

## Is Forgiveness Really Necessary?

1 Thessalonians 5:15: (NASB) See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.



We all know that Jesus taught us to forgive. If your brother trespasses against you seven times in a day, Jesus says to forgive. Okay, while this may be difficult we can see its value and strive to live up to that standard. But, what about when someone commits a horrible crime - what about when someone guns down, in cold blood, innocent God-fearing people in church - at a Bible study? Is the same lesson of forgiveness relevant? Do the teachings of Jesus include forgiving those who are simply and purely evil in their actions?

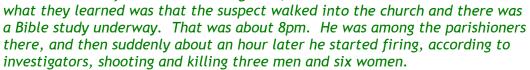
Sin, evil and our reactive desire to NOT forgive: We have a knee-jerk reaction to get back at somebody. How should we respond? So often when faced with difficult experiences our first reaction is one of emotion. Negative emotions may be natural but we don't want our response to be based on emotions. We may need to pause and consider (and pray) for the proper response. We may need to separate our reaction from our response.

## The magnitude of God's mercy:

<u>Psalms 103:6-8</u>: (NRSV) <sup>6</sup>The LORD works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed. <sup>7</sup>He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the people of Israel. <sup>8</sup>The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.



- (Reporter) Dylann Storm Roof was captured in Shelby, North Carolina. Witnesses say a gunman entered the Emmanuel AME Church last night during a prayer meeting. He killed the pastor and eight parishioners. Jeff, let's go over if we could, the chain of events that we know. The shooting occurred around 9pm last night but from what you've gathered this morning, the gunman actually entered the church, what about an hour before that?
- (Jeff) Well, that's exactly right. Investigators have been talking to some of the survivors, and we have been told they have been talking to three survivors of this mass shooting here, and



This is such a tragedy on every level. Every part of this is heartbreaking. This was shooting in a church with the cold blooded murder of those who were seeking God and had done nothing to wrong their killer.





# This stirs up our anger towards such evil, and we beg for God's power to come forth and do something right now:

Psalms 94:1-7: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>O Lord, God of vengeance, God of vengeance, shine forth! <sup>2</sup>Rise up, O Judge of the earth, render recompense to the proud. <sup>3</sup>How long shall the wicked, O LORD, how long shall the wicked exult? <sup>4</sup>They pour forth words, they speak arrogantly; all who do wickedness vaunt themselves. <sup>5</sup>They crush Your people, O LORD, and afflict Your heritage. <sup>6</sup>They slay the widow and the stranger and murder the orphans. <sup>7</sup>They have said, the LORD does not see, nor does the God of Jacob pay heed.

This is the same situation happening now.

The members of the AME Church are truly demonstrating biblical forgiveness.

# ))Introduction, Voices of Victim's Families, CNN

Law enforcement sources tell CNN Roof admitted that he shot worshipers in cold blood as they gathered for a Bible study Wednesday at the historical Emmanuel AME Church. His chilling motive? One source tells CNN that the 21-year old wanted to start a race war. Continuing to gather evidence against Roof, investigators have traced the 45-caliber handgun he was carrying to the shootings, and they say that Roof bought it around his 21st birthday in April. The gun holds thirteen rounds and witnesses to the shootings said Roof reloaded a number of times.

## We want God's wrath to punish evil - and we should:

<u>Deuteronomy 32:35</u>: (NASB) Vengeance is Mine, and retribution, in due time their foot will slip; for the day of their calamity is near, and the impending things are hastening upon them.

We need to remember that vengeance is God's. We cannot handle vengeance. It gets overblown when we try to handle it. God has perfect wisdom, love, justice and power that can handle it perfectly. But we should also see God's wrath from the standpoint of His patience. God is not about reacting with pointed consequences; rather, He is about rewarding with proper consequences!

