

Episode: God and His Family No. 14

Narrator: Esau

Primary Scriptures: Luke 23:34

Story Summary: Forgiveness is an important part of being in God's family

Location: Israel

Time: circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Luke 23:34

Luke 23:34 records some of the most well-known words of Jesus, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." It is fitting that some of Jesus's last words before his death had to do with forgiveness for an unbelievably unjust act perpetrated on him.

Forgiveness is a primary part of the Christian life. The basis of Christianity is that God forgives people of their sins if they believe in Jesus. He doesn't have to, he doesn't need to but God chooses to give the grace of forgiveness. In light of this, God commands his followers to be forgiving people.

The Lord's Prayer makes the bold request that God forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. What an incentive to be a forgiving people! Colossians 3:13 says to forgive others as the Lord has forgiven us. Luke 6:37 similarly says to forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Matthew 6:14-15 says, "For if you forgive others when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." In Mark 11:25, Jesus said, "And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins." It's as if not forgiving people keeps God from forgiving you.

The hard thing about Biblical forgiveness is there are no excuses not to forgive. We are instructed to forgive in all circumstances. And we don't have the out of forgiving once and then stopping. In Matthew 18:22, Jesus said that we are to forgive people not seven times, but seventy-seven times. God forgives us over and over and over, and we are supposed to emulate that type of forgiveness.

Revenge is one of the opposites of forgiveness. An old saying is that trying to take revenge is like drinking poison and hoping the other person dies. Forgiveness is the antidote to many negative feelings. It is often more important to the forgiver than to the forgiven.

A wise person once said, "It doesn't really matter what the problem is, forgiveness is probably part of the solution." Another person once said that his life changed when he quit giving forgiveness grudgingly. Instead, he now tries to set a world speed record in giving forgiveness. That's not in the Bible, but is surely fits.