

June 27, 2021

## 4. Forgiveness Has Depths — Genesis 45:1-15

When I read this study's title, my ruminations recollected: celebrity preachers, awash in tears of remorse, begging forgiveness (but only after their sin had been disclosed by another); a president, questioned about seeking forgiveness from God, said he didn't think it was necessary; a husband repeatedly caught using pornography by his wife, each time requesting forgiveness.

Forgiveness is an essential calling of the church. It displaces despair with healing and hope. Though the church continues to use the language of forgiveness, the need to be right often gets in the way. The church has displayed this unseemly habit related to women in ministry, issues of sexuality, couples living together before marriage, politics, and the inerrancy and accuracy of Scripture.

Personal forgiveness couplets:

- Some forgive easily; others find it excruciating.
- Some forgive and forget; others forgive but find forgetting difficult.
- Some forgive only after careful thought; others forgive without thought.
- Some forgive quickly; others take awhile.
- Some rarely forgive; others always do.

If I were teaching, I might ask the class to add to this list.

Consider the wisdom of these cliches, proverbs, and paradoxes:<sup>1</sup>

- I'm not perfect, just forgiven. (bumper sticker)
- "Forgive, not because someone deserves forgiveness, but because you deserve peace." (author unknown)
- "It's easier to ask forgiveness than it is to get permission." (Grace Hopper)
- "The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong." (Gandhi)
  
- "Forgiveness is the sweetest revenge." (Isaac Friedman)
- "It is easier to forgive an enemy than to forgive a friend." (William Blake)
- "It's far easier to forgive an enemy after you've got even with him." (Olin Miller)
  
- "What we forgive too freely doesn't stay forgiven." (Mignon McLaughlin)
- "There is no revenge so complete as forgiveness." (Josh Billings)
- "There's no point in burying a hatchet if you're going to mark the site." (Sydney Harris)

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<sup>1</sup>. "Quotations about Forgiveness," The Quote Garden, March 2021,  
<http://www.quote garden.com/forgiveness.html>

If I were teaching, I might ask: “Which one of these best fits you?”

The Christian church is called to be a paragon of forgiveness: “Forgive us our sins as we forgive others” (Matthew 6:12 my paraphrase). Jesus makes forgiveness conditional. Given recent feuding, fussing, and splitting, I wonder how easy it is for Jesus to forgive residents in the Christian church?

—Ruben Chupp  
[rubenhome@outlook.com](mailto:rubenhome@outlook.com)

**Ruben Chupp** of Nappanee, Indiana, is a spiritual director, chaplain, and retired pastor. His personal goals: “love God and the person in front of me at any given time; read some, write some, think some, pray some, and take a nap every day; love my wife, Idella, my children, and their children with all the grace I possess; and finally, get home before dark.”

## Resources for this session

### URLS in the Leader guide

- Bobby Allyn, “Ex-Dallas Officer Who Killed Man in His Own Apartment Is Found Guilty of Murder,” *NPR*, October 1, 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2019/10/01/765788338/ex-dallas-officer-who-killed-neighbor-in-upstairs-apartment-found-guilty-of-murd>

### *Salt & Light* Videos

- Matthew Yoder is the presenter for unit 1, Grace. These teaching videos are great for leader preparation or introducing each session. They are available on [MennoMedia’s YouTube channel](#). Matthew is the pastor of Grace Mennonite Church, Pandora, Ohio.

**Additional commentary for this session is available at:**  
<https://www.mennomedia.org/salt-light-supplements/>