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Three Most Powerful Words

By Teresa Hampton

Sally sat patiently while Heather explained how sorry she was for the ungodly things she said and did. She asked Sally to forgive her, even though she knew she didn't deserve it. After a brief silence Sally said, "I forgive you." Heather fell on her shoulder with great sobs. An immense flood of relief and peace poured into her soul. Sally assured her that all was forgiven and would never be brought up again. When someone asks for forgiveness, there is power to free that soul of the guilt and shame of sin. Sally knew that forgiving Heather would save *her* soul, too.

No one left a greater example of forgiving others than our Lord. As he hung on the cross, he prayed for the ones who were killing Him, *Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do* (Luke 23:34). The soldiers ridiculed and blasphemed Him. The two thieves who were crucified with him, reviled Him (23:39-43). At some point, however, one of the thieves asked Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom. The Lord assured him, *This day you will be with Me in paradise*. Incomparable compassion and mercy. Amazing grace!

As children of God, we are called to be like our Savior. Are we supposed to forgive when someone asks for forgiveness, but for years has tried to derail us, said cruel things about us, and did evil against us? Yes. If we want the Father to forgive our sins, we must forgive those who sin against us (Matt. 6:14-15). Otherwise, He will not forgive our sins.

In Psalm fifty one, David used very descriptive words pleading for forgiveness. *Have mercy...blot out...wash me...cleanse me from my sin...purge me...wash me and I shall be whiter than snow...create in me a clean heart...renew a steadfast spirit within me...restore to me the joy of your salvation...uphold me by Your generous Spirit...deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed.*

The three most powerful words in any language are, "I forgive you." When spoken from a sincere heart followed with forgiving actions, they have the ability to transform two lives. When spoken to God from a broken and contrite heart, He is merciful to save!

Today's Verse: *Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).*

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Genesis 50:17

‘Thus you shall say to Joseph: “I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you.” Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father.’ And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

Psalms 25:18

Look on my affliction and my pain, And forgive all my sins.

Matthew 6:12

And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.

Matthew 6:14

“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

Matthew 6:15

But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Matthew 18:21

Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”

Matthew 18:35

“So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”

Mark 2:7

“Why does this *Man* speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

Mark 2:9

Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘*Your* sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, take up your bed and walk’?

Mark 2:10

But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the paralytic,

Mark 11:25

“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.

Mark 11:26

But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”

Luke 5:17

Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was *present* to heal them.

Luke 5:20

When He saw their faith, He said to him, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.”

Luke 5:21

And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, “Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

Luke 5:23

Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise up and walk’?

Luke 5:24

But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the man who was paralyzed, “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.”

Luke 6:37

“Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Luke 11:4

And forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one.”

Luke 17:3

Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

Luke 17:4

And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him.”

Romans 4:7

“Blessed *are those* whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered;

Ephesians 1:7

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

Colossians 1:13, 14

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 2:13

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The path of one who is unwilling to forgive:

- anger
- sorrow
- distance
- bitterness
- more distance
- unwilling to forgive
- rejected by God