

Wrapped in Forgiveness

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 08 December 2019

Preacher: Jim Masters

[0:00] Please turn in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 18. Matthew chapter 18, starting in verse 21.

If you're visiting with us, that black Bible in the chair in front of you, you can pull that out and go to page 15 to the back of that Bible, because they remember the New Testament.

The back of that Bible, page 15, you'll find Matthew chapter 18. Matthew 18, starting in verse 21.

Matthew 18, 21. All the way to chapter 19, verse 2.

I'm linking chapter 19, verse 1 and 2 with the last part or the rest of chapter 18. It just closes off this section. So chapter 18 of Matthew's gospel, starting in verse 21.

Then coming, Peter said to him, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?

[1:11] Seven times? Jesus said to him, I do not say to you seven times, but 77 times. For this reason, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

And when he began to settle, it was brought to him one who owed him 10,000 talents. But since he did not have the means to repay, his Lord commanded him to be sold along with the wife and the children and all that he had in repayment made.

Therefore, falling down, the servant prostrated himself before him saying, Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.

And feeling compassion, the Lord of that servant released him and forgave him the loan.

But that same servant going out found one of his fellow servants who owed him 100 denarii. And seizing him, he choked him saying, Pay back what you owe.

[2:27] Therefore, falling down, his fellow servant entreated him saying, Have patience with me and I will repay you. But he was unwilling. But going out, he threw him into prison until he should pay back what was owed.

Therefore, seeing all that had taken place, his fellow servants were deeply grieved. And going, they reported to their Lord all that had happened. Verse 32, Then summoning him, his Lord said to him, Wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you entreated me.

Is it not necessary that you also should have had mercy on your fellow servant even as I had mercy on you and becoming angry? His Lord delivered him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him.

In the same way also, my Father who is in heaven will do to you if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.

You may have watched a couple months ago the emotional court video dated October 2nd of this year.

[3:54] The brother of murdered Botham Jean hugged the ex-police officer, Amber Geiger. She shot and killed his brother in his own apartment.

Minutes before, in the video, the brother, his name is Brendan, if I'm saying that right, told her he forgave her and he actually asked the judge if he could give her a hug.

And so the judge gave him permission so he got up, went to her, he embraced her crying and she was deeply crying herself. Later in the video, the judge of the court actually got up and read scripture to Geiger giving her the gospel.

It's an emotional scene. If you just Google Botham Amber Court Video, something like that, if you just Google that, you probably will find the video and there's a short video but there's a longer one that I saw two months ago.

Brendan, the brother, before he hugged her, he told her he wanted the best for her and he wanted her to give her life to Christ. And he said, immediately as I began to study this section on forgiveness, that was the first thing that came to my mind was this kid, Brendan.

[5:31] He's like in his 20s, I think. Matthew's calling us to bow down and worship Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, the King of Israel.

And today as we respond that way to Jesus, it's all going to be wrapped in forgiveness. I actually thought about putting it wrapped in the tortilla of forgiveness, which I'll still use that.

Don't worry. In honor of Matthias. Wrapped in forgiveness. Wrapped in forgiveness.

Or you can think of this, this section is just forgiveness. Forgiveness. Remember the goal. The goal is total restoration and reconciliation.

So the overriding response and top rule within the faith community is forgiveness. It's all wrapped in the tortilla of forgiveness. God showed humility and hospitality in the gospel forgiving sinners.

[6:33] You have the beans, you have the meat, you have the guacamole, you have the cheese, you have the rice, but you have to have the tortilla. It's all wrapped in that. That's what makes the burrito good on the salsa and the chorizo and everything else that Matthias and Vicente can think of.

They'll put in that burrito for you. But it's wrapped, and I get that picture. I want you to get that vivid picture in your mind that chapter 18, everything that's involved in 18, it's wrapped with a tortilla.

It's wrapped in forgiveness. God showed humility. God showed hospitality in the gospel forgiving sinners, and basically Jesus is saying, you go do likewise.

You go do likewise. You'll see Jesus gave the command to forgive, then he tells his story to further define the extent of our forgiveness.

With a humble, hospitable attitude, we're ready to forgive sins done against us. So what does true forgiveness look like? And what should be the attitude of a true, real Christian when it comes to sin done against them from another fellow Christian?

[7:50] We show the same kind of forgiving grace that God has shown us in Christ Jesus. Amen. See, this is why it's so vital for us to read verses 15 through 20 in its context.

Because you have verses 1 through 14 about a humble, welcoming God. And that we receive his people, his little ones, in that same way.

We don't despise them. We love them. And then you see forgiving grace in verses 21 to 35. You see this humble hospitality and then you see on the other side forgiving grace and then you see here in the middle you're dealing with sin.

Because it's wrapped in forgiveness. We are the Father's agents who seek out straying sheep.

We don't despise them. We love them. We love them. We love them. We love them. We love them. We love them like he does. We go after them. That's what the Father did with us.

[9:05] The story in verse 12 through 14. The Father did that with you. The Father did it with me. He ran after you. Should we not do that with each other?

And remember this is in the context of a local church. We brought that up last week. So, going through the text.

How much forgiveness? Peter, probably speaking for the 12, said to him, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? He asked about the extent of forgiveness or rather what to do when there may be a repeating offender since Jesus mentioned dealing with it earlier.

Seven times? In other words, how many times should we do chapter 18 verse 15? Seven times?

