

“Big Enough To Forgive!”

I. INTRO:

A. **Communion:** Mt.26:26-29 remission/forgiveness

1. How do we wish to be forgiven? We want it to be *unconditional, complete, finished*.

B. **However**, instead of us forgiving others, we usually opt for 1 of 3 different responses:¹

1. **Conditional** forgiveness:

a) “I will forgive **if...**”; “I will forgive **as soon as...**”; “If you come back & makes things right **then** I will forgive you”.

b) It’s saying, “I’m waiting *like a tiger swishing his tail*. You make the your move, & I’ll determine whether it’s time to back away **or** pounce & bite.”

2. **Partial** forgiveness:

a) “I **forgive** you, but don’t expect me to **forget**”; or, “I forgive you, but just **get out of my life**”; or, “I’ll forgive you **until that happens again**”.

b) Many are willing to forgive...**just as long as** we don’t have to see them again.

3. **Delayed** forgiveness:

a) “I forgive you, but just give me some time” (common reaction of someone who’s been hurt deeply)

4. Recognize, **Unforgiveness** has a dramatic **downward effect** on our own lives:

a) When there’s an **offense** against us & if there isn’t forgiveness, **then resentment** begins to build. If forgiveness is not offered following resentment, then **hatred** comes to take its place. Sustained hatred leads to **grudge**. And grudge ultimately settles into **revenge**.

5. Most of us would rather sit on a **judgment seat** than a **mercy seat**!

a) Sometimes we’d rather use silence, resentment, grudge, or indifference to pay back.

(1) **None of these please God...nor do they work!**

b) Forgiven people *should* make the best forgivers! :))

C. **Announce:** This Wed July 6th, I will be showing *Taking The Hill*. New film by Raul Ries.

D. Independence Day Prayer for our nation:

1. I’ve always loved the words towards the beginning of the Declaration of Independence document. *We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, & the pursuit of Happiness.*

2. As we celebrate of our *Independence*, may we pledge our *Dependence* upon God.

E. **Where we left off:** Absalom stole his father David’s kingdom & now could be heard singing, from Lion King, *Oh, I just-can’t-wait-to be-king!*

¹ Taken from Charles Swindoll, David, pg.252

F. Many military experts have said, *nobody really wins a war!*

1. David's army & Absalom's army were about to engage in battle in a civil war that neither father nor son could **win**, but both sides could lose.
 - a) If David **won**, it meant **death** for his son Absalom & his friend Ahithophel.
 - b) If Absalom **won**, it meant **death** for David & other family members.
2. We call this a **Pyrrhic**^(piric) **Victory!** [a victory won at too great a cost to have been worthwhile for the victor]
 - a) For **every word** in Hitler's book Mein Kampf, **125 people** died in WWII.
3. In view of modern atomic/nuclear weapons, nobody would win WWII.

G. In times of crisis people respond in various ways.

1. Let's meet a few men who show their true colors.

II. ZIBA THE DECEIVER, THE LIAR! (1-4)

- A. Ziba is Mephibosheth's head servant. He was one of Saul's land managers. He was a custodian of Jonathan's crippled son Mephibosheth. Ziba was an opportunist with evil motives.
1. Ziba takes advantage of both David & Mephibosheth.
- B. David immediately disinherited Mephibosheth, giving his estate to Ziba instead.
1. David was weary & deeply wounded within, & it wasn't the best time for him to be making character decisions.
 2. He accepted Ziba's story. Which was later to be discredited (19:26,27).
 - a) He then made **a rash judgment** that gave Ziba the property.
 - b) Take heed to Prov.18:13,17 **He who answers a matter before he hears it, It is folly and shame to him...The first one to plead his cause seems right, Until his neighbor comes and examines him.** [Hear both sides before you act or speak]

III. SHIMEI THE ACCUSER! (5-14)

- A. **SHIMEI CURSES!** (5-8)
- B. **Shimei** - a Benjamite, & related to Saul, blamed David for the destruction of Saul's family & kingdom.
1. *Dr. Alexander Whyte* calls him, "A **reptile** of the royal house of Saul."
 2. He had never really been true to David, & now his real character appeared.
 3. Here he is kicking David when he was down!
 4. Through **Ziba's lies**, Satan attacked David as a serpent who **deceives**; & then Through **Shimei's words** & **stones**, Satan came as a lion who **devours**.²

