Forgiveness

You're having a rough day, driving back to work after your lunch break. Your boss told you that if you were late one more time getting back after your lunch break, you would be fired! You're doing okay time wise when you pull up to stop for a stoplight. All of a sudden the person in back of you drifts too far forward and rear ends you right in the back bumper. After the light turns green you pull off to the side of the road where the person who just hit you pulled off. You look at your back bumper and it's dented up good. The person that hit you apologizes in a very nice and humble way and offers to pay for the damages. All of a sudden your phone rings. It's your boss who tells you you're fired for being late. Of course you would have made it on time if it weren't for the person that rear ended you. You tell the person that rear ended you what just happened to your job. This makes the person feel even worse for what they did and gives you twice as much as what it would take, in estimate, to fix your smashed bumper. They have asked for forgiveness and have made atonement for their wrong doing. Now the big question: what should you do? Should you carry on and on about what a miserable person they are and make them feel even worse or should you just tell them it's okay and move on? What would Jesus do?

Jesus was willing to forgive anyone who came seeking for forgiveness, if they were willing to repent. Jesus told the woman who was caught in adultery to go and sin no more. He forgave her sins, and the sin of many others. Jesus said that He would forgive us if we repent as well, but there is something else Jesus said we would have to do in order to be forgiven. We would have to forgive others just as Christ would forgive us. He said in Matthew 6:14-15, "*For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*" Jesus expresses the importance of forgiving others because if we do not have a forgiving heart towards others, neither will God have a forgiving heart towards us, no matter how much we repent.

But what does it mean to truly forgive someone? Does it mean that we just don't mention it to anyone, or does it go farther than that? We can keep from mentioning it to anybody, but we may still remember and think about what somebody did to us. True forgiveness is being able to forget about all the times somebody wronged us, no matter how many times someone does us wrong. Jesus said in Luke 17:3-4, "*Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him.*" This does not mean when

he comes to us the eighth time we shouldn't forgive him. Jesus rather uses the number seven as a sign of completeness, to show us that no matter how many times someone comes looking for forgiveness, saying that they have repented, we should forgive them.

So when someone does you wrong and you just don't think you can forgive what they have done, remember Jesus' examples of forgiveness, let go of your selfish pride, be compassionate and comfort them with forgiveness. Try to put yourself in their situation. Ask yourself what I would want them to do if the tables were turned, and we were the one in the wrong. Jesus is willing to forgive us. We must be willing to forgive others. But if you still can't find the heart of forgiveness within yourself, remember the example of Jesus in Luke 23:34. Jesus hung on the cross with nails in His hands and in His feet, being spat upon, beaten, and humiliated. But through all the cries of hatred, mockery, and criticism came a solemn prayer by Jesus: "*Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*"

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