



## Advent Truth Newsletter March 2014



One of the most important teachings of the Bible is how sins can be forgiven. Jesus told the paralysed man who was brought to him for healing that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins (Matthew 9:6). It is only through Christ and the atoning sacrifice that we can appreciate the true magnitude of sin and the love of God in giving His Son to die for us.

Jesus also taught that we need to forgive others, just as Christ has forgiven us (Matthew 6:12-15; Luke 6:37). In fact, if we don't forgive others then our own sins will not be forgiven. This was illustrated in the parable of the wicked servant found in Matthew 18. This servant was forgiven an enormous debt that he could not hope to repay when he begged for mercy. However, he demanded another servant to pay back a small amount and would not have mercy on him. When the king heard what had happened he had the first servant put in prison. This story illustrates that if we don't forgive others how can we expect to receive infinite forgiveness from God.

Sometimes we may have been hurt or injured by others, we may not feel like forgiving them, so what can we do? We are encouraged by Jesus to pray for our enemies, to love them and to bless them. Jesus did this for his enemies while he was being crucified, he prayed, Father forgive them because they know not what they do (Luke 23:34). This prayer takes in every sinner who has ever lived. And even now Christ still pleads his blood for repentant sinners (Hebrews 7:25).

Christ is our example, as he forgave and was patient so we must forgive (Colossians 3:13; Ephesians 4:32). It is natural to love those who love us, and to hate those who hate us, but it is divine to love those who hate us. Such an attitude comes from first receiving the grace of Christ in our own lives, the forgiveness of our own sins.

Christlike love hopes for the restoration of the sinner, it pities those who are in error, it is patient with them (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). We must not indulge an unforgiving spirit, in refusing to forgive others we cast away our own hope of pardon (Matthew 7:2). And if we have a revengeful spirit we are lacking the spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9). We must not dwell on our grievances, suffering, the mistakes of others, this only wounds our own soul and separates us from Christ. Let us rather pray for those who have grieved us and focus on the love of Christ.

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