



SERIES: November – December – Walking with Jesus

SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD

Tuesday, 12/07/2021

Scripture: Matthew 6:14-15

TITLE: Why Forgive Others?

Whenever we head to Kansas City, we always make a quick pitstop in Nebraska City for a few sweet treats. My kids buy a giant pack of gum, a family-size bag of Gardettos, and usually some form of gummy bear or candy. But here's what is interesting, when one brother asks the other for a bite or a piece, I often hear "No. You should have grabbed your own."

How insulting for me as the giver of these abundant gifts. They are so stingy. It prompts me to either ask for repayment or a quick transfer from their hands to mine. We balk at such behavior, but if we're not careful, we will do the same thing with forgiveness.

What do I mean by that? Listen to Jesus' final words on effective praying in Matthew 6:14-15 (CSB).

"For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well. But if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive your offenses."

Jesus is punching a point about forgiveness made in verse 12. Now, this verse trips people up. Because it sounds like Jesus is threatening to remove our own forgiveness if we are stingy with giving it. But this is not Jesus' point. Jesus is reminding us that for freely forgiven people to withhold generous forgiveness of others is wrong and insulting to God.

God, in reasons I will never understand, offers free forgiveness of sins to messed up sinners who hate God in our minds and actions. That just doesn't make sense. I mean, if someone slandered me each day, vandalized my home, beat up my wife, and abused my kids, the last thing I would consider was loving that person. I can't imagine freely forgiving that person and then giving them keys to the mansion. But that's what Christ does.

So for us to receive such a lavish offer of mercy and grace but to withhold it from someone else shows one of two things: we are not actually saved, or, a desire to be disciplined by God. We have been freely forgiven. Therefore, we must, out of gratitude for our own salvation, forgive others freely.

Forgive literally means to "hurl away." It's throwing it in the garbage and watching the dump truck take it away. It's gone, and it will never come back again.

That is real love. That is the love that Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 13. That is evidence of our salvation.

So here's my challenge for you today. Forgive fully and freely.

Who is it that you've chosen not to forgive? What offense seems too great to hurl away? Confess it to God. Ask God for help. Ask God to show you and overwhelm you with His scandalous love. And then throw away the bitterness and unforgiveness.

Bathe in the forgiveness of God and then go win the day.