

Devotional
Be Merciful

Luke 6:36 – “*Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*”

Hemingway tells a wonderful story of a father and his teenage son who lived in Spain. Their relationship fell apart and the son ran away from home. After some years, the father began a long journey in search of the lost and rebellious son. He finally put an advertisement in the Madrid newspaper as a last resort. His son’s name is Paco (a very common name in Spain). It simply read: “Dear Paco, meet me in front of the Madrid newspaper office tomorrow at noon. All is forgiven. I love you.”

The next day at noon in front of the newspaper office there were 800 Pacos all seeking forgiveness!

Who do you need to forgive today?

Because we are imperfect sinful people, we will inevitably hurt each other – especially when we are together for a long enough time. Sometimes we hurt each other intentionally, sometimes unintentionally but either way it takes a massive amount of mercy and grace to forgive one another. You can’t have relationships and families without forgiveness.

Did you know that the word “*resentment*” means, literally, “*to feel again*”? Resentment clings to the past, relives it over and over, picks each fresh scab so that the wounds never heal. Not to forgive imprisons me in the past and locks out all potential for change. When you don’t forgive, you hurt yourself more than anyone else. You and I are not built to carry the stress that goes with bearing a grudge. Forgiveness is as important to us as it is for the people who offended us.

More importantly, when you forgive someone, you slice away the wrong from that person who did it. You disengage that person from the hurtful act. You recreate him. You recreate the foundation for a lasting relationship.

In the Beatitudes, Jesus said that if we fail to forgive, we fail to obtain forgiveness as well. (Matthew 6:14-15) God loves you and I unconditionally. And that is why grace demands that we forgive others. For if we fail to forgive then we risk our very own forgiveness. C.S. Lewis said, “To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.”

If you think you’ll ever need mercy, show it, for Jesus said, “*Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*” (Matthew 5:17) If God is dealing with you about this, don’t put it off any longer.

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