

Title: FORGIVENESS, FAITH, DUTY, LUKE 17:1-10
(Chatham, NJ; 10/06/13, AM) [D – Exegetical]

Theme: Jesus demands that we forgive one another, reveals that we need only a small amount of faith, and insists that we do our duty.

Purpose: To encourage forgiveness, faith, and duty.

Introduction:

1. Jesus speaks once again “to his disciples” (1).
2. He speaks of temptations, forgiveness, faith, and duty.

I. Temptations and Forgiveness, 1-4

A. Temptations, 1-2

1. They will certainly come; no one can avoid them though we must reject them
2. There are temptations to violate God’s commands
3. They play on our desires that at first feel pleasurable
4. These desires must be crucified in us
5. There are also temptations to follow misrepresentations of the Gospel: Eph. 4:14 warns us about the winds of false doctrine; culture likes to re-imagine God
6. There are temptations to smooth over paganism, as if it weren’t all that bad (see *World*, “Head Games,” 10/05/13, p. 72)

B. Unlimited forgiveness, 3-4

1. Take heed to yourselves – a transition to the next teaching
2. Rebuke, repent, forgive
3. Christ forbids the nursing of grudges or criticisms of the offender behind his back
4. We are called to restore with gentleness, Gal. 6:1, but also “watch yourselves”
5. Called to “bear one another’s burdens,” Gal. 6:2
6. We must forgive every time
7. Seven times = continually

II. Faith, 5-6

A. “Increase our faith”

1. A reaction to the command to forgive: “How do you expect us to do that?”
2. The human and normal cultural response is to pay back
3. “An eye for an eye” was not a command to exact payback: it was a limit on the vengeful spirit
4. Eph. 4:32 – forgive as God has forgiven us
5. This demands all the faith that a person can muster

B. Jesus wants us to see the possibilities of faith

1. A seed’s worth of faith is not all that much
2. Uprooting a tree is a figure of speech: not called to be conjurers or magicians
3. Faith in the power of God transcends human capabilities, Eph. 3:20-21
4. By faith in God we can perform even the superhuman act of forgiveness

III. Doing our duty, 7-10

A. What you accomplish

1. Jesus warns the disciples not to think they deserved praise, reward, or glory
2. Chrysostom: one of the greatest enemies of a truly faithful disciple is the “pursuit of human glory” (Jeffrey, *Luke*, p. 208)

3. Many people are driven to “do something significant” or “to change the world” or to “make a difference” – although noble, such an attitude deep inside may just be seeking recognition
4. But a servant should not expect accolades, applause, or even thanks
5. Whatever we do or accomplish is only doing what we are told
6. The servants don’t get glory; a servant can make no claims on the master; he is, after all, only a servant
7. The world (employers, others, the government, civil institutions, etc.) doesn’t owe you anything; God doesn’t owe you anything

B. A precursor to The Pharisee and the Publican?

1. The Pharisee demanded recognition because of his “righteousness”
2. The Publican came to God only with an attitude of humility
3. Even works of kindness and compassion are only our duty
4. Spiritual maturity demands self-effacement and humility, not self-glorification
5. We must be humble and content knowing that we have done what is expected

Conclusion:

1. Resist temptations; the devil will flee from you, James 4:8.
2. Forgive as you have been forgiven, Ephesians 4:32.
3. Exercise your faith; you don’t need a lot, but it needs to be active.
4. Do your duty: fulfill your obligations to God and to others.
5. Should glory come your way, it will be because God has said to you on the Last Day, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”
6. With that we can be content.