# Judge offers victim's families a voice, Voices of Victim's Families, CNN

- (Reporter) In shackles and wearing prison stripes, gunman Dylann Roof walks into his first court appearance with little fanfare or emotion; his image broadcast via video link from the detention center into a North Charleston courtroom. On another side of the screen off camera, relatives of the innocent victims.
- (Courtroom official) Before we go into the bond process, I would like to ask if there are any representatives of any of the family members that wish to make a statement before this court before I set the bond?
- (Reporter) Through tears, some of them spoke.

#### When given a voice in the face of evil, whose voice do we choose?

Isaiah 42:1-4: (NASB) ¹Behold, My Servant, (Jesus) whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. ²He will not cry out or raise his voice, nor make his voice heard in the street. ³A bruised reed he will not break and a dimly burning wick he will not extinguish; he will faithfully bring forth justice. ⁴He will not be disheartened or crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands will wait expectantly for his law.



Jesus carried out God's plan of justice - along with mercy and understanding - all in due time! This is not the time for God to exact justice, but the time is coming. When it comes, everything will be put in order. God does not forget; He puts things in proper order.

#### Should we forgive when there is no repentance?

Human beings have both a need to forgive and to be forgiven.

Regardless of the answer to the green question above, our attitude should NEVER be one of joy in anyone's suffering:

<u>Proverbs 24:17-19</u>: (NASB) <sup>17</sup>Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; <sup>18</sup>Or the LORD will see it and be displeased, and turn His anger away from him. <sup>19</sup>Do not fret because of evildoers or be envious of the wicked;

Do we have sympathy for our enemies like Jesus did, or does that allow us to be treated like a doormat? How do we handle this?

# (1) Voices 1, Voices of Victim's Families, CNN

- (Courtroom official) Your name, Ma'am.
- Felicia Sanders.
- (Reporter) One of them, Felicia Sanders, a survivor of the slaughter, who lost her son in the attack, seems to speak for them all.
- (Felicia) We welcomed you Wednesday night in our Bible study with open arms. You have killed some of the most "beautifulist" people that I know. Every fiber in my body hurts, and I'll never be the same.
- (Reporter) Roof listens expressionless. Staring down, he says nothing.

There are four key New Testament words meaning forgiveness. Here is one of them:

Forgive: Strongs #863; to send forth, away

This word <863> is very broadly used. It covers godly and human forgiveness and is the word that most clearly reflects our forgiveness of one another.

<u>Matthew 18:21</u>: (NRSV) Then Peter came and said to him, Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive < 863 >? As many as seven times?

(Basically Jesus answers, "What are you counting for?")

# No eyes of hatred, Marcus Stanley Interview, CNN

- (Robin) Marcus Stanley himself is a victim of gun violence. He was shot eight times. He was confronted by a gang member in Baltimore. He joins me now. Thanks for being here, Marcus.
- (Marcus) I'm grateful to be with you tonight, Robin.
- (Robin) You wrote this (on the shooter's Facebook page): "I don't look at you with the eyes of hatred. I look at you as a human being who made a horrible decision to take the lives of nine living and breathing people." Where did you find it in your heart to write that?
- (Marcus) It was in my heart because I have been in the same position of feeling isolated, feeling alone. After my shooting in 2004, I withdrew and I plunged deep into addiction. Even though I didn't go through the same exact thing that Dylann was going through, I still reached out to him in love.



Regarding our forgiveness to each other, is repentance required from someone who sins against us?

# YES & NO

# YES! Here is a text that shows the part repentance should play:

<u>Luke 17:3-4</u>: (KJV) <sup>3</sup>Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and **if he repent**, **forgive** <**863**> him. <sup>4</sup>And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt **forgive** <**863**> him.

NO! Here is a text that says we should love unconditionally - regardless of repentance on the part of the one who offended us:

<u>Luke 6:27-31</u>: (NRSV) <sup>27</sup>But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup>bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. <sup>29</sup>If anyone strikes you on the cheek offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. <sup>30</sup>Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. <sup>31</sup>Do to others as you would have them do to you.



People are to be treated differently depending on what you would expect them to know.

