

FORGIVING OTHERS

Greg Gwin, adapted

There is no doubt that one of the conditions of our own forgiveness by God is that we forgive others who sin against us. Jesus said: *"If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"* (Matthew 6:14-15). He also taught us that we should extend this forgiveness again and again. Notice: *"Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven"* (Matthew 18:21-22).

The question arises, though, about a situation where an individual is not interested in our forgiveness. They do not ask to be forgiven and may, in fact, continue the offending act against us. What should our response be in such a situation?

Jesus gave valuable information about dealing with this problem: *"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him"* (Luke 17:3-4). The teaching here clearly indicates that forgiveness must be sought before it can be granted. We must be ready to forgive, willing to forgive, even eager to forgive. But, until the offender seeks our forgiveness, there is no way that forgiveness can be accomplished. A moment of reflection will remind us that this is exactly the pattern that God has established for us to be forgiven by Him. He is continually ready to forgive us, but we must repent and seek His forgiveness before we can receive it.

It's worth noting that the apostles realized the difficulty of forgiving a brother who continues to commit the same offense over and over. After hearing His command in this matter, *"the apostles said unto the Lord, increase our faith"* (Luke 17:5). It takes a strong faith to fulfill the Lord's will concerning forgiveness.

"IT IS SHAMEFUL FOR WOMEN TO SPEAK IN CHURCH"

Bryan Matthew Dockens

"Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church" (1st Corinthians 14:34-35). What Paul commanded in this text is more particular than what he wrote on the subject elsewhere: *"I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence"* (1st Timothy 2:12). Presuming the passages are identical, many Christians have reached the mistaken conclusion that, provided a woman is not teaching or otherwise exercising authority, she may speak aloud in church. In some places, during announcements, the congregation may be asked for prayer requests, with women invited to respond verbally. The problem with this arrangement is that the apostle did not merely tell women to refrain from teaching or exercising authority over men. More than that, he said women are to hold back from even asking questions in church. If mere inquiries are disallowed, then making announcements, even while seated, cannot be permitted.

Some may hesitate at this conclusion, wondering whether female participation is permissible in classes. That is a fair concern and the answer is not hard to find. The setting in which this and several other rules of orderliness apply is *"if the whole church comes together in one place"* (1st Corinthians 14:23), with *"church"* or *"churches"* mentioned ten times in this chapter (4, 5, 12, 19, 23, 26, 28, 34, 35), including twice in the text primarily under consideration. Thus, separate classes are not in view when the woman's silence is ordered by Paul because *"the whole church"* has not *"come together in one place."*

The purpose of the gathering is specified, too: *"that the church may receive edification"* (5) and *"for the edification of the church"* (12), with edification referred to seven times in the chapter (3, 4, 4, 5, 12, 17). So, if the whole church has come together for reasons other than edification, such as maintenance and housekeeping, like painting the meeting house or pulling weeds, then the regulations governing conduct *"in church"* do not apply.

When the church is assembled for edification, all the rules of orderliness set forth in this chapter ought to be adhered to scrupulously, including female silence, even for something as seemingly submissive as a question.

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

THURSDAY

Ladies' Study @ 6:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belén, New Mexico

**Seekers Welcome.
Members Expected.**

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

PROVERBS 25:11

"If the world hates you because of Jesus, that's expected. If the world hates Jesus because of you, that's a problem."

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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"NEVER HAS FORGIVENESS"

Bryan Matthew Dockens

The unpardonable sin is addressed by Jesus in three passages of Scripture (Matthew 12:22-32; Mark 3:22-30; Luke 12:10).

In all records, Jesus stated that blaspheming the Holy Spirit is beyond forgiveness. That is unmistakably clear. What may require clarification is what constitutes blasphemy of the Spirit. Luke's account is presented without context, but both Matthew and Mark make clear that the Lord was responding to accusations from the Pharisees and scribes that He was exorcising demons by the power of Satan. Mark's version is particularly straightforward on this point: *"He who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation — because they said, 'He has an unclean spirit'"* (Mark 3:29-30).

Jesus had worked a miracle, casting out an unclean spirit. Miracles were intended to convince observers that Jesus is the Son of God (Acts 2:22), thereby producing saving faith (John 20:30-31). Instead, the hardened hearts of His detractors turned the evidence of His deity on its head, accusing God's Son of being an agent of the devil. That, specifically, is what blaspheming the Holy Spirit is – attributing to Satan the marvelous works of God. One who does so is beyond pardon because his heart is so hard that he will never yield to God in repentance.

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