



### If You Could Ask Jesus Anything...

Daily Devotional Guide/Notes: Apr 21-27, 2024

#### Great Questions turned in:

- \*A primary purpose of this church is to "Use Your Brain. Ask Your Questions. *And get answers.*" Email your questions to: Pastor@LifePointFellowship.com
- How am I supposed to forgive "this person" who hurt me?
  - How am I supposed to forgive myself for "this past mistake"?

#### Forgiveness:

- inevitably involves you hurting yourself or someone else (and suffering)
- OR it involves someone else hurting you (and suffering afterwards)

#### THE PRIMARY CAUSES OF SUFFERING IN OUR LIVES TODAY:

1. **Self-Inflicted Suffering** - Consequences of our Free Will
2. **Suffering inflicted on us by Others** - Consequence of *their* Free Will
3. **Suffering related to hunger/poverty** - consequence of our free will
4. **Suffering concerning Physical Illness** - still goes back to free will  
Immortality + Evil = terrible combination
5. **Suffering Related to Natural Disasters**  
- all have a cause/effect, risk/reward that is very important/necessary

#### Forgiveness: God answers prayer + God removes suffering

##### a) reminder: 4 "Protocols" God will not usually violate

1. **Free Will** - God doesn't manipulate or control people
2. **Personal Responsibility** - Free Will choices have consequences
3. **Character Development** - part of need for suffering is to *learn from bad free will choices*
4. **Natural Law** - God doesn't usually break His own "rules" of physics/natural law, because if EVERY time a person prayed for God to break natural Law, that would be magic (not faith)

\*God (and prayer) is NOT our magic wand.

#### How does God USUALLY answer prayer?

God *usually* works to relieve suffering between the lines of Free Will and Natural Law (understanding God cannot be put in a box)

Rom 8:28: God always answers prayer for those who love Him, but God usually works *within* the system to answer our prayers

Phil 1:6 "God is faithful"; He answers prayer, but in His way

So, when we pray for "healing" from life's worst sufferings, inevitably this goes NOT to physical healing, but dealing with healing from our own past mistakes (and the guilt that involves) or healing from what some other person has done to us.

#### 2 Common Prayers:

##### \*God, please remove the suffering from my own bad choices

- **HELP FOR When We Hurt ourselves or others (guilt)**
- our own free will choices to make BAD decisions
- the suffering that can come from accidents and mistakes too

##### \*God, please remove the suffering from the bad choices of other people that have hurt me

- **HELP FOR When Others Hurt Us (forgiveness)**
- free will choices of others to make bad decisions, and their accidents and mistakes as well

... **How does God answer these prayers for help/healing?**

#### A. Understanding Tolerance VS Forgiveness

**Tolerance** = to give permission to and/or willingly allow people to do/say things you don't like or agree with, without judgment, confrontation or conflict

\*Our "permission-giving" society = all behavior is tolerable

EX. - permissive parenting

a) **there are no consequences**

b) **you are enabling/encouraging bad behavior**

**VS Forgiveness** = a conscious and deliberate decision to release vengeance (eye for an eye) and/or resentment to a person who has wronged you (includes, you wronging yourself)

#### Luke 7:36-50 - Jesus forgives the prostitute

Who had she sinned against?

Who had she "hurt"?

Why was she crying?

#### Luke 23:39-43 - Jesus forgives and accepts the criminal

Who had he sinned against?

Who had he hurt?

Why was he asking Jesus to "remember him?"

#### To the bigger picture: The Lord's Prayer

Mt 6:12, "Forgive us our trespasses..."

... as we forgive those who trespass against us"

\*isn't it interesting that Jesus calls this the "model prayer" that includes:

a) forgiving what YOU have done (poor free will choices)

b) forgiving others (of their poor free will choices)

.... when these are the 2 greatest areas of suffering in our lives

### **PART 1: Mt 6:12, "Forgive us our trespasses..."**

- In Luke 7, the prostitute recognized she had wronged both herself and God, and she was suffering because of it

"God, Forgive Me my Trespasses" = Finally admitting/I was wrong

a) there is no true healing without confession

- an alcohol addict can't be healed until confession

- money problems won't get better until confession

- NO problem caused by your own bad free will choices will

get better until you "admit/confess" you have a problem (and repent/desire change)

- IDEA, "I was wrong/don't want to live that way anymore"

to 1 Jn 1:8-10, "If we confess, God will always forgive.

\*Unforgiveness (and guilt) as a LifeStyle, IF:

1. Imagined Guilt - from "what others do" to us; or, accidents

2. Deny Guilt - I am the victim, not the responsible party

3. I'll Just Live with my Guilt - I did it, and will just live with it

.... regardless of "type of guilt," guilt is crippling (needs to be healed)

Side note: \*forgiveness alone won't bring healing....

... it is forgiveness + repentance

repentance = you STOP doing what is wrong

= "go your way, and sin no more" (John 8:11)

**Mt 4:17, "Repent! Change your hearts and lives, for the kingdom of God is here."**

### **PART 2: "As we forgive those who trespass against us"**

\*Can there be peace within you, if you also carry with you "what that other person did to you" for the rest of your life?

How do we HEAL from what other people do to us?

Answer = we MUST forgive them

... to let go of vengeance/retribution

"Let It Go" ... and yet what does that mean exactly?

#### **How to "let it go"?**

**Apostles Creed: "I BELIEVE, IN THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS"**

### **1. Remember, "No one gets away with anything!"**

... forgiveness does NOT mean everyone gets away with everything

In fact, Everyone gets exactly what they deserve in the end."

**Rev. 22:12**, "I am coming soon..."

..... to repay all people as their actions deserve"

**Romans 12:17-21**, "Don't pay back anyone for their evil actions with evil actions, but show respect for what everyone else believes is good.

