

Gathering

FORGIVENESS

Felipe Concha, soldier in charge, Red Bank Corps

Imagine your heart was a balloon. Each time someone wrongs you and you keep it inside and do not forgive them. Then your heart begins to be filled with anger, frustration, and sadness. Imagine you keep doing this, over and over again. With each experience of wrong, you keep on filling your heart. Eventually, your heart won't be able to take it anymore and it will explode leading you to act in a way that now will make you the wrongdoer causing others pain and suffering.

Mark 11:25 says, *“And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins”*

Forgiveness is not easy, no one ever said that it was. Even the disciples struggled to understand it. Peter asked Jesus: how many times should I forgive? Seventy times seven Jesus said, insisting that there must be no limits to forgiveness because forgiveness is not a matter of math, but a matter of the Christian heart. (*Matthew 18:21-22*)

Forgiveness is at the center of our faith; it is a choice we make (*Colossians 3:13*). Just like we choose to follow Jesus, we must choose to forgive. Forgiveness is extending mercy, that undeserved gift we have received from God through Jesus who died on the cross to forgive us from ALL of our sins. So, as we have been forgiven, we must forgive others. God honors our commitment to follow his commands and it is through Him and him alone that we will find peace in forgiving those that have done wrong against us.

After reading this scripture consider these questions:

- Have you experienced in fullness the forgiveness that Jesus offers? How has your life been changed because of it?
- Are you, like Peter, wondering how many more times you should forgive that person or situation in order to justify your response?
- What do you need to hear from Jesus today that will help you step in faith into forgiving others so you can enjoy peace away from grudge and resentment?
- Are you willing to choose forgiveness today, give it all to Jesus to deal with, and experience the full blessings of the Holy Spirit in your life?

Complete your monthly report and turn it in to the Corps Officer.

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Jesus calls us to forgive others so our Father in heaven may forgive us. This is a call for us all to live in humble obedience and surrender to God, believing that he knows and sees all things. God is telling us today that in order to experience the fullness of His Glory, we need to forgive others as He has forgiven us.

READ MATTHEW 18:21 – 25

- What do you think Jesus was trying to teach the disciples?
- What is Jesus trying to teach you today?

READ LUKE 15: 11 – 32

- Which son's behaviors represent you today?
- How do you feel when others undeservedly experience the gift of forgiveness, even when you think it is not fair?

READ JOHN 8:1 – 11

- What is the example that Jesus is giving us about forgiveness?
- Are you willing to be a living example of the forgiveness you have received to those around you?



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