

Guarding the Doors #5

Monday-

The story of Jacob and Esau is one of those stories every younger sibling loves to hear. Esau, the older brother, has earned the family blessing given by his father just by being the oldest. Jacob, the younger brother figures out a way, with the help of his mother, to steal that blessing. I mean what younger sibling wouldn't be excited that he pulled one over on their older sibling? This story can be found in Gen. 27. But most people stop there and do go on to see how Esau handled the situation. He had every right to be mad at his brother and despise him. But Esau chose to forgive his brother and move on.

Read Gen. 33:1-15

-If you were Esau how do you think you would have responded to what Jacob did?

-In your own personal life has there been some offense, which up until this point, has been too hard for you to forgive?

-Has there been a point in your life where you have needed forgiveness from someone but did not receive it? Or you were too afraid to ask for it? Why?

Tuesday-

In Gen. 37 we find that Jacob's (who we learned about yesterday) jealousy runs in the family. Jacob's youngest son Joseph was his pride and joy and Joseph's brothers knew that their father favored him. Their jealousy was so bad that one day they sold Joseph into slavery and told their father that he was killed by an animal. Once again we see that one of God's children is faced with how to handle this idea of forgiveness. What Joseph's brothers didn't know was that God blessed Joseph through the years and Joseph was soon made the King's right hand man. Joseph's brothers, who did not know what happened to Joseph after they sold him, one day entered before the king's right hand man to ask for a favor. See how Joseph handles this situation.

Read Gen. 45:1-15

-What do you think was going through Joseph's mind as he was being sold by his brothers?

-How do you find it in yourself to let go of past offenses even though you "deserve" to hang on to them?

-What do you feel God is trying to teach you with this whole idea of forgiveness?

Wednesday-

When someone has wronged you have you ever hoped something bad would happen to them? You personally have forgiven them but in your head you say '...but if something happens to them I wouldn't be upset about it'. If you are like most people the thought at least crosses your mind, if only for a moment. I think that is the human nature in us all. The worst part about it is if something bad actually does happen to them, we feel absolutely horrible. God calls us to be better than that. Once forgiven it is then to be forgotten.

Read Numbers 12:1-13

-Do you think you would have been upset if something bad happened to someone who was talking about you in a bad way?

-In your life does forgiving someone mean that the offense is completely forgotten?

-Do you tend to meditate on an offense committed towards you over and over again?

-What can you do in your life to start forgiving and forgetting? What specific things can you ask God to help you with when it comes to forgiveness?

Thursday-

In today's world the motto an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is very popular. We feel that people get what they deserve. If we look through the Bible we see that even though the world may see things that way God does not.

Read 2 Samuel 16:5-14 (The act committed)
2 Samuel 19:18-23 (The response given)

-Do you ever feel you are a prisoner of unforgiveness? Why?

-Why do you think it is so hard to forgive someone?

-Would you have done what David did?

-Do you agree or disagree with what David did? Why or why not?

Friday-

I think, as Christians, one of the things that we forget is that God forgives us on a daily basis. We continue to mess up yet God continues to love us. Don't you think we should give others the same benefit that God gives us? Maybe you struggle with forgiving yourself even though God has already forgiven you. Do

you realize that nothing you can do can ever come between you and the love God has for you?

Read Romans 8: 31-39

-Do you find it hard to forgive yourself when you mess up? Why?

-What did God give up so that we may be forgiven?

-What is the hardest part for you about asking forgiveness from other? From God?

Saturday

So what do we do about people who have done something wrong and it keeps bugging us but they don't even know about it? Or they might know about it but have done nothing to make it right? This is something I struggle with often.

Read Matthew 18:15-20 (This is how we are to go about it)

Matthew 18:21-35 (This is how we are to forgive)

-Are there still issues in your life that you need to deal with when it comes to forgiveness?

-Do you need to seek others out to ask for forgiveness?

-Do you need to ask God for forgiveness?

-Are there people in your life who have asked for forgiveness but you have not given it?