

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church 2080 West Grand Blvd.  
Detroit, MI 48208  
Nathan Johnson, Senior Pastor

## **“Forgiving One Another”**

**LESSON SCRIPTURE:** *“Be ye kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you”*. [Ephesians 4:32, King James Version]

*“And become useful, helpful, and kind to one another, tenderhearted (compassionate, understanding, loving hearted), forgiving one another (readily and freely), as God in Christ forgave you.”* [Ephesians 4:32, Amplified Bible]

**GOAL:** To grasp an understanding of true forgiveness and to practice it in our lives.

**OBJECTIVE:** Demonstrate and apply true forgiveness in daily Christian relationships.

This lesson on forgiving one another will be presented in two parts. Today’s lesson will focus on the Christian necessity of forgiveness and what it is. Next month’s lesson will high light our volitional responsibility: choose to forgive and how to forgive.

### **ESSENTIAL INSIGHT/ QUESTION:**

Human nature often compels and drives us to “teach people a lesson” or seek revenge as a way of getting back for a “wrong” or hurt we have experienced, but it never works. Jesus offers a better solution. There should be no revenge or getting back at another. He suggests simply that we become the “shock absorbers”<sup>1</sup> of this world in that we exhibit humility, patience, and kindness towards others who wrong us. What practical steps of faith should Christians take to become “shock absorbers” for true forgiveness?

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Time: About 60 – 64 A.D. Place: Rome

Our Scripture passage of study is from Ephesians. Ephesians is one of the seven prison epistles written by Paul who was incarcerated in Rome. Tychicus delivered this epistle along with other letters to Philemon and the churches of Collosia and Philippi.

Paul founded the church in Ephesus during his second missionary journey. He assigned Priscilla and Aquila whom he had met in Corinth to teach the Gospel. Later the Church was strengthened and firmly established by Paul during his third missionary journey where he pastored three years. Upon Paul’s departure, Timothy headed the Church for about eighteen months. Timothy was constantly in conflict with the false teachers that erupted in the Church. Their ungodly teachings resulted in harmful disputes rather than faith building

---

<sup>1</sup> Swindol, Charles R., *Becoming a People of Grace*

interpretations.<sup>2</sup>

In chapter four of Ephesians, Paul tells of God's plan for faithful living. Christ endows and builds the Church and gives God's pattern and principles for Church members. Ephesians 4:32 deals specifically with forgiveness.

### **LESSON INTRODUCTION:**

The church may not be benefiting from the full potential of its members because of tense relationships. The word of God is replete with exhortations to forgive. It is taught in the Gospels (Matthew 6:14-15, 18:35; Mark 11:25. Jesus referenced it in the Model Prayer; "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." Subsequently, He became the supreme example of forgiveness. God Himself, in the person of Jesus Christ, hung on a cross, bled, suffered, and died in our place to forgive us of our sins. Though He had never sinned, He took on Himself the penalty for our sins. He forgave us and He asked His Father to forgive those who crucified Him. *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace (Ephesians 1:7)*. Since Christ has done this, as believers who have received God's forgiveness, we are compelled to forgive one another.

The scriptural passage in Ephesians 4:32 is the first mention<sup>3</sup> of "forgive one another" relative to Christians in the church. The law of first mention in a passage indicates that we will find out what God originally intended and communicated concerning that idea. The lesson to follow is to shed light on what Paul meant.

Forgiveness is a key biblical concept. Exactly what is forgiveness and how does it play out in Ephesians 4:32? Listed below are several definitions of key words found in Ephesians 4:32.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

**Forgiveness Defined:** Forgiveness is choosing to pardon, remit, or overlook the mistake, fault, offense, hurt or injury of the offender without demanding a penalty, punishment or retribution.<sup>3</sup>

A definition for forgiveness could be -- giving up my right to hurt you, for hurting me.<sup>4</sup>

**Forgive, charizomai,** (khar-id'-zom-ah-ee), 5483, "to show a favor unconditionally", is used of the act of "forgiveness," whether divine, Ephesians 4:32; Col. 2:13, 3:13; or human, Luke 7:42, 43 (debt) 2 Corinthians 2:7, 10; 12:13; Eph. 4:32 (1st mention).<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> MacArthur, John, The MacArthur Study Bible

<sup>3</sup> Brown PhD, David L (Pastor), Forgiveness, Logos Resource Pages.org

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.allaboutgod.com/definition-for-forgiveness-faq.htm> Accessed online 6-11-11

<sup>5</sup> Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W., Jr. (1996). *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Vol. 2, p. 251). Nashville, TN: T. Nelson.

**Kind, chrestos,** (*khrese-tos* ) (5543) serviceable, good, pleasant” (of things), “good, gracious, kind” (of persons), is translated “kind” in Luke 6:35, of God: in Eph. 4:32, enjoined upon believers. <sup>6</sup>

**Tenderhearted, eusplanchnos** (yoo'-splanekh-nos) (2155), “compassionate, tenderhearted,” lit, “of good heartedness” (eu, “well,” and splanchnon), is translated “tenderhearted” in Ephesians 4:32.<sup>7</sup>

## God’s Standard for Forgiveness

✠✠✠Scriptures: Luke 23:34, Matthew 6:12, 14-15 and Roman 5:8✠✠✠

It is God who initiated his relationship with us as believers. In the beginning, in the Garden of Eden when Adam sinned, God had already made a provision through his Son Jesus Christ to reconcile us back to Him. Jesus sacrificial death on the cross was sufficient for God to forgive us of all of our sins. Romans 5:8 states “*But God commended His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*”.

God forgives us in Christ and mandates us to forgive others. When we forgive one another, God grants us a renewed strength and inner peace that passes all understanding. Christ sets the standard and we must strive to be like him. He is our perfect example.

Even while Christ was being crucified on the cross, he cried out “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). The Lord’s Prayer states, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors (Matthew 6: 12). When we forgive others of their sins or trespasses, God also forgives us; but when we do not forgive others of their sins and trespasses, God will not forgive us of our sins and trespasses (Matthew 6:14-15). This does not indicate that God withholds the justification from believers that are in Christ. We are still pardoned from the penalty and guilt of sin. God does admonish and chasten us to encourage us to forgive. As Lewis B. Smedes argues in *Forgive and Forget*, “When you release the wrongdoer from the wrong, you cut a malignant tumor out of your inner life. You set a prisoner free, but you discover that the real prisoner was yourself.” Research has shown that high levels of forgiveness correlate with better health habits, lower anxiety, lower anger, lower depression, and more task coping behavior.

As believers who experience love, kindness, tenderheartedness, compassion and forgiveness from God through His Son Jesus Christ, we should reciprocate and live out these virtues as we receive new freedom through the act of forgiveness. Then and only then, can we be one with Christ as He is one with the Father. Forgiveness paves the way for treating others with kindness, love, and compassion out of a tender heart. We become serviceable for the Lord. What spiritual growth the church could experience if she were a unified body forgiving and loving one another!

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Ibid