

Forgive Us, as We Forgive: New Testament

Osher Institute

Vanderbilt University

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Forgiving Sins in the Gospels

- Matthew 2:21
 - The angel instructed Joseph to name Mary's son Jesus, "for he will save his people from their sins."
- Matthew 5:23-24
 - ²³ If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.
- Matthew 9:1-8/Mark 2:1-12/Luke 5:17-26
 - They brought a paralytic to Jesus. "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven." Some of the scribes said to themselves, "That is blasphemy."
 - Jesus said, "So that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" –he said to the paralytic—"Stand up, take your bed, and go home."

The Lord's Prayer

- Matthew 6:12 / Luke 11:4
 - And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
- Matthew 6:14-15
 - For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you;
 - But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

The Parables of Forgiveness

- Luke 15

- ¹ The tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. ² And the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”
- ⁴ “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it?” . . . ⁷ “Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”
- ⁸ “Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it?” . . . ¹⁰ “Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

The Parables of Forgiveness

- Luke 15:11-32

- ¹¹ “There was a man who had two sons; ¹² and the younger of them said to his father, “Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.”
- ¹³ Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey to a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living.
- ¹⁸ “I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; . . .’”
- ²⁴ “. . . For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.”
- ³⁰ “When this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!”
- ³¹ “Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.”

Mutual Forgiveness

- Matthew 18:21-22
 - ²¹ Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²² Jesus said to him, “Not seven times but I tell you, seventy-seven times.”
- Luke 17:1, 3-4
 - ¹ Jesus said to his disciples
 - ³ “Be on your guard! If another disciple sins, you must rebuke the offender, and if there is repentance, you must forgive.
 - ⁴ “And if the same person sins against you seven times a day, and turns back to you seven times and says, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive.”

Jesus's Sermon on the Church

- Matthew 18:23-30

- “For this reason, the Kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt.
- ²⁸ “But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt.

Jesus's Sermon on the Church

- Matthew 18:31-34

- ³¹ “When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then the lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wretched slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt.

- Matthew 18:36

- ³⁵ “So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

The Power/Authority to Forgive

- Matthew 16.17-19
 - ¹⁷ “And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you Simon son of Jonah! . . .
 - ¹⁸ “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.”
 - ¹⁹ “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

The Power/Authority to Forgive

- The Sermon on the Church: Matthew 18:15-19
 - ¹⁵ “If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one.
 - ¹⁶ “But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.
 - ¹⁸ “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”
 - ¹⁹ “Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

The Power/Authority to Forgive

- John 20:19-23
 - ¹⁹ On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”
 - ²⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.
 - ²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.”
 - ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

Limits of Forgiveness

- Matthew 10:32-33 / Luke 12:8-9 Jesus is addressing the disciples whom he sent out to preach and witness to him.
 - ³² “Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; ³³ but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.
- Mark 8:38 / Luke 9:26
 - Those who are ashamed of me and of my words, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.
- Matthew 12:31-32 Jesus was accused of working exercising demonic power rather than acting by the Holy Spirit
 - ³¹ “Therefore I tell you, people will be forgiven for every sin and blasphemy, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. ³² Whoever speaks against the Son of Man will be forgiven but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”

Binding a Person in Sin

- 1 Corinthians 5:1-5
 - ¹ It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and of a kind that is not found even among the pagans; for a man is living with his father's wife.
 - ² And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.
 - ³ For though absent in body I am present in spirit, and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment⁴ in the name of the Lord Jesus on the man who has done such a thing.
 - When you are assembled, and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, ⁵ you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Lying to God

- Acts 4:32-37
 - describes the sharing of goods in the Jerusalem Christian community. Some sold properties to contribute the proceeds.
- Acts 5:1-11
 - ¹ But a man named Ananias with his wife Sapphira sold a piece of property, ²and with his wife's knowledge he kept back some of the proceeds, and brought only a part and laid it at the apostles' feet. ³But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? ⁴While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? ... You have not lied to men but to God." ⁵When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died.
 - Three hours later, Peter repeated this interrogation with Sapphira. ⁹ Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?" ... Immediately she fell down at his feet and died.
 - ¹¹A great fear came upon the whole church and all who heard these things.

Considerations

- Interaction of Divine and Human Forgiving
 - Forgiveness of Sins was understood as a belonging to God alone
 - Divine forgiveness of human sinners was inseparable from those sinners forgiving other human sinners.
 - The forgiveness that humans offered to one another, in some instances, also carried divine forgiveness of the same sin.
- Limits on the Forgiveness of Sins
 - Sins directly against the Deity or the Messiah
 - The teaching is somewhat unclear regarding failure to confess the Son of Man
- Human exercise of divine power to forgive
 - Power or Authority
 - Prayer of intercession for divine forgiveness

Bibliography

- Much of the material that will be covered in the next five sections is treated more fully in chapter seven of the book on the development of Christianity in North Africa
- *Christianity in Roman Africa: The Development of Its Practices and Beliefs*
- J. Patout Burns Jr & Robin M. Jensen
- William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, MI, 2014