

God keeps wiping away our sins

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In the Tennessee vs. UCLA game, the UCLA quarterback had an awful first half. He threw 18 passes and 4 interceptions. They were losing at half-time.

Peter wants to put a limit on forgiveness -7 times. Peter might have thought he was spiritual, raising it from 3, which the Jewish religious leaders used, to 7. Peter was upping the amount-he more than doubled the three strikes and you're out rule.

We are told to love our neighbor. This includes and is especially other believers. To love is to forgive.

The famous and often used passage used at weddings - 1 Corinthian 13:5 Love keeps no record of wrongs.

What happens when we don't forgive?

Bitterness

Anger

Resentfulness

A want to try to get even or more.

When there is unforgiveness in a church, it can lead to the corruption of the whole fellowship.

I saw this firsthand in a small church where two families had a disagreement over something going on in the church. They both stayed away in fear that the other might come. They didn't leave the

church. Maybe they were waiting for the other to leave or die. The church took sides and the church was divided. People came to church and did what they always did, but this unforgiveness held the parish in bondage. You could feel the tension in this little parish.

Forgiveness of other believers is a healthy thing and critical to the health of a church. We all get that forgiveness is a good thing but we like the Pharisees and Peter who wants to put a limit on it.

This is where the parable came in.

The king forgave the servant of 12 million dollars and the servant wouldn't forgive \$15 owed to him by another servant.

Think how many times God has forgiven us. God doesn't put a limit because God is love.

God doesn't say to us, to me, "Bruce, you have 50 sins left on the ledger. Bruce, now you are down to 5. Zap! I warned you." No, that is not how God is. God forgives our sins. God is forgiving because God is love.

One rainy afternoon a mother was driving along one of the main streets of town, taking those extra precautions necessary when the roads are wet and slick.

Suddenly her son Matthew spoke up from his relaxed position in the front seat.

"Mom, I'm thinking of something."

The announcement usually meant he had been pondering some fact for a while and was now ready to expound all that his seven-year-old mind had discovered. She was eager to hear.

“What are you thinking?” She asked.

“The rain,” he began, “is like sin and the windshield wipers are like God, wiping our sins away.”

After the chill bumps raced up her arms she was able to respond. “That’s really good, Matthew.”

Then, she asked, “Do you notice how the rain keeps on coming? What does that tell you?”

Mathew didn’t hesitate one moment with his answer. “We keep on sinning, and God just keeps on forgiving us.”

By God’s grace we have been forgiven through Jesus on the cross. All our sins are forgiven. So why aren’t we willing to forgive other believers, why aren’t we willing to love other believers?

We have hurts in our own lives.

We are selfish.

We want to set the rules-3 strikes and you’re out.

We want to put limits on forgiveness. For some, it is zero tolerance.

We don’t get God’s unlimited forgiveness for our sins.

The media wanted to know what the UCLA coach said to the quarterback. The quarterback had a great second half and they came from behind to win the game.

What did the coach say? Did he scold him? How did he motivate him? The team didn't point fingers at the quarterback and blame him for their losing at half-time. The coach said to his quarterback, "I threw 4 interceptions in my first game and had a much better second half. Relax and play your game." He did. The quarterback had hope that he could make the change and help his team.

By the grace of God we have hope. We have hope because we are forgiven an unlimited amount of times, so eventually we will get it that we in turn are to forgive other believers the way God forgives believers-with no limits. This is love.

One Saturday morning, the mother woke to the delightful smell of waffles and the sound of her two small boys in the kitchen with her husband. She went downstairs for breakfast. She sat in her husband's lap and gave him a big hug for his thoughtfulness.

Later that day, the husband and wife were having a heated discussion in their bedroom when their four-year-old, Jacob, stopped them in mid-sentence.

Standing in the doorway, he said, "Mommy, try to remember how you felt when you were in Daddy's lap." Let's remember the grace and love we have been given by God so we in turn can forgive other believers.