



Pastor & First Lady Richardson

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"A REASON FOR FORGIVENESS"

Col 3:13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. KJV

July 2012



Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who has blessed us to sit in heavenly places in Him. It is my prayer and heart's desire that you and your family are doing well and that the blessings of the Lord are manifest in your lives.

Our ministry theme for the month of July is Forgiveness. Forgiveness is defined as the act of excusing or pardoning another in spite of his slights, shortcomings, and errors. As a theological term, forgiveness refers to God's pardon of the sins of human beings.

Out of the many things that God has provided for humanity, forgiveness is one of the greatest. In fact when God forgave us he met our greatest need. Chuck Swindoll in "The Grace Awakening" wrote this "If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator. If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist. If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist. If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer. But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Savior!



THE GATEWAY TO FREEDOM

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God's brand of forgiveness is far superior than ours. When God forgives He forgets. In Isa 43:25 God says "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." In Micah 7:19 it reads "He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Someone says that when God forgives He throws our sins into the sea of forgetfulness and puts up a sign that says "No Fishing!"



Another verse of scripture that highlights how God dismisses our trespasses is found in Psalms 103:12 "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." Do you understand how far that is? Let me just give you a hint. If you were to travel north from anywhere, at what point would you begin going south? At the north pole. But if you were traveling east from anywhere, at what point would you begin going west? You could go east forever and never be going west. That's how far God removes our sins from us when they are forgiven.

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However when we forgive, we often struggle with removing, throwing away or forgetting the trespass or transgression against us. We talk about forgiveness, sing about forgiveness, teach and preach about it, but our noise about forgiveness becomes mute when we are called to forgive. C.S. Lewis put it this way “Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive.”



Though we may not have the capacity to forget, remove and throw away trespasses like God, we must strive to do it with all sincerity. Clara Barton, the founder of the Red Cross, was never known to hold resentment against anyone. One time a friend recalled to her an especially cruel thing that had happened to her some years previously, but Clara seemed not to remember the incident. "Don't you remember the wrong that was done to you?" the friend asked Clara. She answered calmly, "No, I distinctly remember forgetting that." Like Miss Barton, we must distinctly remember to forget!

Though the act of forgiving requires effort and depending on the severity of the transgression can be most difficult, there are some good reasons for you to forgive. First of all, Forgiveness provides Freedom. When we refuse to forgive someone for something they have done to us, we become bound and enslaved by the situation in question. It will negatively impact your focus, your productivity, your rest and even your health. Every time the person who has trespassed against you comes into your presence or into your thoughts you feel bound, restricted and uneasy. However, when we forgive we begin to reclaim the liberty, peace and freedom we once had.

Another reason for forgiveness is that it provides healing. Unforgiveness can be deadly. It destroys relationships. It destroys marriages, families, and friendships. It destroys neighborhoods communities and even churches. However, I agree with Marianne Williamson who said that “the practice of forgiveness is our most important contribution to the healing of the world”. Though forgiveness may not be easy, if we would strive to practice it daily in all of our interactions, we will reap the benefits of better and healthier relationships with one another.

Finally, the best reason for forgiveness is because Christ has forgiven us. In the book of Col 3:13 the Apostle Paul rights “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” When we consider the price that was paid to purchase our Salvation which is a direct result of God forgiving us, when we consider all of the many benefits, blessings and liberties that we are entitled to, how can we not demonstrate the love of God to others as He has shown unto us?

Be tolerant with one another and
forgive one another whenever any of
you has a complaint against someone
else. You must forgive one another
just as the Lord has forgiven you.

Colossians 3:13

Forgiveness is conditional. Jesus said in Mark 11:26 “But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.” We express our appreciation and gratitude of God’s love and forgiveness towards us by expressing that same love and forgiveness to others. George Herbert said “God’s love is like a bridge that makes reconciliation possible. If you take away the bridge, the separation remains. He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass.”

During this month of forgiveness let us strengthen the bridge of reconciliation by reflecting on God’s forgiveness towards us and practicing forgiveness towards others.

*Be Blessed,
Pastor Michael Richardson*