

# Forgiving Others

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## Two stories

John 8:2-11 Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear. So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one passed sentence on you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I pass sentence on you; go and sin no more."

Matt 18:21-35 Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”

Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

“But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

“So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”

- ▶ Forgiveness is hard!
- ▶ It hurts so much because we are introduced to a hell we are not ready to deal with
  - ▶ Especially in areas of vulnerability
  - ▶ Which is why abuse of children is so hard - they are in no way equipped to deal with what they are forced to face. But it's the same with all harm that lasts

# We know we are supposed to forgive

“Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors”

“Give and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use it will be measured back to you.” (Luke 6:38)

# Definitions of forgiveness

## Grant's definition

- ▶ “forgive” = lit. “to give off,” “give away” (“for” = away, off)
- ▶ i.e. to give up or to cease to harbor resentment or anger, to cease to impose punishment

## Webster's dictionary

- ▶ “To cease to feel resentment against an offender”

## The Lord

- ▶ “That to which no attention is paid is said to be forgiven.” (*Heavenly Secrets* # 10504)
- ▶ Note: All defined as the absence of something negative rather than as something positive

# Forgiveness is not

- ▶ Pretending it never happened, or not judging it as wrong
  - ▶ Judging vs condemning
    - ▶ You can judge something wrong while still forgiving
  - ▶ “Neither to I pass sentence on you. Go and sin no more.”



Heavenly Secrets # 9014:3 The majority within the Church think that the forgiveness of sins involves wiping and washing them away, like the removal of dirt by water, and that after forgiveness people go about clean and pure.... But let it be known that the situation with the forgiveness of sins is altogether different from that. Since He is Mercy itself, the Lord forgives everyone their sins. Nevertheless they do not come to be forgiven unless the person sincerely repents, refrains from evils, and after that leads a life of faith and charity, doing so to the end of his life. When this happens the person receives spiritual life from the Lord, called new life.... *This shows what the forgiveness of sins is, and that it cannot take place within an hour, nor within a year.*

# Forgiveness is not

- ▶ Pretending it never happened, or not judging it as wrong
  - ▶ Judging vs condemning
  - ▶ “Neither to I pass sentence on you.”
- ▶ Forgiveness is not forgetting
  - ▶ You can forgive even as you still distrust someone
  - ▶ Go and sin no more.
    - ▶ They show you they are trustworthy with how they act
- ▶ There’s a big difference between unforgiveness and grief

- ▶ And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. And He said to the man who had the withered hand, “Step forward.” Then He said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” But they kept silent. And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. (Mark 3:1-6)

- ▶ “To forgive is not to regard any one from [the point of view of] evil but from [the point of view of] good” (AC 7697)
- ▶ Is 42:1,19 “Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.... Who is blind but My servant, or deaf as My messenger whom I send? Who is blind as he who is perfect, and blind as the Jehovah’s servant?”

AE 409:2 This is said of the Lord, who is treated of in the whole of this chapter, and the Lord in respect to His Divine Human is here called "a servant," because He served his Father by doing His will, as He frequently declares.... He is called "blind" and "deaf" because the Lord *is as if He did not see and perceive the sins of people, for He leads people gently, bending and not breaking, thus leading away from evils, and leading to good. Therefore He does not chastise and punish, like one who sees and perceives.* This is meant by "who is blind but My servant? or deaf as My angel?" ... *It is therefore here meant that He as it were does not see, although He possesses the Divine truth from which He understands all things, and that He does not will according to what He perceives, although He has the Divine good, from which He is able to effect all things.*

- ▶ AC 1079 Those who have faith that comes from charity are different. They notice the goods, and *if they do see evils and falsities they excuse them, and if possible endeavour with that person to correct them....* Those who have charity *hardly notice* the evil in another person, but instead notice all the goods and truths that are his; and on his evils and falsities they place a good interpretation. Of such a nature are all angels, it being something they have from the Lord, who bends everything evil into good.