

OPTIONLESS

If anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do (Colossians 3:13).

This title expresses how I feel about God's command concerning forgiveness. Many of us grew up with the doctrine of free-will. We seem to think that we live in a neutral zone with the ability to opt for or against what the Lord commands us. I disagree with this. He is our Sovereign Lord!

The Lord has commanded us to forgive those who trespass against us. We have the ability to forgive because of the power of His indwelling Spirit.

Let us take a look at a few verses of what the Lord says about forgiveness. Matthew 6:14-15 says, "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Here, He emphasizes that we must forgive. In Matthew 18:21-35, there is the story of a king who forgave one of his servants of a huge debt when that servant asked him for leniency. The same servant went out from a place of matchless mercy and found a fellow servant who owed him a pittance. He seized that servant by the throat and demanded payment. Although that servant begged him as he himself had previously begged the king, he found no mercy in his heart for his fellow man. Let us take up the story in Matthew 18:34-35, and it reads "and his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. 'So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.'" This story shows us that when we imprison others by unforgiveness, we ourselves are also imprisoned by it!

Colossians 3:12-13 brings us more of the same truth, and it reads, "therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do." This is an imperative. He tells us (you) put on these necessary qualities in order to walk in forgiveness. Then He says "even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do."

There is no option not to forgive!

In Christ,
Pastor Don