

The Tennessee Tribune

Volume 23 , No.8 , 3 Sections

THURSDAY, February 23-29, 2012

\$1.00

Receiving Human and Divine Restoration through the Power of Forgiveness

A Commentary by Jason Curry



I must admit that I neither hear nor preach many sermons on the power of forgiveness, and casual references regarding the importance of forgiveness are seldom made by Christians and non-Christians in everyday conversations. However, the idea of forgiveness, whether it is God's forgiveness of you and I, or our forgiveness of our neighbors, is an important part of the life of the Christian. Like many of you, I am aware that forgiving people can be very difficult work. As I reflect on my childhood, I realize that it was the love of my uncle, the love of my grandfather, and the love of God which helped me to forgive my biological father for being absent in my life. As I began to grow in the Lord through my personal and professional experiences in the ministry, I came to the following conclusion: If Jesus can forgive the people who nailed him to the cross (e.g., "Father, forgive them for they know

not what they do (Luke 23:34)," then I certainly have a responsibility to forgive people who have offended or harmed me in the past. I thank God for the healing power of forgiveness.

A wonderful, biblical example of the process of restoration through the power of forgiveness concerns a man who was unable to walk (Mark 2:1-12). Jesus was in a crowded room; therefore, the man's friends lowered him through the roof so that he could be healed. Jesus restored the man physically by giving him the power to walk. However, Jesus also restored the man spiritually by saying that his sins had been forgiven (Mark 2:5). Paul reminds us that nothing can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39); however, sin (e.g., lying and stealing) negatively impacts both human and divine relationships. Admitting our manifold sins before God through prayer, asking for forgiveness, and receiving forgiveness,

from God puts us in a right relationship with God. Forgiving, as opposed to hating, those who have harmed us with their words or actions may also put us in a right relationship with our neighbor. The joy of forgiveness is that it will always present us with a win-win scenario, for God is always pleased with us when we forgive, and we will always be pleased when God is smiling upon our actions. Forgiveness may also restore relationships that are extremely valuable to us, as we strive to honor God's second commandment which calls us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves (Mark 12:31). Jesus reminds us, if we forgive, we will be forgiven by God (Matthew 6:14), so let us continue to forgive one another so that our thoughts and actions might be pleasing in God's sight.

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