

3. FORGIVENESS IS CONDITIONAL

1. Very popular among Christians is the idea of "unconditional forgiveness." We are told that Jesus forgave his murderers "unconditionally" from the cross (Luke 23:34). We must examine this teaching in the light of Scripture.

A basic principle — we ought not go beyond what Scripture enjoins — even if it seems an appropriate extrapolation from Scripture.

2. What about Jesus' alleged "unconditional forgiveness" of his murderers from the cross? "*Father, forgive them for they know not what they do*" (Luke 23:34).
 - a. A declaration of forgiveness or a prayer? (cf. Mark 2:5,9; Luke 7:48)

 - b. What's going on here? (cf. Acts 2:23–39; Zech. 12:10; Acts 3:17–19)

3. What about other kinds of "forgiveness-without-repentance?"

4. Is there a legitimate concern behind these unbiblical "solutions?" Yes, our heart-attitude toward those who have offended, but have not (yet) repented. Consider Mark 11:25.

5. Another line of biblical instruction tells against the idea of "unconditional forgiveness" — Jesus' teaching on the four-step process of church discipline in Matthew 18:15ff.

6. The pattern of God's forgiveness (Eph. 4:32). Is God's forgiveness "unconditional?"

Luke 24:46–47

Acts 2:38

Acts 17:30–31

WCF 15.1. Repentance unto life is an evangelical grace, the doctrine whereof is to be *preached* by every minister of the gospel, *as well as that of faith* in Christ.

2. By it, a sinner, out of the sight and sense not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, as contrary to the holy nature, and righteous law of God; and upon the apprehension of his mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, so grieves for, and hates his sins, as to turn from them all unto God, purposing and endeavoring to walk with him in all the ways of his commandments.

3. *Although repentance be not to be rested in, as any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of the pardon thereof, which is the act of God's free grace in Christ; yet it is of such necessity to all sinners, that none may expect pardon without it.*

7. "Must I go to another about every offense? Must there be rebuking, repenting, and forgiving over everything that happens?" (cf. 1 Pet. 4:8; Prov. 17:9)

8. Conclusion: