

AMAZING FORGIVERS

Introduction

- 1) **FORGIVE** means to release from debt, deliver from punishment
 - a) *aphiemi* (Gk) - lit. to send forth, send away (Vine)
- 2) Forgiveness is a spiritual blessing in Christ (Eph. 1:7)
- 3) We are commanded to forgive others (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13)
- 4) Jesus taught about forgiveness and its magnitude (Lk. 17:3-4)
 - a) Forgiveness is to be extended to those who sin against us and repent; not needed for those who may rebuke our error or offend our personal opinions (we are wrong!)
- 5) The best way to learn about forgiveness is to watch it in action (Bible examples)
- 6) Consider some amazing forgivers who extending forgiveness in extraordinary circumstances

I) JOSEPH

- A) *Genesis 37:4, 11, 18, 24, 28; 42:6, 21-24a; 45:1-5, 14-15; 50:15-21*
- B) Joseph possessed a sincere, forgiving heart; he forgave while in a prime position to inflict vengeance and punishment upon his brothers
- C) When his brothers repented, Joseph's heart was *prepared* to forgive
- D) We are not to repay evil for evil, but to seek an opportunity to forgive (Rom. 12:17-21)

II) ESAU

- A) *Genesis 27:35-41; 32:1-8; 33:1-16*
- B) Esau learned to let go of old hatreds and grudge; easy to stubbornly and selfishly take feelings of bitterness and resentment to our grave unresolved
- C) Need to get past our wrath and hatred - move on to an attitude of love and forgiveness (Eph. 4:26)
- D) Spiritual maturity helps us to grow and be willing to forgive others when they repent

III) JESUS

- A) *Luke 23:34*
- B) Jesus had compassion on those who orchestrated his death - the tender heart of God (Matt. 5:44-45); He could have destroyed all his enemies (Matt. 26:53)
- C) Weak and insecure people hurl threats and wish evil on those that hurt them
 - 1) An unforgiving attitude poisons the spirit and attitude of a person
- D) Jesus' prayer was not immediately fulfilled – need patience (Acts 2:38, 41)
- E) Need to have a heart ready and willing to forgive (Matt. 18:21-35)

Conclusion

Our great God is the *supreme example of forgiveness* (Psa. 130:1-4). This is our only hope of salvation from our sins (Psa. 51:1-2, 7-9; 32:1-2; 1 Jn. 1:9). God will judge us as to whether we were willing to forgive (Matt. 18:35; Col. 3:13). Is there anyone we are unwilling to forgive? Are we wiser than God, who forgives sinners? We need to be ready and willing to forgive as true children of God, even in the most extraordinary of circumstances. Remember, we have been forgiven by God!

Plan of salvation: Hear, Believe, Repent, Confess, Baptism = **Forgiveness of sins**

Have you been forgiven of your past sins?