	<u>Luke 17:3-4</u>	<u>Luke 6:27-31</u>
Is repentance part of the forgiveness?	YES!	NO!
Who are you forgiving?	Your brother in Christ	Your enemies/ those of the world
What does this show?	Communication because there is a relationship between you	Persecution from someone with whom you do not have a relationship
What are you to do?	Forgive him	Love him, bless him and be humble

Those "within" should know better. Again, forgiveness means to send the situation away from you personally. If someone you know to be a fellow Christian committed a wrong and does not repent, that creates a great rift. You can have a forgiving attitude but something still needs to be dealt with.



# Remarkable forgiveness, Interview With Christians About Christianity, CNN

- (Reporter) I think one of the most remarkable events of this last week is the families of the victims telling this horrific person, whose name I will only use sparingly, "I forgive you." I don't know that I would have the strength to say that. Is this something particular to the AME Church? Is this particular to black churches? Is it Christianity in general?
- First of all, I think the whole world was moved by that.

So, the provocation to forgive can come from two places:

- 1. <u>Luke 17:3-4</u>: Someone's recognition for their need of forgiveness namely a brother in Christ who should know better, and
- 2. <u>Luke 6:27-31</u>: From our own desire to lift up those who may have hurt us regarding those still in the darkness of the world for their own good.

To forgive is to make someone's sin against us lose its relevance in our life. That is what was displayed in South Carolina.

## Forgiveness releases us from damaging emotions:

<u>Proverbs 19:11</u>: (NASB) The discretion of a man maketh him slow to anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.

It takes work to be slow to anger!

What gives anyone the strength to forgive such a heinous crime?

You get the strength because you realize your own need for forgiveness from God through Christ. This is the basic principle of Christianity, which makes it such a powerful force when properly applied.



A caller from Connecticut has had a sibling and other family members hurt her for decades. She now is at an ultimate low feeling she can never forgive them. She wants to and tried, but cannot. She is a Christian and wants to know how to do this. She loves them but cannot forgive them for what they just recently did to her.

This is a very difficult question! Applying biblical principles, the idea of forgiveness for people like this is to put the circumstance away from you. Let whatever the hurt is not be a driver in your life anymore. The goal is to bring it before God through Jesus and ask for help to get beyond it to be able to live your life to love them - even from a distance - and to move forward without this thing driving you. That is what forgiveness is. Whether anything comes back from them is not relevant. The forgiveness is to release YOU from the results of what they have done to you.

# (1) Voices 2, Voices of Victim's Families, CNN

- It hurts me. You hurt all the people, but God forgives you. I forgive you.
- We are the family that love built. We have no room for hating, so we have to forgive.
- I forgive you. You took something very precious from me. I will never talk to her ever again. I will never hold her again, but I forgive you and have mercy on your soul.



That is absolutely remarkable! How are they able to rise to this level?

We must realize that in order to be forgiven - in order for us to have our sins that we commit not be relevant to God - we must make the sins against us by others not relevant to us:

Matthew 6:9-15: (NRSV) <sup>9</sup>Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. <sup>10</sup>Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. <sup>11</sup>Give us this day our daily bread. <sup>12</sup>And forgive <863> us our debts, as we also have forgiven <863> our debtors. <sup>13</sup>And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. <sup>14</sup>For if you forgive <863> others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive <863> you; <sup>15</sup>but if you do not forgive <863> others, neither will your Father forgive <863> your trespasses.



Put the experience away from you. Make it not relevant to your life and God can do the same to us.

Forgive us our debts - that which we owe; not money, but our sins and transgressions committed that take us out of balance with God. We want forgiveness applied to us as we apply it to others.

We can find the strength to forgive by realizing our need to be forgiven.

When we are forgiven by God, do we undergo just an emotional change or an actual change?

