

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Luke 17:1-6.**
- B. So many things to do and so little time!
- C. This morning's thoughts from the word of God revolve around some things that really matter.
Incorporate these things into your life and life will get better.

I. **FIRST, FORGIVENESS (Luke 17:1-6).**

- A. It is a serious offense to cause another person to stumble. In effect, Jesus is saying that if you cause another to fall away from Him, it would be better if you had never lived!
- B. The term "little ones" (17:2), Jesus was referring not only to children, but young believers as well.
- C. But if a brother/sister sins against you (17:3), the right thing to do, is to go to them and work the matter out. Rebuke, if necessary, but go to that individual (Mt. 18:15ff) and come to an agreement.
- D. How often are we to do this? If they repent, as often as seven times a day (17:4).
Forgiveness is something that we all want, but may find it difficult to give!
- E. The idea is that we are to be in the habit of forgiving. Jesus is probably using hyperbole here (exaggerating to make a point). Agape love keeps to record of wrongs (1Cor. 13:4-6).
- F. When you pray to God, forgive (Mk. 11:25) so that he will forgive your sins too.
"And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions."
- G. Forgiveness is more than just words. Children will be forced to say they are sorry for what they have done, but don't feel any remorse in their heart. Christians are to forgive from the heart as they do their Xian service from the heart (Rom. 6:17; Eph. 6:6; 1Pet. 1:22).
(Rom 6:17) But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,
(Eph 6:6) not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.
(1Pet 1:22) Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,
- H. The apostles ask that Jesus "increase their faith" (17:5). Jesus speaks of the mustard seed in showing that if their faith is alive, like that of a growing mustard seed they will be able to do great things, even forgive their brother again and again.

II. **SECOND, FAITHFULNESS (Luke 17:7-10).**

- A. We pray to have enough faith to get us through the difficult times, but we also need faith to do the everyday "routine" things of life.
- B. A faithful servant should not expect any special reward, since he did what he was told to do. You cannot earn a gift, and that is what salvation is, a gift of God (Eph. 2:8,9).
For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.
- C. There are two extremes to avoid:
 - 1. Working out of a sense of duty (because one "has to").
 - 2. Working because we hope to gain a reward (a selfish approach).
- D. Rather let me suggest that one should work as a servant because it is something that we love to do, and delight in it! See Psa. 40:8; Jn. 14:15; 1Jn. 5:3.
(Psa. 40:8) "I delight to do Thy will, O my God; Thy Law is within my heart."
(Jn 14:15) "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."
(1Jn 5:3) For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

- E. Faithfulness is an attitude that allows one to do the everyday things of the Xian life and enjoy them. Notice the following passages; Lk. 16:10; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:2; Rev. 2:10; and my favorite of these is Rev. 17:14 which tells of a 3-fold description of a Xian.
(Lk 16:10) “He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.”
(Eph 1:1) to the saints who are at Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus:
(Col 1:2) to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae:
(Rev 2:10) ‘Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.’
(Rev 17:14) “These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful.”
- F. Faithfulness keeps one going no matter the circumstances because it is not based in reward but in the pleasure of doing it.

III. **THIRD, THANKFULNESS (Luke 17:11-19).**

- A. Ten lepers, standing at a distance, knew that Jesus had mastery over their physical problems. They called Him, “Master” a title meaning “chief commander.”
- B. You would think, that as Jesus did the impossible in their lives, that they would be overflowing with gratitude. Yet, only 1 of the 10 came back to say thanks.
- C. Warren Wiersbe said it this way, “What is your GQ--Gratitude Quotient?” Do you often take your blessings for granted? Are we content to enjoy the gift and forget the Giver? At times are we quick to pray, and slow to praise?
- D. A brother asked me once, “How are you doing?” I replied, “**Not as good as I would like, but better than I deserve.**”
- E. Notice the following verses in the Psalms on giving praise and thanks: 107:8,15,21,31.
Let them give thanks to the LORD for His lovingkindness, And for His wonders to the sons of men!
- F. God does so many wonderful things each day, and the world does not pause to give thanks:
 1. He gives the sun and rain and the change of seasons.
 2. He gives water, food, clothing, and shelter.
 3. He has given His Son as a ransom for many.
 4. He providentially blesses the world in all ways.
 5. He is being long-suffering toward us that we might be saved.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. There are many important Xian characteristics we must cultivate into our life.
- B. This morning I have focused on 3 very important ones:
 1. Forgiveness.
 2. Faithfulness.
 3. Thankfulness.
- C. Take a minute and think about some situations in your life right now. And then ponder as to how you can take these three Xian qualities and apply them in those situations. If you do that you will be doing the right thing!
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.