

**FORGIVENESS IS FREE, Ephesians 4:32**  
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**Introduction:** This is the second in a series of *Chats of Cheer* messages. The purpose of these special sermons is two fold: the first is to encourage all believers in the stress of daily Christ-centered living that they may go through and the second is to present to the non-believer some of the personal blessings they will continue to miss until they become a Christian by personally trusting Christ as their redeemer.

The first message in this series was BE OF GOOD CHEER. The remaining are: FORGIVENESS IS FREE, SALVATION IS SIMPLE, ACCEPTANCE IS ARRANGED, GRACE IS GREATER, PARDON IS POSSIBLE, HEAVEN IS HOPEFUL, DESTINY IS DETERMINED, PRAYER IS POSSIBLE, REJECTION IS REJECTED, AND DIRECTION IS DETERMINED.

Nothing can bring cheer to the lives of believers more than knowing that they can be forgiven and that it is universally available for free!

**FORGIVENESS IS FREE, Ephesians 4:32**

- I. **THE DEFINITION OF FORGIVENESS:** The concept of forgiveness comprises the whole of scripture, yet the word is used only about one hundred times in the scriptures. The primary Greek New Testament word used for forgive is *aphiemi* and means to "send away", and "remit a debt". Theologically it means to completely cancel our debt of sin against God's Holy character. In doing so, God removes the penalty and punishment due a sinful person by making sufficient payment at Calvary. This payment is made by God and thus the only possible payment that is satisfactory to Himself. Remission of sin is solely based on the vicarious (Christ's death has value on our behalf) and propitiatory (Christ's death satisfied the righteous wrath of God against the sinner) sacrifice of Christ.
  
- II. **THE DOCTRINE OF FORGIVENESS: Ephesians 4:30**
  - A. The truth of the text - The Apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesian believers first reminded them doctrinally that their redemption was by God's grace and without human merit in part or in whole (chapters 1-3), and second rebuked them for their conduct and challenged them to "walk worthy" of being in Christ (chapters 4-6).

- B. The teaching of the text – By not appreciating the forgiveness of God, the Ephesian believers in their lives were taking advantage of God’s good grace, 4:30, and were grieving (distressing and causing sorrow) the Holy Spirit of God.
- C. The test of the text – Grieving the Holy Spirit, in this passage, is related to the temperament of believers. The specific items mentioned, in this passage, that grieve God are resentment, anger, violent and heated arguments, and speech that injures others.
- D. While forgiveness is free, it is also anticipated that a changed life will be demonstrated in behavior. Forgiveness is not to be considered cheap just because it is free.

### III. THE DUTY OF FORGIVENESS: Ephesians 4:31

- A. The duty of forgiveness is to consciously allow God to change one’s heart from self-centeredness to a gracious tender one.
- B. A tender and kind believer will forgive others as God has forgiven them. To fail to do this is as unacceptable to God as it is often acceptable within the body of believers.
- C. The text presents a little understood foundation of the gospel; namely, that God does not forgive (put away) our sins because of the importance of the individual. The Father forgives us for Christ’s sake! His strong reaction against the continued carry over of a carnal selfish life style in believers is because that life style is really an action against the very character of Christ!

### IV. THE DEMONSTRATION OF FORGIVENESS: Matthew 18:21,35; Luke 17:35

- A. Forgiveness is granted on two conditions, repentance and confession. When these are present there is no limit to God’s forgiveness, nor should there be in believers.
- B. The teaching of Christ about forgiveness includes:
  1. forgiveness is not because of the law, 18:15-19
  2. forgiveness is because of love, 18:21-27
  3. forgiveness is not part of a “louse”, 18:28
  4. forgiveness is not to be limited, (1-600,000), 18:28
  5. forgiveness is a lesson to be learned, 18:32-35
- C. Human forgiveness identifies a believer with Christ. Failure to forgive is non-Christian, un-Christian and anti-Christian. It is the ultimate demonstration against Christ!