

- A one-off on forgiving others, following on from issues raised by the Lord's Prayer series in the Autumn of 2008...

Chat with the Children

- Chat about being **forced** to say sorry...
 - and then about being **forced** to say "I forgive you"
- Jesus **chose** to forgive us, through the Cross
 - Jesus **invites** us to forgive others, as a response

Forgive and Forget?

- Sermon on Lord's Prayer, "as we have forgiven our debtors"...
 - **forgiveness should be grateful**: out of thankfulness that we have been forgiven
 - **forgiveness should be generous**:
 - **forgiveness should be gritty**:

What Forgiveness is Not

1. Approval of what they did

- Jesus forgave the woman caught in adultery, but he didn't approve of what she had done

2. Excusing what they did

- eg Moses appealing to God on behalf of the people when they had worshipped the golden calf:
 - he appealed to God's mercy, not seeking to excuse what they did
 - eg, their upbringing made them do it...

3. Justifying what they did

- To justify - to show something to be right or reasonable
 - eg, they were trying to be kind/good/whatever...

4. Pardoning what they did

- A legal letting off, freeing the offender from the consequences of their action
 - that's why we will not ask that, eg, a rapist be let off legal sentence for their actions - they need to pay their debt to society, they may still be a danger to others...
 - but we may forgive them

5. Reconciliation

- Takes two to reconcile - may be our ultimate hope, even if only realised in heaven:
 - but forgiveness does not instantly mean reconciliation

6. Denying what they did

- Really repressing - perhaps because facing something that has happened is too difficult or painful
 - often unconscious - contrast next one...
 - eg child abuse...
 - forgiveness will not be achieved by repressing, but but (however uncomfortably) facing the fact that this person actually did or said this...

7. Blindness to what happened

- A conscious choice to pretend it didn't happen:

8. Forgetting

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9. Refusing to take the wrong seriously

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10. Pretending we are not hurt

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What Forgiveness Is

1. Being aware of what someone has done and still forgiving them

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2. It is a choice to keep no record of wrongs

- To not count what they did - which we know - against them

3. Refusing to punish

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4. Not telling what they did

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5. Being merciful

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6. Graciousness

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7. It is an inner condition

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8. It is an absence of bitterness

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9. Forgiving God

- Always a struggle to know why God permits evil
- question is will we trust him

10. Forgiving ourselves

- "I can't forgive myself".... we need to learn to

Conclusion

- Hard - but incredibly worthwhile:
 - for ourselves
 - for those we forgive
 - for the health of God's people