(i)) Giving the best when it is the worst, Interview With Christians About Christianity,

• First of all let's be very, very, clear. Multiple ends of the political spectrum have to be challenged by what you're going to see today. You have the secular left from Bill Maher all the way over who've been dumping on religion for the past five, six years saying religion is only about bigotry, it's only about violence, only the fundamentalists are religious. This is religion today. You're about to see the good part of religious faith. The strength it can give you to get through unspeakable times, and you also have conservatives who when there is ever violence against America only respond saying, "We gotta go to war." You're not going to hear that today. You're going to hear a conversation about how you deal with the worst of the worst and yet bring out the best of the best. That is the moral strength of the black church.

We will expand on that and say it is the best of Christianity. That is the fundamentals of true Christianity. It is much easier to forgive others when we understand our need for forgiveness from God.

We must realize just what the sacrifice of Jesus means to us. The forgiveness we receive from that sacrifice is MUCH MORE than the forgiveness that we have been talking about. The following is a second word for forgiveness:

Forgiveness: Strongs #859; freedom, pardon

This word <859> is never used in connection with us forgiving one another. It is only related to the pardon granted through Jesus' sacrifice.



Our forgiveness of one another "sends the sin away" from us; it does not forgive the other person of their sin. Jesus removed our sin through Adam to give us an opportunity in the future for eternal life.

<u>Ephesians 1:7</u>: (KJV) In whom we have redemption through his blood, the **forgiveness** <859> of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

(June 19, 2015), Thomas Roberts, MSNBC

• (Reporter, Thomas Roberts) This case, been hearing emotional testimony. Can we look over here for a moment? It's kind of heartbreaking. They're singing and a whole flood of people have showed up at the same time his arraignment was taking place, so you're hearing from the family and then this whole group of people showed up. And they're singing a gospel song and you heard from the family members of those who were lost. (Breaking up emotionally) I apologize.

This is an example of the power of Christian principles when properly applied. It is inspiring to see the role forgiveness can have in our lives.

#### God's forgiveness:

<u>Hebrews 9:22</u>: (KJV) And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission <859>. (pardon)

God's forgiveness is in place already because of the sacrifice of Jesus, but we do not yet see the full result.



The animal sacrifices in the Old Testament pointed to - were a picture of - the sacrifice of Jesus. The shedding of blood was necessary to take away - remove - sins. Jesus was that lamb of sacrifice to satisfy justice. This is a pardon. All we are asked to do is put sins away from us so they no longer affect us.

God, through Jesus, satisfied justice - a life for a life - and therefore provided true forgiveness.

<u>Luke 4:16-18</u>: (NASB) <sup>16</sup>And he came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was his custom, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. <sup>17</sup>And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, <sup>18</sup>The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because He anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release <859> to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed.

The release here is not just an opening of the prison door - it is a full pardon - an opportunity to go on and live without the previous consequences of sin.



While most of us will never have the horrible experience of those that the AME Church had, and therefore never have that most dramatic expression of forgiveness, we can all certainly have experiences in which great faith is required to be able to forgive.





A CQ App user from Virginia suggests the thought that forgiveness is an active and ongoing action where you bring it to God and then actively leave it in His hands and seek His peace. This means not rehashing it in your mind and speaking bad about the situation/person. The more you practice pushing it back onto God, the faster you will be able to feel His perfect peace and be able to forgive the situation/person.



A caller from Indiana suggests that *not* forgiving leaves you in a mire and that time could be spent making offerings to God. Forgiveness is necessary.

Our forgiveness does not release the person from consequences. Our forgiveness releases the action from ourselves; not from justice or consequences.

Power of Christianity, Interview With Christians About Christianity, CNN

• This particular church has just had such an extraordinary history. They've dealt with tragedy from every kind over decades, so what you're seeing here is a community in a church healing the country. I am so proud of the people of Charleston, and I wandered around there last night. I found that wooden cross which is the real symbol of the day, not the confederate flag, and people laying flowers down and praying and holding and singing spirituals, and I felt very uplifted and when I arrived here in Charleston I was depressed and it's the power of Christianity today that's the winning spiritual energy.





