

March 22, 2020  
Forgiveness part 4

Good Morning, let's continue with our sermon series on forgiveness. It has been called the science or the art of the soul. Over the centuries pastors and priests have studied it and have developed three very important guidelines for cultivating forgiveness. These are supposed to be good for forgiving: others, yourself and even God.

> Forgiving someone does not mean you allow that person to continue harming you. That is not forgiveness; it only enables bad and harmful behaviour. Forgiveness may mean having to set defined boundaries or ending the relationship completely.

> Being mindful has many benefits. Mindfulness is related to good mental health and fosters self-compassion. Treat yourself with kindness, consideration and acceptance that you afford others. Self-compassion increases the compassion that you have for others. This makes forgiveness much easier to cultivate and express.

3. Remember that you cannot heal another person, nor can you make them kinder, or more self aware or empathetic. You are not responsible for the choices that others make. You can only be responsible for yourself.

Self-examination has always been a great benefit. To reflect at the end of the day on my actions, words and thoughts. Thinking, did I offend anyone today with my actions or inactivity, my words or thoughts that require me to ask for forgiveness. Then to move beyond asking forgiveness and into reconciliation. To repair or rebuild the relationship I had with this person.

Doing this exercise at the end of the day is very humbling and requires self-reflection and awareness. A humble heart and the awareness of your transgression is the first step in asking for forgiveness. With hope and conviction to not re-offend with the same action. Through all of this, keep in mind that the other party may not be ready to accept your apology or efforts to reconcile.

Next week we will conclude with how Our Lord placed forgiveness as the center of the prayer He taught. How the greatest example of forgiveness was given to us from the cross.

Considering the situations we find ourselves in, ironically we have had Lent imposed upon us. Do we see it as a blessing and a grace filled opportunity to draw closer to Our Lord at this time?

As a prayerful Christian, I see the pattern and similarities shared by Lent and our current situation. Lent is a time to take up our cross and follow Jesus into the desert. A time set aside to pray and fast. This is a grace filled period to draw closer to God by using the time to pray and fast. Just as Jesus did after his baptism in the Jordan River. Keep in mind that God did not abandon His son, but sent angels to minister to Him. Mat. 4:11 "Then the devil left Him and behold angels came and ministered to Him". When we call upon the Lord in our trials, He will do the same for you and I. St. Paul tells us so in Heb. 1:4 "Are not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation". That would be you and I.

To those who will listen, God is calling us back to Himself, in ways we never imagined. Now is the time to pray and fast. With Sunday services postponed, now is the time to pray at home with your families.

Until we gather again at church. Try to develop a personal prayer routine. I find myself praying a lot more during this Lenten season. I am praying my office and hours and Jesus prayer a lot more. It keeps me from watching the news and keeps me immersed in a prayerful mindset. It truly helps me to stay focused and positive.

Fasting in some situations may be out of our control. Especially with the shortages of items in the stores. Remember that Our Lord had no food or water for forty days. Now is the time to be loving and charitable in our fasting. Being fearful and greedy does not draw you closer to God.

I can only imagine the joy and happiness when this is all over. We will have truly gone through the darkness of Lent in the desert and on into the joy of Easter and Our Lord's resurrection. Easter is not being cancelled this year, only postponed. Did we use the opportunity to go through the Lent, and Covid 19 with prayer, fasting, love and charity, in order to make it meaningful? As truly a grace from God, and to take advantage of it as it was presented to us. Use this time wisely.

God Bless you all, you are in my prayers and we will be together soon. I am thinking about doing a mid-Lent message on Wednesdays?

Blessings to all,

Pastor D