

Series: Forgiveness Brochure Contents – Part 6

“Forgiveness Allows Us to Focus on the Present and the Future – rather than the Past!”

Based on Various Passages
6th Wednesday of Lent – 2010
March 24 → 11:00 & 7:00

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, over the past five Wednesdays we have looked at these very important aspects of forgiveness:

- ***Forgiveness is a promise!*** We may not *forget* the sins committed against us, but we **SHOULD** promise to *never mention them up or even think about them!*
- ***Forgiveness is a gift!*** When a person sins against us, we know he needs our forgiveness; therefore, because we have received God’s gift, we **SHOULD** offer our gift!
- ***Forgiveness stops the cycle of revenge!*** When it is our turn to get revenge, we **SHOULD** do the God-thing by offering the gift of forgiveness!
- ***Forgiveness can restart a broken relationship!*** When God enabled us to receive His forgiveness in Christ – by grace through faith, *our relationship with Him was restored!* Now, as we offer forgiveness – *and others accept it*, our relationship with them will be restored!
- ***Forgiveness is a Chain Reaction!*** (God→us→others!) Whenever a person receives God’s wonderful gift of

forgiveness, *he will be filled with joy and gratitude; he will also sincerely forgive those who sin against him!*

Today, in our *LAST SERMON* on the topic of forgiveness, God is calling us to →forget the *sinful past*, →rejoice in the *forgiven present*, and →focus on a *God-pleasing future!*

1. **Forget the Sinful Past:**

- a. Esau and Jacob – *the twin sons of Isaac*: Do you remember their situation?
 - i. Esau – *the firstborn* – should have received his father’s blessing – *it was important*; however, *through deception and lying*, Jacob received it instead! Esau was so angry that he wanted to kill his brother, *so Jacob fled to save his life!*
 - ii. Then, after 20 years and many blessings, Jacob had to flee from his father-in-law – *which led him toward Esau – his brother – and 400 men!* What would happen? Would Jacob live or die? The Bible says: Jacob “...**bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother** [**“A sign of total submission.” CSSB**]. **But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept.**” (Genesis 33:3-4 NIV) That was Esau’s way of saying to Jacob: ***“I forgive you! So forget the sinful past!”***
- b. Jesus regarding the Roman soldiers: ^{NIV} **Luke 23:34** [He prayed:] **“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”** In other words: ***“Don’t hold what they did against them – because they acted in ignorance, without knowledge. They did not realize that I am Your sinless Son, their Savior!*”**

Father, please forget their sinful past!" God wants us to do the same to all who have sinned against us!

2. **Rejoice in the Forgiven Present:** Since forgiveness wipes out past sins and restores broken relationships, *forgiveness is certainly a wonderful blessing* – ✦ from God to us, ✦ from us to others, and ✦ from others to us!
- What is your current situation? †Do you know you are a sinner? †Do you fear God's wrath? †Would you like to receive God's forgiveness? Here is the answer: ^{NAS} **Acts 3:19** "Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord..." Repent; *then rejoice in God's forgiveness!*
 - We forgive, *but we can't forget!* Is God like us? Here is the answer: ^{NAS} **Isaiah 43:25** "I [the Lord] ...am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins." *What good news!* Let us rejoice in our forgiven present!
3. **Focus on a God-Pleasing Future:**
- Thoughts of past sins – *ours and others* – will certainly try to sneak back into our minds. Whenever those thoughts begin, ✦ close the door, ✦ lock it, and ✦ throw away the key! *Then focus on a God-pleasing future!*
 - This verse – *especially by memorizing it* – will help us direct our thoughts in a God-pleasing direction: "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if

there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, **let your mind dwell on these things.**" (NAS Philippians 4:8)

- c. But there is more! *When we fill our minds with God-pleasing thoughts, the result will be God-pleasing actions!* The very next Bible verse says: "The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, **practice these things**; and the God of peace shall be with you." (NAS Philippians 4:9) The future may not be easy; however, ♥ *having God's forgiveness in Christ* and ♥ *offering sincere forgiveness to others*, God will be with us to help us in all our ways!

Conclusion: So let us always → *forget* the sinful past, → *rejoice* in our forgiven present, and → *focus* on a God-pleasing future! And all God's people said: *Amen!*