts that cause you to become bitter, angry, resentful all over again. Choose to confess & repent immediately each time a relapse happens. Practice Philippians 4:8.
 - ✓ **Don't hold onto a grudge** – This is a reality in our hearts when we *completely* let go of the offense and the offender as we allow God through His Word and Holy Spirit to convict us each time we churn inside us and to assure us of His promises, help, empowerment and transformation in us to become more like Christ.
 - ✓ **Don't have to be right all the time** – Value relationships and see each person through the eyes & heart of Jesus. Let go of the need to win every argument even though you are right. Choose to live in peace with others.
 - ✓ **Don't react. Pause** – When perspectives differ, ask God for His help, lean on the Holy Spirit, and allow the Spirit to bear His fruit in you! (Galatians 5:22-23) Respond to others in gentleness and love. Cultivate self-control over your emotions, words and actions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

RELATE

1. Share an actual account of someone being forgiven – either yourself or someone you know. Share also your thoughts and feelings from the perspective of the one being forgiven and the one who extended forgiveness.

REFLECT

2. What do these Scripture Texts – Matthew 6:14-15; **Ephesians 4:30-32**; Galatians 5:16-17,22-23 – teach us about forgiving others? Share your findings and reflections with your CG.

RESPOND

3. Who is God nudging you to extend forgiveness and grace today? Among the FOUR practical steps shared in the sermon, share with your CG the one step you have chosen to act on. And in subsequent CG Meetings, share with them how your growth journey in forgiving this person went.

PRAYER POINTERS

- Praise and thank God for His forgiveness of all our sins and for His mind-blowing extravagant love, grace and mercy extended to you, your CG, TPMC and all peoples.
- Pray for a growing willingness and capacity to forgive others as Jesus has first forgiven you.

SCRIPTURE TO MEDITATE ON

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” Ephesians 4:32 [English Standard Version]