

Message by Pastor Dapo Akinosun

Topic: To Forgive, Divine

Bible Reading:

The English Poet Alexander Pope wrote back in 1709 that 'to err is human, but to forgive, divine'. The act of forgiveness is emphasized not only in the Bible and taught by Christendom, but poets, artists, doctors and even lawyers echo it.

What is forgiveness? Forgiveness is the act of allowing one's self to let go and move past the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual hurts caused by others. It is not an event that happens at one instance, but it is a process that requires a few steps of:

1. Acknowledging what has been done to you and reflecting on the impact of it
2. Praying through for the grace to let go
3. Admitting to yourself that as a believer, God is the only avenger of our wrongs
4. Making space in your heart to allow the Holy Spirit to work in and through you
5. Looking back and realizing that through those steps, you have already forgiven and you are free of the darkness that rests in unforgiveness

Forgiveness is not forgetting that it ever happened. Although Paul said in Philippians 3:13-14 "I forget what is behind, and I struggle for what is ahead...so that I can win the prize of being called to heaven", it is not the form of forgetting which means that we act as though it never happened. We are to let go of the pain, anguish and other symptoms associated with that act that hurt us. We are to forget the impact it had on us and forget our feelings of wanting revenge on others or affirmation from others. We are to forget our need to explain and be heard, but rather, we are to forgive the wrongdoing and move past it.

Forgiveness is divine in that it takes the Divinity of God and His grace to help us through some of the hurts we have experienced in our lives. But the Bible reassures as that we have already overcome because greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world (I John 4:4). People who hurt us are most often operating by the powers of the prince of this world. But we the believers, the royal priesthood and holy nation, have already overcome by virtue of the finished work on the cross. No matter the difficulty, there is no situation that we cannot rise above.

Colossians 3:13 instructs us to bear with one another and forgive the grievances and offences of each other just as God has forgiven us. He who has instructed us to do it will give us the grace to forgive in the mighty name of Jesus. It is extremely hard to forgive, especially when the wrongdoings are carried out by those closest to us – family and friends. It can be very difficult for you and for me, but for God, it is easy. Cast all of your cares upon Him because He cares for you. He has asked us to hold our peace and He alone will fight our battles. If we fight our battles for ourselves, then we leave no space for God. If our hearts are filled with hurt and anger, then there is no room for the Holy Spirit.

Whatever your ills are right now, whatever acts of unforgiveness are pricking at your heart, just say this short prayer. Father, give me the grace to forgive _____ for _____. It is my desire to walk in obedience to your Word. I submit to your perfect will and forgive _____ for _____ from this moment. I ask that you take me through a process of total healing that will ensure that I walk ahead and not look back. I plead for your mercy and compassions that enables you to hear my prayer and forgive me of my trespasses In Jesus Name.