² Warren Wiesrbe, Be Restore, pg.103

- C. Shimei probably *nursed this grudge* against David for 20 years, ever since the royal dynasty shifted from Saul to David.
1. His vision blurred by **hatred**, & now the chance for **sweet revenge**.
 2. Shimei was wrong on 3 counts: [vs.7,8 NLT] **Get out of here, you murderer, you scoundrel! he shouted at David. The Lord is paying you back for all the bloodshed in Saul's clan [that was a lie]. You stole his throne [another lie], and now the Lord has given it to your son Absalom [3rd lie, Lord didn't give it to Absalom, he took it]. At last you will taste some of your own medicine, for you are a murderer!**
 - a) Fewer offenses plunge deeper into our flesh than *false accusations*, particularly when they're hurled at us when we're **vulnerable**.
- D. Separated from David & his party by a deep ravine, he went along the hill opposite, casting stones & cursing.
1. **Amazing how bold people can be when they're separated by a deep ravine.**
 - a) *Shimei is like the cheap-shot bloggert of our day.* Those who can speak so loudly, be so opinionated, from their safe little dark bedrooms, apart from any retaliation.
- E. (7,8) Shimei was *breaking the law* while giving vent to his hatred of David.
1. Ex.22:28 **You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people.**
- F. **ABISHAI OFFERS HIS SERVICES!** (9)
- G. (9) Abishai says, "I'll slice his throat so fast, he won't know it till he sneezes!"
1. David knew w/just the point of his finger, Shimei would be silenced forever.
- H. Abishai was quick to ask to "take him out", **but** David took the better approach.
1. **Abishai** was the one who asked David to take out **Saul**; & was the one who assisted Joab in murdering **Abner**. **So David knew his words weren't to be taken lightly.**
- I. **DAVID SHOWS PATIENCE!** (10-14)
- J. (10) When men *speak against us*, let us look beyond them to *the permission of God*.
1. David patiently "took it" & left the matter with the Lord.
 - a) He already promised he would "take it" in 15:26 *let Him do to me as seems good to Him.*
 - (1) **Now here he proves it!**
 - (2) When he considered that he was **an adulterer & a murderer who deserved to die, yet God let him live**, why should he complain about some **stones & dirt**?
 - (a) **There are times when silence & submission are your best responses.**
 - b) Also, if Absalom, David's own son, was out to kill him, **why should a total stranger be punished for slandering the king, & throwing things at him?**

- (1) David had faith that one day God would **balance the books** with people like Absalom & Shimei.
2. David had no desire to avenge himself. All the curses & abuse that could ever come to him were simply **the ministry of God** to help him toward **perfection & restoration**.

K. How was David able to do this? Soft heart & thick skin.

1. **Not sensitive skin**, so delicate that he slightest pinprick will damage it, **but** really thick. Rhinoceros thick. *take up the shield of faith w/which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil 1*
 - a) If you hope to be **used by God**, you need that kind of thick skin...**Shimei's** come at you by the dozen.
 - b) **When you walk through thorns**, you have to have on **heavy boots!** (heavy Jesus boots)
2. If you are called into **leadership** where you must deal with people, you have to be **armor-plated**.
 - a) This **doesn't mean** a thickness **towards God**. It means you have a **spiritual protective coating** against the slings & arrows, dirt & rock throwing, of people like this Shimei.
 - b) **You'll have to decide: Am I big enough** to forgive...**or** will I **reduce myself** to **his** size & throw rocks back?

L. Lets **jump ahead** in Shimei's story. When David was returning to Jerusalem.

1. **Read 19:18b-23**.
 - a) Now Shimei's singing a different tune.
 - b) (21) Shimei's blasphemies against **the Lord's anointed** were a capital offense, as Abishai was zealous to point out.
 - (1) **Caution: Abishai people** delight in **the letter of the law** & in watching people **get what they deserve**. Their advice is always **Make Them Pay!!!**
 - c) (22,23) **How could David show such restraint?**
 - (1) **His focus was on the Lord**. He had left Shimei's offenses in God's hands.
 - (a) **Always get a vertical perspective before you seek any horizontal one!**
 - (2) **He was aware of his own failures**. Once he stood in Shimei's shoes crying out, **"I have sinned"**, & God had forgiven him for crimes **much worse** than hurling insults at a king. **How could he not forgive Shimei?**
 - (a) **Forgiven people make the best forgivers! :)**
 - d) **Forgiveness comes easier when...**we remember times in our past when **we** failed & were forgiven.
 - e) **Indifference** is certainly not forgiveness. **Indifference is RAGE controlled! :{**
2. **Well I wish the story would have ended here**, but it doesn't...**In one sense** David **passed** this test in flying colors & **in another** he **failed** miserably.

