

Articles and Sermons :: Forgiving Others As God Has Forgiveness Us -poonen**Forgiving Others As God Has Forgiveness Us -poonen - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2007/9/15 19:18****Forgiving Others As God Has Forgiveness Us***by Zac Poonen*

God is rich in mercy (Eph 2:4). The very first characteristic of the Divine nature that every one of us encountered when we were converted was His mercy. That should also be the very first impression that others have when they encounter us, if indeed we have partaken of the Divine nature.

There is no mercy found in hell and no mercy found in our flesh either. Our flesh is naturally hard towards others and it is easy to deceive ourselves that such hardness is part of the Divine severity. Such is the deceitfulness of sin.

If we could look into Heaven right now, we would find that God is constantly forgiving others. From every part of this world, believers and unbelievers are constantly crying out to Him asking for forgiveness for their sins and their failures. And He is always forgiving them - 24 hours of every day. Some may be asking for forgiveness for a sin that they have committed for the 1000th time. He still forgives, for that is His nature. Jesus said that we were to forgive others in exactly the same way (Matt 18:35)

Jesus also said that we were to forgive our brothers seven times in a single day (Luke 17:4). A day was reckoned as 12 hours. This meant that if your brother sinned against you at 6 a.m. one morning, and asked for your forgiveness at 7 a.m. you were to forgive him. If he committed the same sin against you at 8 a.m. and asked for your forgiveness at 9 a.m. you were to forgive him again. Then at 10 a.m. he does the same thing a third time, and asks for your forgiveness at 11 a.m. You are to forgive him. He repeats exactly the same sin at 12 noon and at 2 p.m. and at 4 p.m. and comes back each time, an hour later and asks for forgiveness. Each time, you are to forgive him, without keeping any record of the number of times you have forgiven him already, the same day. Some who are legalistically minded may say that Jesus did tell us to keep a record up to seven times. That is exactly what Peter once said to Jesus, and he was told that he was to forgive his brother 490 times (Matt 18:21, 22)

That is what God's nature is like. And the good news of the new covenant is that we can partake of His nature. It is easier to speak about this than to actually partake of it. We all know that from experience. But "the kingdom of God is not in words but in power" (1 Cor 4:20)

The glory of Christ is radiated through us, not by our mouthing so many wonderful "truths" and doctrines, but by our manifesting the love of God to others.