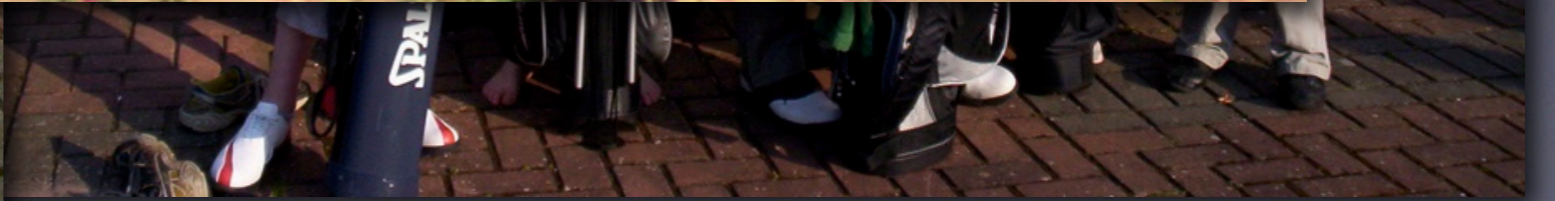


Forgiveness and Love



Context

- union
- unity
- new creation

Ephesians 4:31-5:2

Unforgiveness

- like a cancer in the body
- destroys and kills
- harms most the person who does not forgive others

What is forgiveness?

- Matthew 18 - the parable of the unmerciful servant
- relationship to “rights”, “justice”, and “judgement”

The Root of Forgiveness

Personal appreciation of God's grace:

- awareness of personal sin
- awareness of forgiveness of personal sin
- gratitude and worship to the God who does not give us what we justly deserve

How do we forgive?

- recognise anger - its legitimacy (forgiveness doesn't mean pretending not to be angry)
- recognise idolatry - my right to justice
- giving up rights
- submitting to God as the One who judges righteously
- letting go of our demands for justice and/or revenge
- choosing to live with consequences of sin

It's not the magnitude of the sin which must be dealt with, but the magnitude of our bitterness - which may be great despite what seem like relatively small offences.

5:1-2 - Forgiveness as the root of lives of love.

- imitators of God in what respect?
- imitate love the same way we experience it
- pass it on!
- forgiveness is foundational to love in a fallen world - giving up “rights” = abandoning self-protection
- it is always necessary and is the hardest thing we are called to do

If it doesn't hurt, we're
probably not loving
enough...

Discussion Questions

- ask God to bring to mind anyone you need to forgive for anything....
- admit your anger and desire for justice or revenge
- submit your “rights” to God as judge
- Pray - “Lord, I forgive X for Y, and I release them to you.”
- be ready for the fact that you may need to ask forgiveness of those against whom you have been bitter.