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Forgiveness and Freedom

Theme Text: 2 Corinthians 2:5-11

Key Points:

1. Forgiveness _____ God's Grace.

Paul wants the Corinthians to know that what they had done was right, but now the time had come to forgive and receive this man back into the fellowship of the church. *Forgiveness in that case displays the mercy of God.* Consider David's words in Psalm 103:8-9.

"The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever;"

2. Forgiveness _____.

True forgiveness restores. Look how Paul puts it in verses 7-8:

"Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him."

3. Forgiveness _____ the Character of Christ.

Five times in verse 10 Paul uses the words "forgive" or "forgiven."

"If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake."

He's saying, "We're all in this together—you, me, and the man who sinned." All of us stand in desperate need of the grace of God.

4. Forgiveness _____ Satan's Schemes.

Paul ends his appeal by reminding his readers of the high price of unforgiveness. We forgive **"in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes"** (v. 11).

The word "schemes" speaks of a military strategy. It has the idea of an enemy force of commandos that under cover of darkness slips behind our lines and sets up a camp.

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS AND PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Personal Life:

1. Why do people find it so difficult to forgive those who have hurt them?
2. Remember a time when someone forgave you. How did you feel?
3. Remember a time when you forgave someone. How did you feel?

Ponderings:

(Questions based on theme text—2 Corinthians 2:5-11)

4. How had this person's actions affected the church?
5. What might this person have done?
6. What can we learn from this passage about forgiveness?
7. What is the relationship between forgiveness and comfort?
8. What does this teach us about what true forgiveness looks like?
9. What can we learn about this person from the fact that he demonstrated "excessive sorrow?"
10. Explain the phrase "what I have forgiven... has been for your sake in the presence of Christ."
11. Based on the context, what schemes was Satan plotting in the Corinthian church?

Promptings:

12. What is the result of unforgiveness? Why should believers forgive?
13. Is there someone you need to forgive?