

## OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

TRANSFORMED BY GRACE

EMPOWERED BY GRACE (COLOSSIANS 3:13; EPHESIANS 4:32)

SEPTEMBER 30, 2018



### SERMON OUTLINE

Transformed by Grace:

Col 3:12-14

Empowered by Grace

Knowing the Legacy of Jesus . . .

Leads to Sharing the Way of Grace

*What do I need to do with what I have heard today?*

### MAIN POINT

As we recognize the grace of God in forgiving us, it should be normal for us to forgive others as part of the Christian life.

### THINKING THINGS THROUGH

*Connect the sermon to the study.*

**1. Think about a time when you held a grudge that now seems silly. Why did you feel like your grudge was appropriate at the time?**

**2. What are some reasons it is difficult to forgive others? Which of these are excuses for not practicing forgiveness, rather than legitimate reasons?**

## SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

**Leader:** Every one of us has a heart prone to not forgive. We hold grudges, we build up offenses against other people, we sweep things under the rug, or we write people out of our lives forever. Rarely do we do the hard work of putting on real forgiveness, especially as a character trait that we try to model consistently. In Colossians 3, though, Paul included forgiveness in his list of godly character traits that children of God must put on. Paul based this trait on the very forgiveness of God toward us, which can't be argued with.

### DIGGING DEEPER

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ COLOSSIANS 3:13.

**3. Look up some other translations of the phrase “bear with each other.” What do you understand this phrase to mean, and how is it connected to forgiveness? Why is accepting someone else, despite their behavior, an essential element of forgiveness?**

**4. How does Paul’s call to forgiveness in this verse help you understand why this is an important trait for Christians to model?**

**Leader:** When Paul wrote to “bear with” one another, he did not mean quiet resignation. Rather, Christians are to actively forgive whatever grievances they may have against one another. Believers have been fully forgiven by Christ (Col. 2:13-14), and the forgiven are obligated to become forgivers. The standard for this forgiveness is Christ Himself.

**5. Why do we treat forgiveness as something we have the choice to do or not do? Do Christians really have that choice? Explain.**

**6. What would be the proper grace response if we have a complaint with someone else? How does that stand in contrast to the way you typically respond?**

**Leader:** Forgiveness does not come naturally to us. It must be taught, learned, and accepted. For Christians, we have no option but to forgive if we wish to live faithfully to Jesus Christ. However, we often think that we have the choice to not forgive. While technically this is true, being unforgiving arises from sin. We must remember that when we were sinful, God forgave us and gave Himself for us. Being unforgiving does not honor Jesus, nor your brothers and sisters in Christ.

## SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EPHESIANS 4:32.

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**7. How is forgiveness more a spiritual issue than anything else in our lives? What does our willingness or unwillingness to forgive reveal about our hearts?**

**8. How are compassion and forgiveness related? As your compassion for other people grows, how does your ability to forgive grow as well?**

**Leader:** To act in forgiveness is to act with grace; forgiving one another is certainly one of the best ways to extend undeserved favor. Paul pointed out specifically that forgiveness is a God-like quality. Because God forgave us through Christ, we are to extend forgiveness to others. The more we reflect on and grow in our understanding of how much God loves us and how much He has forgiven us, the more we want to treat others the same way.

### DOING LIFE TOGETHER

*Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.*

**9. Is there anyone in your life to whom you need to extend grace or forgiveness right now? What is one step you can take?**

**10. Describe a time when you saw bitterness wreak havoc on you and a relationship in your life. What did you learn about the importance of forgiveness through that experience?**

**11. What are some practical ways we can challenge each other to extend grace and make forgiveness normal in our daily lives? How does it impact our credibility in asking people to accept the grace and forgiveness Jesus offers, if we are graceless and unforgiving as His servants?**

### PRAYER

Thank God that He graciously gives what we cannot earn or work for. Pray that God would continually remind you of His grace, that you might trust Him more and grow in your forgiveness of others. Pray that God would guide your actions daily, particularly as you forgive those who have wronged you.

## SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

### MEMORIZE

<sup>13</sup> Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. - Colossians 3:13

### SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE

#### COLOSSIANS 3:3

3:3. Paul now provides the basis for his preceding exhortations. The exhortations are based in a past reality, a present truth, and a future expectation. Paul begins with a glance back. He tells believers, you died. Believers have "died to sin" (Rom. 6:2), which means that the believer is no longer under the influence of sin's dominating power. Paul told the Colossians one chapter earlier that they had died with Christ to the basic principles of this world (Col. 2:20), which means that the believer is not subject to the cosmic powers of darkness. The old order of things (slavery to sin and evil forces) is gone.

The glance back gives rise to the glimpse now. In the present our life is hidden with Christ in God. The reference to hidden can refer to "safety or secrecy." In fact, both are probably in view. Our life is doubly secure since it is with Christ in God. This is a comforting reminder of the truth found in John 10:28-29: no one can snatch the believer out of Jesus' hand or the Father's hand. The believer is secure. The term hidden (*kekruptai*) can also mean "concealed, unseen." This means that the believer's life is unknown or not understood by the watching world (compare 1 John 3:1-2). The unseen realities will be revealed. Paul now turns his attention to that glorious truth.

#### EPHESIANS 4:32

4:31-32. Christians are to "put away" five sins: bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and slander. In their place, they are to "put on" three virtues: kindness, tender-heartedness, and forgiveness. Because God acts this way toward us, we should act this way toward others. Then the church will be built up, the people will be holy, and Christ's body will be unified.