

**“Jesus, the Forgiving One”  
March 11, 2012**

**Matthew 18:15-22**

**PROP-** Jesus is the **ULTIMATE FORGIVER**. He longs to see us go directly to our offenders (*“just between the two of you”*) with the goal of winning them over—so that we may “come together.”

**1. For Jesus—forgiveness is PERSONAL (not merely transactional)**

Hebrews 4:15- **“...tempted in every way (that we have been tempted)...”**  
Isaiah 53:3- **“Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief...”**

- When we encounter false accusation or hatred—we “share in His sufferings” (Romans 8:17) **“With Him”** in order to be **“like Him”**
- False notion that His “endless mercy” kept Him from being offended
- He was “despised and rejected by men” (Isaiah 53:3) He “came to His own and His own (family, friends, hometown) received Him not” (John 1:11) He just “looked” as Peter denied Him to others (Luke 22:61)

**2. Jesus—the ULTIMATE EXAMPLE OF FORGIVENESS**

John 3:17- I “did not come into the world to **condemn** (*to avenge; punish*) the world, but to **save** (*fully restore and protect*) the world”  
2 Corinthians 5:19- **“God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them.”**

- **When we refuse to forgive**—we try to make someone else “pay for” what Jesus already “paid for.”
- **True justice** is found when people receive what Jesus paid for on the cross. (NOTE: The greatest **injustice** occurs when people fail to receive what Jesus has done for them!)
- **True forgiveness** happens when we turn people over to God—along with our desire to see them punished—resulting in a change of heart within us as we see them through His eyes...knowing that the punishment for all their sin fell on Jesus!

**3. Requires HONESTY**

**WITH OTHERS:**

Matthew 18:15- **“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault”**

Numbers 14:18- **“The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished.”**

## WITH OURSELVES:

**NOTE:** The most unhealthy way to deal with the pain of offense is to “harden” your heart by “hiding” the pain.

**Matthew 5:4- “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”**

- **W/o the process of mourning—there is no comfort**
- **“Mourning” has a beginning and an end.** (NOTE: Processing pain is like lifting weights. If you lift weights all day long—every day—instead of getting stronger, you will eventually break down your body to the point where you cannot function).

## **4. An ACT OF OUR WILL**

**Matthew 18:35- “...forgive from your hearts”**

**Ephesians 4:32- “...tender-hearted, forgiving one another”**

- **Refusing to live hard-hearted**
- **Choosing to live compassionately “outside of yourself”**

## **5. An ACT OF FAITH**

**Luke 17:3-6- “Be uprooted and planted in the sea—it will obey you”**

**John 20:23- We have the power to open/close off heaven to people.**

## RESPONSE

**“Forgive...seventy-seven times?” (Matthew 18:22)**

**Lamech (descendent of Cain) sang this song of his passion for revenge: “I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me; if Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times.”** (NOTE: Thought he was “powerful”—but actually “became poor (made low)” by holding onto his pain and inflicting it on others).

**“Seven” is the number signifying “completeness.”**

**Lamech was driven by a desire for vengeance that went far beyond completeness!**

**Jesus: “I am raising up a people who are the polar opposite of Lamech. They will forgiving as extravagantly and completely as I have forgiven them!”**

**“Forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”**