

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 12/6/2021

ONE AT ONE – *Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, December 7 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, pray for truth. Ask God to reveal truth in every situation. Pray that the Holy Spirit might empower us to always offer truth as best we know it, and to be able to discern truth in all that we do.*

In my last article, I talked about loosing and binding sin. A question that may arise from that discussion is, “What happens if I sin and ask for forgiveness, but the other person will not forgive me?” Does that refusal count as a binding of sin before God?

The directives in the Bible are given for Christians to follow. Binding and loosing are important for Christians to understand as they reveal the authority each Christian has regarding sin. We have tremendous power through extending the forgiveness of sins to others, or not. Jesus directs us that when someone comes to us seeking forgiveness, we are to extend that grace, just as we ourselves have received it. In Matthew 18, Peter asks Jesus how often we have to forgive another. He wonders if we have to do it as often as seven times—the perfect number. Jesus replies that we are to forgive, not seven times, but seventy times seven, or really every single time. Again, as we have been forgiven by God, we should always forgive others.

But that still leaves the question, “What happens if we ask for forgiveness, but the other won’t forgive?” When we are genuinely repentant, there still is forgiveness from God, even if the other person won’t extend that grace. In Acts 3:19, Peter proclaims, “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out.” True repentance is recognized by God and forgiveness is offered to those who are sincere in their sorrow over sins committed.

This doesn’t give us an “end around” to avoid seeking the forgiveness of another. We must always try to heal relationships that have been damaged. In Matthew 5:23-24, Jesus says, “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them. Then come and offer your gift.” As Christians, we must always try to heal broken relationships with those whom we have harmed, with those who have harmed us, and through seeking the forgiveness of God who assures us that, through faith, forgiveness is ours.

In Christ's love,
Pastor Jeffrey