

"THE DUTY TO FORGIVE"**Introduction**

1. Christ here teaches us to be humble
2. v.15: Also to speak straight to a brother
3. v.21: Then Peter asks how often should we forgive
DOCTRINE: However much we feel hurt by one another we must forgive those who offend us.

1. WE MUST EXPECT EVEN OUR BRETHREN IN CHRIST TO OFFEND US AT TIMES

- 1) The text refers to our "brother" – not our enemy. So we must not be surprised by this event.
- 2) It is a sad reality that Christians do upset and offend one another and sin in doing so.
- 3) It is something we should not be surprised by for various reasons:
 - (i) sin dwells even in the best Christian:
Examples: Moses' brother + sister; Peter
 - (ii) our own foolishness annoys our brethren:
"Why does X not improve?" "But I too!
APPLICATION: The "mote" and the "beam" (Matthew 7)
 - (iii) we are in this life often tried and we are always frail
ILLUSTRATION: Dr. MacDonald + Dr. Bain of Kiltarlity
 - (iv) Satan knows how to take advantage.
We ministers are always vulnerable on a Monday!
DOCTRINE: We are all so imperfect – liable to speak foolishly – to hurt one another, even without realizing it.
APPLICATION: "How often shall I forgive?"!

2. SOME WHO PROFESS CHRIST AT TIMES HAVE AN UNFORGIVING SPIRIT

- 1) If this were not so, there would be no need for Christ to give us this teaching.
- 2) An unforgiving spirit – what is it?
 - (i) a secret sense of grudge:
Robert Burns: "nursing her wrath..."
 - (ii) taking offence and feeling annoyance
 - (iii) a silent inward anger + bitterness
 - (iv) fuel in our heart for vengeance:
ILLUSTRATION: Esau against Jacob; his brothers against Joseph; Cain against Abel.
- 3) We must be honest and confess that at times we have all felt it – but see:
 - (i) this is a "root of bitterness"
 - (ii) it is hatred hidden in the heart
 - (iii) it will show itself:
ILLUSTRATION: Laban's countenance
- 4) Our Duty is to deal with it soon:
 - (i) It hinders our worship: Matthew 6:15
 - (ii) Similarly, if we offend others: Matthew 5:23-24
 - (iii) An unforgiving spirit is like a fire in the cellar – it will burn up and up.
 - (iv) An unforgiving spirit is a contradiction of the entire gospel of Christ
APPLICATION: O search your soul + mortify this bad spirit

3. CHRIST'S PARABLE IS A WARNING TO US ALL

- 1) The parable explained.
- 2) Things here to note:
 - (i) "seventy times seven" + forever
 - (ii) the difference between our debts to God and those to one another

- (iii) the unreasonableness of an unforgiving spirit: v.32-33
(iv) see how cruel and forgetful people professing grace can be:
v.28-30

APPLICATION: Is not all this true? Is it not real?

- 3) How is all this a warning to us?
(i) an unforgiving "Christian" is no true Christian at all.
(ii) the unforgiving "Christian" will get a terrible punishment
from God: v.32-35

DOCTRINE: Churches also must forgive: 2 Cor. 2:6-8

- 4) There is also a connected lesson: See Matthew 7:1-5

APPLICATION: Do you see your own sin too?

APPLICATION

If you have the experience of being hurt – get over it and put it behind you.
If necessary, go to your brother + talk it through.

PSALM

37: 1 – 6

119: 129 – 136

131: 1 – 3