# This next New Testament account has several layers of forgiveness beginning with Stephen's stoning:

Acts 7:58-60: (NASB) <sup>58</sup>When they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. <sup>59</sup>They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! <sup>60</sup>Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, Lord, do not hold this sin against them! Having said this, he fell asleep.

The last uttered prayer of Stephen was one asking forgiveness for his murderers.

Acts 8:1-3: (NASB) ¹Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. ²Some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him. ³But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.

Saul, who later became the Apostle Paul, oversaw the stoning of Stephen.



- (Reporter) We've seen this unbelievable outpouring of forgiveness from some of the family members of the victims who were murdered saying, "I will never forget. I will always be in pain, but I forgive you." Other people watching this may say how can you forgive him? How can you forgive someone like that, that drove from 120 miles to carry out this pre-planned massacre? What do you say to them?
- (Marcus) It's possible to forgive. The only way you can forgive is through the hope of Jesus, and that's why I reached out to Dylann. I went to my shooter that attempted to shoot me. They shot me eight times at point blank range and I reached out to him and I told him that I forgave him, and he didn't say anything back to me at all. So, forgiveness is not about how you personally feel about a person. It's 100 percent about releasing it and being free.

Acts 9:10-19: (NASB) <sup>10</sup>Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, here I am, Lord. <sup>11</sup>And the Lord said to him, get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying, <sup>12</sup>and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight. <sup>13</sup>But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to your saints at Jerusalem; <sup>14</sup>and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name. <sup>15</sup>But the Lord said to him go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; <sup>16</sup>for I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake. <sup>17</sup>So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>18</sup>And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized; <sup>19</sup>and he took food and was strengthened.

And so, the forgiveness that Stephen prayed for was directly answered in Saul - God answered his prayer and forgave Saul, but it was not with any lack of testing that Saul - now Paul - would need to prove his faith. Ananias displayed the faith to forgive and acted accordingly.

Think about it - Saul was a persecutor of Christians. He became a leader of Christians, and then he personally suffered the wrath of his previous allies!



Romans 12:14-17: (NASB) <sup>14</sup>Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup>Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup>Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. <sup>17</sup>Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

Could these words have been inspired by Stephen's last prayer and by the faithfulness of Ananias?

How can we become better forgivers?



<u>Proverbs 14:29</u>: (ASV) He that is slow to anger is of great understanding; But he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.

<u>Proverbs 25:23</u>: (ASV) The north wind bringeth forth rain: So doth a backbiting tongue an angry countenance.

Roof family statement, Voices of Victim's Families, CNN

• And a short time ago CNN received this statement from the Roof family and it reads like this: "Words can not express our shock, grief and disbelief as to what happened that night. We are devastated and saddened by what occurred. We offer our prayers and sympathy for all of those impacted by these events. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of those killed this week. We have all been touched by the moving words of the victims' families offering God's forgiveness and love in the face of such horrible suffering."

Here is the third word for forgiveness:

Forgive: Strongs #630; to free, relieve, release, dismiss, let die, pardon, divorce

This word <630> is broadly used but rarely translated forgive. It is generally used to describe divorce, which means to send someone away, so the principle of forgiveness and divorce has a thread of similarity.

<u>Matthew 27:17</u>: (KJV) Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, whom will ye that I release <630> unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus, which is called Christ?

<u>Luke 6:37</u>: (KJV) Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive <630>, and ye shall be forgiven <630>:





Determine to truly walk away from the wrong done to us – only then we can be free!

Good people, but evil came, Kayla Hall's Charleston Experience, GBTV

• Even at the church I took a step back with my three boys and we just kind of hugged each other, and I said a little prayer in our own circle and asked them to really think about the people that had passed away and what they were doing. They weren't in the wrong place, they weren't doing the wrong thing and evil came, but look what was happening. I had them look everywhere and then somebody mentioned, please meet a stranger next to you, and some man came over to us and he had some kind of African garb on and one of my little ones said, "Where are you from?" and he said, "I'm from here in Charleston." My little one just went and hugged him, and it was just a really special moment for my boys and me.

