

ASSEMBLY TIMES

Sunday

Bible Class 9:30
Morning Assembly 10:30
Evening Assembly 5:00

Wednesday

Evening Bible Class 6:30

RADIO PROGRAM

The Bible Speaks



Sunday 9:00-9:30a.m.
KURM 790AM

Downtown Church of Christ

P.O. Box 447
201 W. Chestnut Street
Rogers, AR 72757
479-636-3575
www.downtowncoc.net



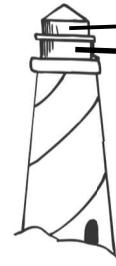
**A healthy marriage is the
union of two forgivers.**

ELDERS:

Otis Hardin
Perry Johnson
Ken Parker
Alan Revier
GW Walsh

DEACONS:

TJ Burleson
Scott Hale
Joel Heiligenthal
Jason Hill
Chris Johnson
Brock McKeel
Randy Potter
Tim Roberts
Randy Shell



DOWNTOWN GOSPEL BEACON

**PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY THE DOWNTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST
ROGERS, ARKANSAS**

February 6, 2022

FAMILY NEWS

PRAYER LIST –

Preachers we support: Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Canada, Mexico, Peru, & U.S.
Sick: Gary Fletcher, Tony Tolbert, Rai Starr, Diane Willis, Js Swim, Carol Griggs
Shut-ins: Betty Jo Young, Billie Pennington, Shirley Cole, Mary Lou Lewis
Military: Logan Dickey, Kyler Sullins, Sean Potter

SINGING – Tonight we are scheduled to have our monthly singing. Song leaders should come prepared to lead, and others prepared to sing!

SENTENCE SERMON – “If you think tough men are dangerous, wait until you see what weak men are capable of.” – Jordan Peterson

When Forgiveness is Unwanted

Should a Christian forgive those who do not seek – or even desire – to be forgiven? The knee-jerk answer from many Christians is ‘of course’, and they proceed to point to Jesus on the cross. But while such an answer seems righteous and – well, forgiving – it misses the whole point of true forgiveness.

Now, if by ‘forgiveness’ we mean that we harbor no ill-will toward those who have wronged us then, yes, we should ‘forgive’ everyone. As Paul reminds us (quoting the inspired advice of Solomon), “If

your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink” (Ro 12:20). We should be proactive in doing good, even toward those who have wronged us. But that is not forgiveness.

And such kind treatment of our enemies must go beyond the mere outward behavior toward them. Feeding them should not be a cover for bitterness and hatred. As Jesus put it, “Love your enemies; pray for those >

who persecute you” (Mt 5:44). This takes kindness to a whole new level. We are to genuinely love them – with all that entails (patient, kind, etc. from 1 Co 13). But that is not forgiveness.

Some say that forgiveness is not so much to help my enemy, but to help me – that I must learn to ‘let it go’ in order that I might find inner peace. And there is certainly an element of truth to that. As Paul wrote, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Ph 4:6-7). Inner peace is important, and it can only be found by ‘giving it to God’. And yes, that applies to anxieties caused by our enemies. We need to ‘let it go’ when someone wrongs us, and move on with our lives. But that is not forgiveness, either.

To learn the true meaning of forgiveness, one must look to the perfect example of forgiveness – to God Himself. For while God is good and kind and loving toward all (an example for us), He does not forgive all (an example for us).

And why does He not forgive all? Because most people do not **want** His forgiveness. Regardless of the reasons (and there are many), most people have no interest in a close relationship with God. And **forgiveness** is all about **relationship**.

When we come to God on His terms (think faith, repentance, baptism, walking the walk), we are forgiven of our sins – and the relationship that was lost because of our sin is restored. Thank God for His forgiveness!

But God never pretends that all is well when it isn’t. And neither should we. Just as true love is kind and patient, true love also “does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices

in the truth” (1 Co 13:6). In the same way, true forgiveness will not give an offender a free pass, acting as though nothing is wrong. This approach may make us feel warm and fuzzy and righteous – but it does the offender no favors. It masks the sin and provides them with a false sense that all is well when it isn’t. A close relationship cannot exist when there is sin between us. That’s true for God, and it’s true for us.

And what about Jesus on the cross? Didn’t He forgive those who crucified Him? Well, He loved them. That is why He allowed them to drive the nails through His feet and His hands. And He harbored no ill-will toward them. In fact, He asked His Father to forgive them.

Yet fifty days later, God still held that sin against those who crucified Jesus (Ac 2:23,36). It wasn’t until some 3,000 of them came to believe on Jesus, repented of their sins, and were baptized that the

prayer of Jesus was answered, and God forgave them of their sin.

God, and those who have His heart, will forgive any who sin – if the offender is willing to repent of that sin. As Jesus Himself put it, “If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him” (Lu 17:3).

The rebuke part of that command can be difficult. And perhaps that is why some would rather jump to the forgiveness part – and make it unconditional. But that’s not how Jesus framed it; and it’s not how we should frame it, either. We dare not make ourselves more righteous than God. For the sake of the offender, God’s forgiveness is conditional. Ours should be as well, and for the same reason.

May God grant us hearts of courage to rebuke the sin, and hearts of compassion to love the sinner – just as He does.

- *WKing*