



#80

Theme: "Forgiveness -Past, Present, Future"

Scripture: Ephesians 1:7 (TEV)

"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace."

A Thought: Forgiveness for many is not negotiable. All platitudes aside it is difficult to be a paragon of virtue when your spirit has been corralled with tremendous pain. Ancient sages and contemporary scholars from the philosophical, psychological and spiritual spheres have written countless tomes on the subject. Biblical scriptures cry out to those who harbor pride, rancor, hurt, hatred, guilt, stupid indiscretions and years of bad experiences that accumulate to the point of spiritual despair. It plays havoc in your mind, your health and inevitably your temperament. For many souls a dark cloud of misery hovers over them daily.... *"My soul has been kept from enjoying peace. I have forgotten what happiness is."* Lamentations 3:17 GW). You either have doled out or have been the recipient of a wrong. Either wrong will stick to our conscience; the historical tapes play back in our minds incessantly.....even if the person in question is dead. Author Lewis Smedes tells us in so many words....*"By his grace we participate in His power to change the past and control the future. We, too, can forgive, and must forgive. We, too, can make a promise and keep it."* (CT article Forgiveness - The Power to Change the Past.)

Now....what are your thoughts? Write them down.

Talk to yourself:

- Is it difficult for you to forgive yourself? Is this issue a routine matter?
- Are you seeking forgiveness from others? What are your emotions?
- At this writing do you need to forgive someone? What steps have you taken?
- Do you believe in the miracle of forgiveness? Elaborate.

Scriptures to read: Psalm 133:1; Proverbs 19:11, 24:17; Matthew 5:43,45, 22:38-39; Mark 11:25; Luke 6:31; Romans 8:1, 12:14, 19:21; Ephesians 1:7, 4:32; Colossians 3:13; 1 John 4:20;

Quote: Lewis Smedes, Professor, Theologian and author (1983 Christianity Today article on forgiveness) *“God offers two answers to our deepest anxieties. He is a forgiving God who recreates our pasts by forgiving them. He is a promising God who controls our future by making and keeping promises. By forgiving us, he changes our past. By promising, he secures our future.”*

Bottom Line: Gents, do we claim to have a real intimacy with the Father? Do we trust the Word or do we live by our own survival instincts? If so, it is time to read the Word and bear witness to the Truth. It is time to stop brow-beating and kicking yourself. Failing to see yourself as God’s word sees you is denying the very sacrifice our Lord Jesus suffered on the cross. Accept His sacrificial gift and begin to see yourself as a new creation in Christ Jesus. Faith and obedience gentlemen...faith and obedience. Pay attention to the two words *“true heart”* as written in the letter to the Hebrews (10:22 HCSB) *“let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water.”* Be assured that the days ahead will be filled with tough circumstances. Nevertheless we have a duty as to the Lord as He speaks out through Paul in the letter to the Ephesians *“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”* (4:32 NIV)

NOW.....THAT’S THE BOTTOM LINE.

Spiritual Dabbler,

Your bro, Ray