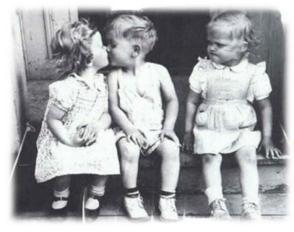
Here is the fourth word for forgiveness:

Forgiving: Strongs #5483; favor

This word <5483> is broadly used in the sense of having a big heart - not focused on taking away sin.

<u>Philippians 1:29</u>: (KJV) For unto you it is <u>given <5483</u>> in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

Colossians 3:13: (KJV) Forbearing one another, and forgiving <5483> one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave <5483> you, so also do ye.



Give one another the benefit of the doubt whenever possible!



# One word message, Mother of Amish Shooter Shares Forgiveness, WGAL.com

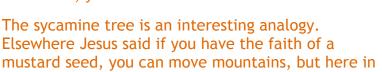
- (Reporter) News 8's Ann Shannon spoke with her, and this is all about forgiveness isn't it?
- (Reporter) That's right, Ron and Kim. Terri Roberts says
  if you only hear one thing she has to say, one part of her
  message, she wants you to hear her message of
  forgiveness. She says accepting the forgiveness the
  Amish families had offered her was the first step in her
  healing journey. It even helped her forgive her own son.
- (Terri Roberts) I just feel like God's grace to get me through and to give me a hope and a future has been nothing short of amazing.

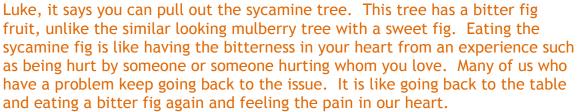


The victim's families found a way through a forgiving attitude to look at the mother of the shooter in this case; it transformed her life while recovering their own.



A caller from New Jersey discussed how Jesus compared unforgiveness to the sycamine tree. <u>Luke 17:6</u>: If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you. <u>Luke 17:5</u>: The apostles said unto the Lord, increase our faith. The point is if you don't have faith, you can't achieve this.





This type of tree grows in the arid Middle East and puts down incredibly deep roots - just like bitterness. In a peculiar twist, this tree had been used to build coffins. The lesson might be that if you don't get rid of the symcamine tree of unforgiveness, you can expect not to have life. If you cannot forgive your brother, neither will God forgive you.

To uproot this tree and toss it into the sea would be a monumental task. If you let it stay planted in your heart and keep going back to eat the bitter fruit, you may end up with it as your coffin. Harboring bitterness is deadly! Great faith can produce great forgiveness.

Again, our forgiveness does not release someone from the consequences of their actions; it releases US from any consequences of their actions. Can we have that great faith?





## **Looking unto Jesus:**

<u>Isaiah 53:3-7</u>: (NASB) <sup>3</sup>He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face he was despised, and we did not esteem him. <sup>4</sup>Surely our griefs he himself bore, and our sorrows he carried; yet we ourselves esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup>But he was pierced through for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well being fell upon him, and by his scourging we are healed. <sup>6</sup>All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on him. <sup>7</sup>He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so he did not open his mouth.



Remember that what Jesus did here is vastly different than what we can do towards each other. If he could bear our sins and pardon us, surely we can decide to not allow another's sinful actions to control our lives!

It is one thing to be forgiven and another to live forgiven how may we do a better job of living forgiven?

)) A mighty fortress, Interview With Christians About Christianity, CNN

- (Interviewer Jake Tapper) Dr. Moore, tell us how you're feeling as you hear the hymns behind us.
- (Dr. Moore) That's what I was just about to say. I am struck by the hymns; not only are they right now in the church but last night as I was walking around. Just a few minutes ago we heard that majestic hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is My God" that says: "The prince of darkness grim. We tremble not for him. His rage we can endure for lo his doom is sure." I think that's the power we saw in the forgiveness that was given by these families. It's not that they're saying what happened is okay, and it's not that they are saying there shouldn't be justice. They're saying we are not going to be enslaved by hatred; instead we're going to turn you over for the dealing of justice by the state and ultimately the justice of God. That's what the Gospel is all about.
- (Interviewer Jake Tapper) It gives you shivers just hearing it.



