

Messenger of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16)

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## **Forgiveness**

"To err is human, to forgive divine." – Alexander Pope, *An Essay On Criticism*

"We win by tenderness; we conquer by forgiveness." – Frederick W. Robertson

"Doing an injury puts you below your enemy; revenging one makes you but even with him; forgiving it sets you above him." – Anonymous

"The noblest vengeance is to forgive." – H. G. Bohn, *Hand-Book of Proverbs*

"And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:32).

Forgiveness – we are not very good at it. Even in the church, it is surprising how many Christians struggle with the willingness to forgive. One wonders how often the words have been spoken, "I will never forgive \_\_\_\_\_ for as long as I live." O the sadness to see people enter through different doors to the auditorium just to avoid the person with whom they still hold a grudge.

And those who are in the wrong, and know it, how can they ignore what the sacred text says? "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matt. 5:23-24). And likewise, how can those who need to forgive another also ignore Scripture? "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6:14-15).

Jesus said that the badge of discipleship, (the reason folks will know us), is our love for one another (John 13:34-35). It sure sounds strange when brothers or sisters won't even talk to one another, and still agree that we should be known for love. How is it that we allow such inconsistency in the Lord's church?

We would do well to follow in the footsteps of Jesus (1 Pet. 2:21-24). How can we forget what He endured on Calvary, and yet He found it in His heart to forgive. "...Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34).

Like revenge, the unwillingness to forgive can only serve to hurt the one who can't find it in his heart to forgive. They have to live with that bitterness. What a sorrow that they choose such a life of unhappiness.

Forgiveness allows us to move on. It was Charles Simmons who said it so well, "There is noble forgetfulness – that which does not remember injuries."