**Messages Series: Answering Tough Questions**

**Garry Parker August 21, 2016**

**How Do We Forgive…Completely?**

Philemon 1:8-22

**Key Truth:** It takes Faith, Love, and Obedience to forgive!

1. What is Forgiveness?

 A. An Act of Love.

 B. Removing yourself from focusing on the past.

 C. Opportunity for growth.

 D. An act of wisdom.

2. What does Scripture say about forgiving?

 A. Wholly and completely. (Ephesians 4:32

 B. Not held against you.

 C. Clear and free for God to order the steps.

 D. Willingness to move forward. (Matthew 6:14)

3. What are the steps to completely forgive?

 A. Faith, love, and obedience.

 B. Vertical Forgiveness (Mark 11:24-25)

 C. Horizontal Forgiveness (Luke 17:3-4)

**Conclusion**: It takes Faith, Love, and Obedience to forgive. Repentance is the offender’s responsibility…forgiveness is our responsibility. Who do you need to really forgive? It’s time now to forgive and grow.

**Food for Thought for the week of August 21, 2016**

**(Questions and Scriptures for further study)**

**Who should forgive?**

Read: Matthew 6:14-15. Jesus intended for those whom He forgave to themselves be forgiving people. Whatever we have suffered at the hands of other people Jesus suffered it first (Heb. 2:5–18; 4:14–15). So close is the relationship between our being forgiven and our forgiving that Jesus based one on the other.

The message is that those of us who have experienced God’s forgiveness will be people predisposed to forgiving. That is not to say it is always easy but we will, with God’s help, be able to forgive those who have wronged us.

**Forgiveness Is a Promise**

Never forget that fact. When our God forgives us, He promises that He will not remember our sins against us anymore.

**Question:** Can God, who knows all things—past, present, and future—ever, forget anything? How can He forget our sins? **Answer**: He doesn’t.

**Question:** But doesn’t it say, “He won’t remember our sins?”

**Answer:** Yes, it does, but that’s not the same thing as *forgetting* them. The omniscient God who created and sustains the universe does not forget, but He can choose to “not remember.” You see, forgetting is passive and is something that we human beings, not being omniscient, do. “Not remembering” is active; it is a promise whereby one person (in this case, God) determines not to remember the sins of another *against him*. To “not remember” is simply a graphic way of saying; “I will not bring up these matters to you or others in the future. I will bury them and not exhume the bones to beat you over the head with them. I will never use these sins against you.” Now that is true and complete forgiveness!