A caller from Connecticut suggests <u>Matthew 26:52</u>: Put your sword back into its sheath for all who take the sword will die by the sword. Jesus came to restore and proclaim the unity of all in God. Lack of forgiveness, as a practical matter, separates us from that unity. To not forgive does not punish the transgressor but hurts us.



A caller from Connecticut asks, "How is it no longer relevant to my life after I forgive?"

We will weave the answer into our next story about Zacchaeus.



#### A great example of learning to live forgiven:

<u>Luke 19:1-10</u>: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>He entered Jericho and was passing through. <sup>2</sup>And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and he was rich.

(Source: John Gill's Exposition of the Bible) What sort of tax Zacchaeus was concerned in collecting is not certain; however, he was a principal man in this employ and had got great riches by it.

<sup>3</sup>Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, and was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature. <sup>4</sup>So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way.

There was a clear enthusiasm for Jesus and Zacchaeus went to extraordinary lengths to merely see him.

Live forgiven by striving to see that which is true and honest.

<sup>5</sup>When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house. <sup>6</sup>And he hurried and came down and received him gladly. <sup>7</sup>When they saw it, they all began to grumble, saying, he has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.

• Live forgiven by immediately receiving that which is true and honest into your life with joy.

<sup>8</sup>Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.

(Source: Whole Bible Commentary Critical and Explanatory by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown) *if I have* - that is, "so far as I have," for evidently the "if" is so used (as in Philippians 4:8 - "if there be any praise or virtue").

Zaccheus realized he had taken part in defrauding people. He was willing to step up and make it right in a big way.

• Live forgiven by being a giver and by thoroughly and righteously restoring all wrongs done.

(Source: Whole Bible Commentary Critical and Explanatory by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown) Roman Law would have required a 4 times restoration and Zacchaeus self-imposed this penalty.

Jewish Law would have required only a 20% restoration. Zacchaeus followed the maximum to show he really was changed. He saw in Jesus a way to live and a freedom he had never experienced.

<sup>9</sup>And Jesus said to him, today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup>For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Live forgiven by not looking back to your previous sinful ways.

Back to our caller's question, "How is it no longer relevant to my life after I forgive?" If someone has done a terrible wrong to you, if you are forgiving, you can make the wrong not affect your daily life. You are not thinking about it over and over again. Your life's activities are not dictated by what happened to you. All of your life is focused on something bigger and better. Let it be a part of what happened in the past without dictating your future.

Please see the archived program from August 31, 2014, "What Happens When Life Gets Broken?" for more on forgiveness after terrible circumstances.



# Family bonds, Mother of Amish Shooter Shares Forgiveness, WGAL.com

- (Reporter) Terri Roberts still refers to it as "the tragedy," but even in the wake of such sorrow Terry has found great hope.
- (Reporter) How often do you go back to that day?
- (Terri Roberts) Every week.
- (Reporter) Once a week she spends time with 14year old Roseanna, one of the five girls injured in the school shooting.
- (Terri Roberts) She was sent home to die but she is very much alive. She recognizes me when I come.
- (Reporter) Roberts and her husband have relationships
  with each of the Amish families impacted by the tragedy. They come to the
  Roberts' southern Lexter County home to eat, share and enjoy.
- (Terri Roberts) The bond with the families is just nothing short of amazing and God's grace. I mean, it is so God's grace.

Christian faith says: You have been forgiven. You have been redeemed. Now go and act accordingly.

Holding grudges against those around us and playing the "blame game" can be weighing us down on a smaller basis.

<u>Ephesians 4:25-32</u>: (NRSV) <sup>25</sup>So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another.

• Live forgiven by living and speaking only that which is true.

<sup>26</sup>Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup>and do not make room for the devil...

• Live forgiven by living, acting and responding in a Christ-like fashion.

