



The Gift of Forgiveness and the Opportunity for Repentance at the Cross **Luke 23:39-43**

By Rev. Sharon S. Cheek

“Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.” But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.

Luke 23:39-43 NKJV

The Meaning of the Cross

When it comes to our understanding of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus the Christ, there is no way to get around what the meaning of His death procured for humanity on the Cross of Calvary. His death marked the beginning of renewal against humanity's ultimate transgression against God. (Genesis 3) Humanity sinned against God, and the Cross was God's plan of restoration to get humanity back into God's presence. (Philippians 2:8) The Cross must be our model of forgiveness in every human relationship amid the pain and suffering that we will experience in this journey called life.

What is Forgiveness?

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"He did it just for me"

Definitions of Forgiveness

The act of giving up resentment of or claim to requital for something or to cease to feel resentment against someone- **Merriam-Webster**

The process of concluding resentment, indignation or anger as a result of a perceived offense, difference or mistake, or ceasing to demand punishment or restitution- **Wikipedia**

The practice of letting go of any wrong, hurt or pain inflicted by another person or entity without holding in the soul, anger, rage, hatred or revenge- **Rev. Sharon S. Cheek.**

1. The Beginning of the Release of the Gift of Forgiveness into the World.

He said, " Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." Luke 23:34

2. There must be an exercise of faith to extend the Gift of Forgiveness to another person or entity. We must have complete trust that God will handle all that we have experienced by the actions of others.

...whatever is not from faith is sin." Romans 14:23 NKJV

"Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the

Lord. Therefore “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Romans 12:19-21 NKJV

3. The Gift of Forgiveness is a sacrificial offering.



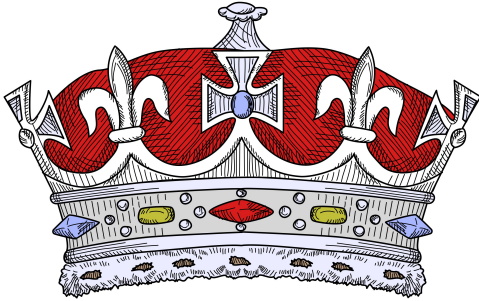
“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Matthew 6:14-15 NKJV

4. The Gift of Forgiveness has no limits.

“Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.” Matthew 18:21-22 NKJV

“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.” Luke 17:3-4 NKJV

5. The lack of offering the Gift of Forgiveness will hinder our petitions in prayer.



“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” Mark 11:25-26 NKJV

6. What Jesus did on the Cross of Calvary must be modeled by His Kingdom citizens in the earth. This is our mandate in order to heal the world.

“Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.” Colossians 3:13 NKJV

As Kingdom citizens, we bear in our souls (mind, will, emotions) the pain and suffering that has been inflicted upon us in our families, friendships, associations, and work places. No matter where the suffering has taken place, it will never amount to the suffering that Jesus went through on the Cross of Calvary. There are disciplines that we can incorporate into our devotional life that can assist us with letting go of hurt, and pain so as not to store that pain in our souls. Stored pain becomes physical disease. Not offering the gift of Forgiveness is our choice, but God has promised to heal any pain that we might go through by faith in Jesus' name when we forgive- PEACE