- M. Lets jump ahead to **the end** of Shemei's & his story. When David was on his deathbed.
1. **Read 1 Kings 2:1; 8,9** - How tragic that *the sweet singer of Israel* should approach his final days w/**revenge** on his lips.
 2. **1 Kings 2:36-46** - When Solomon took over, he restricted him to Jerusalem so he could be watched. **Shimei overstepped his bounds, was arrested/executed.**
- N. **Developing a spirit of forgiveness in our own lives! Or Putting forgiveness into action!**
1. **Cultivate a thick layer of skin** - Ask God to toughen your skin. To calm your responses. To be more like Christ.
 2. **Try to understand where the offender is coming from** - Try to see the **little boy** inside the man lashing out at you; **or the little girl** inside the woman who is striking back. **Maybe they're just having a bad day. Maybe you can turn a hurtful conflict into an opportunity for healing.** [Prov.12:18 **Some people make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise bring healing**]
 3. **Recall times in your life when you've needed forgiveness, then apply the same emotion** - All of us have **done** or **said something dumb or extreme or offensive** & have needed someone's forgiveness. (this happens in families, w/ friends, at work, school, even at church) Col.3:13 **Forgive as the Lord forgave you.**
 4. **Verbalize your forgiveness** - **Say it, don't just think it.** Spoken words of forgiveness & graciousness are marvelously therapeutic to the offender. **Saying our feelings removes all doubt. So offer that verbal gift of grace!**

Lewis Smede (Prof. Of Theology & Ethics, Fuller 25 yrs.) illustrates in his book, **Forgive & Forget** the power & the miracle of forgiveness. (PG13)

In the village of **Faken** in innermost **Friesland**, there lived a long thin baker named **Fouke**, a righteous man, with a long thin chin and a long thin nose. Fouke was so upright that he seemed to *spray righteousness* from his thin lips over everyone who came near him; so the people of Faken preferred to stay away.

Fouke's wife, **Hilda**, was short and round; her arms were round, her bosom was round, her rump was round. Hilda did not keep people at bay with righteousness; her soft roundness seemed to invite them to come close to her in order to share the warm cheer of her open heart.

Hilda respected her righteous husband, and loved him too, as much as he allowed her; but her heart ached for something more from him than his worthy righteousness.

And there, in the bed of her need, lay the seed of sadness.

One morning, having worked since dawn to knead his dough for the ovens, Fouke came home and found a stranger in his bedroom lying on Hilda's round bosom.

Hilda's adventure soon became the talk of the tavern and the scandal of the Faken congregation. Everyone assumed that Fouke would cast Hilda out of his house, so righteous was he. But he surprised everyone by keeping Hilda as his wife, saying that he forgave her as the Good Book said he should.

In his heart of hearts, however, Fouke could not forgive Hilda for bringing shame to his name. Whenever he thought about her, his feelings toward her were angry and hard;...When it came right down to it, he hated her for betraying him after he had been so good and so faithful a husband to her. He only pretended to forgive Hilda so that he could punish her with his righteous mercy.

But Fouke's fakery did not sit well in Heaven.

So each time that Fouke would feel his secret hate toward Hilda, an angel came to him and dropped a tiny pebble, hardly the size of a shirt button, into Fouke's heart. Each time a pebble dropped, Fouke would feel a stab of pain...

The pebbles multiplied. And Fouke's heart grew very heavy with the weight of them, so heavy that **the top half of his body bent forward** so far that he had to strain his neck upward in order to see straight ahead. Weary with hurt, Fouke began to wish he were dead.

The angel who dropped the pebbles into his heart came to Fouke one night and told him how he could be healed of his hurt.

There was one remedy, he said, only one, for the hurt of a wounded heart. Fouke would need the miracle of **the magic eyes**. He would need eyes that could look back to the beginning of his hurt and see his Hilda, not as a wife who betrayed him, but as a weak woman who needed him. Only a new way of looking at things through the magic eyes could heal the hurt flowing from the wounds of yesterday.

Fouke protested. "Nothing can change the past," he said. "Hilda is guilty, a fact that not even an angel can change."

"Yes, poor hurting man, you are right," the angel said. "You cannot change the past; you can only heal the hurt that comes to you from the past. And you can heal it only with the vision of the magic eyes."

"And how can I get your magic eyes?" pouted Fouke.

"Only ask, desiring as you ask, and they will be given you. And each time you see Hilda through your new eyes, one pebble will be lifted from your aching heart."

Fouke could not ask at once, for he had grown to **love his hatred**. But the pain of his heart finally drove him to want and to ask for the magic eyes that the angel had promised. **So he asked. And the angel gave.**

Soon Hilda began to change in front of Fouke's eyes, wonderfully and mysteriously. He began to see her as **a needy woman who loved him** instead of **a wicked woman who had betrayed him**.

The angel kept his promise; he lifted the pebbles from Fouke's heart, one by one, though it took a long time to take them all away. Fouke gradually felt his heart grow lighter; he began to walk straight again, and somehow his nose and his chin seemed less thin and sharp than before. **He invited Hilda to come into his heart again, and she came, and together they began again a journey into their second season of humble joy.**

- **Forgiveness isn't a snap-of-the-fingers miracle.** It is a journey that involves **work, commitment, faith, & time** to heal.
- **God can do many things for you.** He can lift pebbles from your heart. He can help heal your hurt. But there's one thing He can't do, He can't undo the past. **Can you live with that?**
- **Have you grown to love your hatred? Are you willing to ask Christ for a pair of magic eyes, the eyes of love, through which you can see your offender from a new perspective?**