<sup>29</sup>Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear...

 Live forgiven by ALWAYS being a building up influence in all areas of your life.

<sup>31</sup>Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice,

Live forgiven by choosing to live better, not bitter.

<sup>32</sup>and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, **forgiving<5483>** (favoring) one another, as God in Christ has **forgiven <5483>** (favored) you.

Live forgiven by being gracious and forgiving - that's what Jesus did!

Forgiveness transforms your life! Choose to live a God-honoring life.



# So, is forgiveness really necessary? For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions... Think about it...!

# s...

# And now <u>even more</u> to think about... only in the Full Edition of CQ Rewind!

"The practice of forgiveness is our most important contribution to the healing of the world."

- Marianne Williamson

"Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies." — Nelson Mandela

Remember, to forgive is to make someone's sin against us lose its relevance in our life! The event still happened and the results of the event are still intact, but the relevance of the act AGAINST us has been diminished!

Our God is a forward thinking and planning God - His plan is built on a foundation of justice that enables him to be loving and forgiving.

#### God's forgiveness:

Psalms 103:8-13: (NASB) <sup>8</sup>The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. <sup>9</sup>He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. <sup>10</sup>He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. <sup>11</sup>For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. <sup>12</sup>As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. 13 Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.

Clementa Pinckney, age 41

Tywanza Sanders, age 26

Cynthia Hurd, age 54

Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, age 45

Myra Thompson, age 59

Ethel Lee Lance, age 70

Daniel Simmons, age 74

DePayne Middleton-Doctor, age 49

Susie Jackson, age 87

<u>Jeremiah 31:31-34</u>: (NASB) <sup>31</sup>Behold, days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup>not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them, declares the LORD... I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. <sup>34</sup>They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, know the LORD, for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, declares the LORD, for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.

## Our being forgiven is the basis for us to become more Christ-like:

Romans 12:14-21: (NKJV) <sup>14</sup>Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup>Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup>Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. <sup>17</sup>Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. <sup>18</sup>If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. <sup>19</sup>Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I



will repay, says the Lord. <sup>20</sup>Therefore if your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head. <sup>21</sup>Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

A bit more on the role of repentance: What about the responsibilities of those needing forgiveness? Once there is repentance, is it a free lunch afterwards? If we repent of a wrong done is that the end of the story?

The concept of repentance uses three primary words in the New Testament, <3338> and <3340> and <3341> being similar:

Repent: Strongs #3338 metamellomai; to care afterwards, i.e. regret

**Repent:** Strongs #3340 metanoeo; to think differently or afterwards, i.e. reconsider (morally, feel compunction)

**Repentance:** Strongs #3341 metanoia compunction (for guilt, including reformation); by implication reversal (of [another's] decision):

Compunction: uneasiness of mind due to feelings of remorse or guilt; twinge of conscience

#### Strongs #3338 (KJV) Two examples:

<u>Matthew 27:3</u>: (KJV) Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, <u>repented himself <3338></u>, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

Matthew 21:28-32: (NRSV) <sup>28</sup>What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, son, go and work in the vineyard today. <sup>29</sup>He answered, I will not'; but later he **changed his mind** <3338> and went. <sup>30</sup>The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, I go, sir; but he did not go. <sup>31</sup>Which of the two did the will of his father? They said, the first. Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. <sup>32</sup>For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not **change your minds** <3338> and believe him.

A Bible commentary explains the distinction often given between these is:

3338 refers to an emotional change, 3340 to a change of choice,

3338 has reference to particulars, 3340 to the entire life,

3338 signifies nothing but regret even amounting to remorse, 3340 that reversal of moral purpose known as repentance. (The difference here can be characterized as emotional vs. actual change)

3340 Matthew 3:1-2: (KJV) <sup>1</sup>In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, <sup>2</sup>And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Acts 17:30-31: (NRSV) <sup>30</sup>While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent <3340>, <sup>31</sup>because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.

3341 Acts 5:31: (KJV) Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance <3341> to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.