

1 PETER 3:8-12

8Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.

9Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. 10For,

"Whoever would love life
and see good days
must keep his tongue from evil
and his lips from deceitful speech.

11He must turn from evil and do good;
he must seek peace and pursue it.

12For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous
and his ears are attentive to their prayer,
but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

ROMANS 12:15

"Rejoice with those who rejoice, mourn with those who mourn."

1 THESSALONIANS 4:9

"Now about brotherly love we do not need to write you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other."

Is God Dead?

PASTOR DOUGLAS ESTES



We Must Willing to Love

Unselfish love for each other keeps our heart tender.

Hard hearts are only good for hate and revenge.

We Must Be Willing to Forgive

It's a fact of life that people will hurt you.

If we love God we will forgive those who hurt us.

We Are Blessed When We Forgive

Forgiveness brings peace to our lives.

Forgiveness brings God's blessing to us.

Our Hope...

..is that we can forgive others.

LifeGroup Moment:

"How can we practice forgiveness?"



"Forgiveness is terribly hard- which is why it's critical to have real relationship with God."

-PASTOR DOUGLAS



Discussion

"How do you want God to act in your lives?"

-PASTOR DOUGLAS

What is forgiveness? How much are we called to forgive? Are there any sins committed against you that you don't have to forgive? When you forgive, am I condoning sin? Do you have to forgive even if the offending person isn't sorry? Do you have to forgive people even as they are continuing to hurt you? What happens if you don't forgive? How do you know if you have forgiven?

Read 1 Peter 3:8. Peter starts off by saying that God desires us to live in "harmony" with one another. What does that mean? In the NRSV version of the Bible it says that we should "have unity of spirit." In the original Greek it literally says that we should "be of the same mindset." What does that mean? Who are some people that you have a difficult time getting along with?

Next there some things that are illustrated to help us promote harmony, the first is sympathetic. What does it mean to be sympathetic with others? Literally it means that we are to "suffer with" others. What does it mean to "suffer with" others? Read Romans 12:15. If we are sympathetic to others, we listen to their hurts, we spend time with them, etc. How can we better be sympathetic with others, both non-Christian and Christian?

Next he talks about us "loving as brothers." What does this mean? Do you think our church "loves as brothers?" The word here is the adjective form of "Philadelphia." How are we supposed to do this? What would it look like practically? Read 1 Thessalonians 4:9. How does Paul say we receive brotherly love? How important is it to have love for one another? (We are known to be Christians by our love...)

The next thing Peter talks about is for us to be compassionate. What is the difference between being sympathetic and being compassionate? (If being sympathetic refers to our commitment to know how others are doing, kindhearted refers to our emotional response to the state of others. Mother Teresa once said, "The biggest disease today is not leprosy or cancer. It's the feeling of being uncared for or unwanted, of being deserted and alone. The greatest evil is the lack of love and charity. It's an

indifference toward one's neighbor who may be the victim of poverty or disease or exploited and at the end of his life, left at a roadside." How "infected" are you with this disease? What are some dangers to avoid when being compassionate? (Burn out, desiring to see results too quickly, being impatient)

The last thing he mentions is that we are to be humble. What does it mean to be humble? What is particularly interesting about Peter saying this is that in secular Greek culture this was not considered a valuable character trait. Does modern culture value humility? Was Jesus humble? Are you humble? If not, how can you better be humble?

Read 1 Peter 3:9-12. How do we harmonize with people who are difficult, who annoy us or who we generally don't like? Is it wrong to "fake our feelings" in order to be loving to others? Earlier we talked about people who harm us, hurt us or continue to hurt us. How do we give up our "right" to get even? Have you experienced a time when you were wronged and glorified God by your actions? Do you pray for your enemies? Do you love the unloveable? In verse 12 it says that if we obey Him we will receive a blessing. What form do you think the blessing comes in? Why should we be characterized by grace rather than by a grudge toward those who have wronged us? (it is consistent with God's character and in verse 9 it says that we are destined to do so)

Why can't people just get along? We can't just get along because we wish it, and it cannot be commanded, God must change your heart first.

Take a note card and write down a list of people who have hurt you that you haven't actively forgiven yet. What's keeping you from forgiving them? This week pray that your heart will be healed and that you would make efforts to forgive others just as Christ has forgiven you. Amen.