

- ❖ Christ endured a painful death he did not deserve --- to forgive our sins.
- ❖ Forgiveness is the fuel of a heart driven by Christ.
- ❖ Christians forgive --- because Christ forgave us!
 - Forgiveness is the message of the cross and all of us need it.
 - Forgiveness without transformation is not the message of the cross.

The message of the cross is as we ask God to forgive us and as we choose to forgive others, God transforms us AND God begins to conform us back into his image.

- ❖ When we as a church choose to receive and unleash forgiveness the way that Jesus Christ modeled it, our families, our church, our communities, and our world will be transformed beyond what we could ever ask or imagine.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
2 Corinthians 5:15-20

PGUMC 6-24-18
 I can only imagine:

IMAGINE FORGIVENESS

A man had two sons. The younger son told his Father, 'I want my share of your estate now before you die.' So, his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons." Luke 15:11

We learn two things about the son.

1. He is selfish.
2. He wants independence.

We learn something about the father:

1. The Father allows him to go.
- ❖ It is the gift of God's free will for us to choose our way, but if we choose our own way, we have to accept the responsibility for it.

"A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living. About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land and he began to starve." Luke 15:13-14

"He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs. The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything. When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'at home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger!'" Luke 15:15-17

“I will go home to my father and say, ‘father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.’ So, he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.’ But his father said to the servants, ‘quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.’ So, the party began.” Luke 15:18-24

This is sometimes called the parable of the running father.

- The son expected to receive what he deserved because of his sin against his father.
- But the text says that while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming and ran toward him.
- ❖ This is a great picture of the unconditional love of God.

The words of the father show his heart and priorities, **“This son was dead and is alive, he was lost and now is found.”**

- ❖ The father does not see his ruin, he sees his response.
- ❖ The father does not see your ruin, He sees your response.

“Meanwhile, the older son was in the fields working. When he returned home, he heard music and dancing in the house, and he asked one of the servants what was going on. ‘Your brother is back,’ he was told, ‘and your father has killed the fatted calf. We are celebrating because of his safe return.’

“The older brother was angry and would not go in. His father came out and begged him, but he replied, ‘all these years I have slaved for

you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to. And in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends. Yet when this son of yours comes back after squandering your money on prostitutes, you celebrate by killing the fattened calf!’
“His father said to him, ‘Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours. We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!’” Luke 15:25-32

Both brothers had selfish heart problems.

- ❖ Jesus wants us to see that the younger brother’s sin was not what distinguished him from the older brother --- it was his willingness to repentant and admit he had a selfish heart.
- ❖ You cannot have restoration without repentance, and because the younger son repented: The Father’s Forgiveness Restores him.

“The older brother was angry and wouldn’t go in.”

The older brother was indignant, he was stuck in legalism, he was not interested in “Extending Forgiveness” and for sure he did not see his own need to be “Forgiven.

Three signs you might be like the older brother of this parable:

- 1.) You question when someone repents. You say something like, “We will see.”
- 2.) You would rather criticize than celebrate. You would rather find a reason not to celebrate than a reason to.
- 3.) You don’t try to understand the Father’s heart for another person.

“If you forgive others the wrongs they have done to you, your father in heaven will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your father will not forgive the wrongs you have done.”

Matthew 6:14-15

- ❖ Forgiveness is not just for us, we are also commanded to extend that same forgiveness to others.