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## Sermon of the Week

# Forgiving and Forgiven



**Theme:** Forgiving and forgiven

**Object:** Offering envelope or \$5 bill, Construction paper heart, Washable marker that contrasts with the heart, Contact paper or laminator, Small tub of soapy water OR wet paper towel or wipes

**Scripture:** "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:23 (NIV)

(Cut out a construction paper heart. Then laminate it or cover it with Contact paper, trimming the edges to just around the heart.)

I'm sure you all know what this is. (Hold up your offering envelope.) It is my offering envelope. Every week I bring an offering as a gift to God -- it is a very important part of our worship. Most of you have probably brought your offering today too. There are many places in the Bible that teach us the importance of presenting an offering to God, but the truth is that God is more interested in what's in our heart than He is in what's in our hand. (Show kids the heart.)

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "If you are presenting your offering to God and you remember that you have said something that hurt another person, leave your gift at the altar and go and ask forgiveness from that person. Then come back and offer your gift to God."

Before we give our offering today, perhaps we should ask ourselves a few questions. Have I been angry with someone this week? (Scribble on the heart.) Have I had any arguments lately? (Scribble on the heart.) Have I called someone a bad name? (Scribble on the heart.) Have I said something about someone that wasn't true? (Scribble on the heart.)

What happened to our heart? (Allow responses.)

If we have hurt someone, we should ask God to forgive us and we should go to the person we have hurt and ask them to forgive us. (Wipe the scribbles off the heart.) When we have done that, God will be pleased with our heart and with our offering.

Pray: Dear God, sometimes we say things in anger that hurt other people. Help us to guard against hateful and hurtful words and forgive us as we ask those we have hurt to forgive us as well. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

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