<sup>18</sup> If possible, to the best of your ability, live at peace with all people. <sup>19</sup> Don't try to get revenge for yourselves, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath. It is written, *Revenge belongs to me; I will pay it back, says the Lord.*<sup>20</sup> Instead, *If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink. By doing this, you will pile burning coals of fire upon his head.* <sup>21</sup> Don't be defeated by evil, but defeat evil with good."

### **2. Forgiveness on the OUTSIDE - only if they repent**

Does God just forgive you or me, even if we never repent? No. Why?

back to free will:

a) importance of character development

b) issue of personal responsibility

c) there are benefits to consequences

d) God is JUST/justice demands consequences

... there can be no true healing, until they STOP sinning

... if you enable them, you are contributing to the problem

Jesus clearly say, "IF THEY REPENT, then you forgive..."

**Luke 17:3, "Watch yourselves! If your brother or sister sins, warn them to stop. If they change their hearts and lives, forgive them"**

### **3. Forgiveness on the INSIDE - regardless if they repent**

a. Inwardly, there is never a time that we can *not* forgive, because, when we don't forgive, we are the ones who lose the most

b. Mark 11:25: "Whenever you pray, forgive, & then your heavenly Father will forgive you as well"

c. What is the alternative to not forgiving them on the inside?

d. Unforgiveness allows them to hurt you long after the initial damage was done

e. Inwardly, there is never a time that we can *not* forgive, because simply put, when we don't forgive, we are the ones who SUFFER

- **forgiveness on the inside, relieves YOUR suffering**

### **4. Never Forget: God's forgives you (IF you repent)**

Rom 8:1, "There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"

- does NOT mean no consequences, no character development, and no personal responsibility; but it DOES mean, no condemnation

Rom 6:21-23, "What consequences did you get from doing things that you are now ashamed of? The outcome of those things is death. <sup>22</sup> But now that you have been set free from sin and become slaves to God, you have the consequence of a holy life, and the outcome is eternal life. <sup>23</sup> The wages that sin pays are death, but God's gift is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

### **Forgiveness is at the HEART of the Gospel**

- at the heart of **WHY** Jesus went to the cross
- there is **NO** healing/peace without forgiveness
- there is **NO** healing from suffering, without forgiveness

### **THE GOAL: Forgiven and Free, sowing good fruit**

- God forgives you
- YOU can forgive you
- You CAN forgive them (and let it go), but:
  - don't enable, instead have healthy boundaries
- God will hold them accountable in the end
  - bad choices in this life, inevitably yield bad fruit
  - (Everyone will reap what you sow)

**Gal 6:7-9, "Make no mistake, God is not mocked. A person will harvest what they plant. <sup>8</sup> Those who plant only for their own benefit will harvest devastation from their selfishness, but those who plant for the benefit of the Spirit will harvest eternal life from the Spirit. <sup>9</sup> Let's not get tired of doing good, because in time we'll have a harvest if we don't give up."**

Questions for Reflection:

1. What would God be like, if God was NOT forgiving?
2. What would our world look like, if nobody ever forgave anyone?
3. How does unforgiveness give power to the person who hurt you?
4. How do you have healthy boundaries with someone who hurts you, while also 100% forgiving them on the inside?

### Items of Note:

**April Men's Hangout** - Hey Guys, come out to Kincaid's Burgers in Alliance on Tuesday, April 23rd at 6:30PM to get some grub and hangout together. Let Shawn Finney know you're coming or sign up online via the church website under 'events'.

**Missions Focus for April/May** - These months, we're collecting toiletry items for the Presbyterian Night Shelter. Find a list of needed items at the Mission kiosk in the lobby

**Chasing Carrots** - Our next sermon series starts Sunday, April 28th. More often than not, pursuing more is not the solution for success in life. Join us and invite someone in your life to attend, as we find fulfillment in God's truth instead of chasing carrots.

**Can we join in prayer with or for you?** Drop your prayer off in the offering box or email: Mary Anne at corriendo01@gmail.com

**Counseling scholarships available** pastor@lifepointfellowship.com

### DAILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

**HABIT 1 of Faithful Discipleship: Have a daily devotional. How? 3 Steps:**

#### I. Work through the 5 Prayer Forms

##### **1 - Begin w/Centering Prayer**

- Mt 11:28-30, Name and Release your burdens/distractions to Christ
- Psalm 46:10, Consciously seek to clear your mind and "Be Still"

##### **2 - Intentionally Glorify (worship) the Lord**

- involves your participation by glorifying God, adoration, praise and worship
- Name the "Good" within you (the specific "fruit" you are experiencing today, like peace, or love, or joy, or hope, faithfulness, goodness, etc.)
- Name the "Good" around you (Gen 1:31, "And God saw that it was good.")
  - a. What do you see that God has made that is good today in the creation?
- Participate: Lift Up the "Good in You" with the "Good In Creation" in worship

##### **3 - Confess Your Sins**

- a. What have you done that is wrong? (From works to 7 Deadly sins)
- b. What have you left undone that would have been right?

##### **4 - Give Thanks to God for your Blessings** (name them)

##### **5 - Make Your Requests to God**

- a. for other people who are on your heart
  - include your church leadership and family
  - include people you know who need to accept Christ/get right with Him
- b. Make requests to God for yourself

#### 2. Time of Listening to God through His Words

Read through the daily scripture passages, with the goal to "hear from God" on any point you feel relates to you. Stop and reflect on those truths.

**Apr 22 - Mon** - Rom 8

**Apr 23 Tues** - Rom 6

**Apr 24 Wed** - Gal 6

**Apr 25 Thur** - Luke 17

**Apr 26 Fri** - Rom 12

**Apr 27 Sat** - 1 John 1

#### 3. Closing Prayer + The Lord's Prayer