Because he truly thought seven times would be adequate. The rabbis actually taught only three. So Peter's thinking, well, there's more than double. This guy's gotta be like, that's gotta be good.

[10:17] Seven times? How long do I need to keep forgiving my brother or sister in Christ? How many times?

How much forgiveness? That was the first point. Second point, unlimited forgiveness. Look at what Jesus says in verse 22. Jesus said to him, I do not say seven times, but literally it should read 77 times.

And not that Jesus was saying once it's 78, then forget it. Bets are all off. You're going down, buddy. It doesn't mean that. Jesus used hyperbole to emphasize that forgiveness should continue. Luke chapter 17, if your brother sins and he repents, you forgive him. If he does the same thing and he comes and repents, you forgive him again. It should be limitless because it should simply be a way of life for us as Christians.

One writer said, forgiveness must be unending. Since the Father has forgiven us of so much more than what a fellow disciple has done to us, I say that numerous times forgiveness.

[11:41] You will hear that many different ways and many different times, that phrase. Forgiveness, as God has forgiven, frees and empowers us to forgive others.

We are able and should be willing to forgive others in that same way. And remember, forgiveness is vital to our faith community because A, we live in a fallen world with a bunch of fallen sinful sinners who need to be forgiven and B, people will continue to be fallen sinful sinners who sin against us in many different ways.

That's not going to go away. And remember, we talked about this within the, Jesus is assuming this is taking place in a local church.

There's not a time where you leave a church because you can't reconcile. That's foreign to Jesus' thinking. It just doesn't happen. And yet that happens all the time in churches, doesn't it?

Everywhere. There's non-reconciliation? Gone. That makes no sense according to the Bible.

According to Jesus.

[13:01] Your response is forgiveness so that life continues as normal. At least it should. And then Jesus here in verses 23 all the way to verse 35, he tells a story.

He gives a parable to further define what true forgiveness looks like and how fellow disciples should respond to each other. We should be known as the people who show forgiveness among us.

We should be known that way within our community. And there's three different scenes. The king's compassion, the servant's lack of compassion, and the king's anger.

And we'll split it up in that way in three different parts. And Jesus does this on purpose because he's trying to motivate his hearers.

The parable should actually serve as a motivator towards forgiving others. If we don't forgive as we've been forgiven by our heavenly father, judgment awaits us, not mercy.

[14:11] That's a huge statement. The second statement goes along with it. It also serves as a way to snuff out hypocrisy and duplicity among those who proclaim to love and follow the Lord Jesus.

If we proclaim to follow and love the Lord Jesus and yet there's no forgiveness, your Christianity should be questioned and so should mine. The father has forgiven us so much more in comparison to the little minor, one writer put it like this, peanuts that our fellow brethren have done to us.

So it's a motivator. If we don't forgive as the father's forgiven us, judgment awaits and the second one goes along with it. It snuffs out hypocrisy and duplicity.

So notice how it begins. A massive debt is forgiven verses 23 to 27. This king, notice verse 23, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

The king depicts God. His slaves or servants depict his people. And the slaves here should be regarded more as like his officials.

[15:41] Slaves would not have been entrusted with so much money. So they were in his high office, his officials, maybe even his counselors, whichever the case may be, they were his servants.

They were close to the king. So he decided to settle accounts and when he had begun to settle, verse 24, it was brought to him and owed him 10,000 talents. One talent was worth six drachmas. So, the amount that this guy owed would have been equivalent to a labor working 60 million days or 193,000 years.

that's a pretty big loan that this guy took. I mean, he's had big business ideas, I guess. I don't know. I can start all these pizza huts all over the place.

It'd be perfect, really. one translation translated like this, zillions. Zillions of dollars.

[16:48] So the king legally could sell him. Notice what happens. Verse 25, since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him, he would sell wife, children, all he had in repayment made, which wouldn't even put a dent in it.

But to be in prison for debt was very common in the Greco-Roman world. So that way the person couldn't run off. The other one they owe you a bunch of money, well they couldn't just take off and leave.

You put them in jail and the others would pay the money for them. So notice, the huge debts conveyed, this guy owed, it conveyed the debt that we owe to God as sinners.

It's unimaginable. Huge debt we owe to God. We can never, it can never be repaid by us. It's completely and totally impossible. That's why we need God's grace.

That's what this depicts. How much we owe God. It can never be repaid. You can never pay back God.

[17:59] You know, it's almost ridiculous, crazy when people say that it's just about me being a good person and God's gonna weigh that.

That makes no sense. You have to be completely and totally absolutely perfect which is virtually completely and totally impossible.

You can never repay the debt. Never. Never. Notice verse 26. Therefore falling down the servant prostrated himself kneeling down.

Look at what he says here. Have patience with me and I will repay you everything. Well that's crazy. No you can't.

It was virtually impossible. But he came across to the king desperate wholeheartedly pleading and treating him be long suffering with me. Verse 27.

[19:09] This is the first word in the Greek. Feeling compassion. Splagna. Feeling compassion.

the Lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. He released him from going to prison and then he forgave the loan.

Which means he was totally free. No conditions or hesitation from the king. The servant asked and it was granted. and actually even asked this.

Specifically the servant didn't actually do this. But the king forgave him the loan. Now this would be shocking. A king displaying this kind of mercy yet this is God's compassion towards sinners in Christ.

This is how God shows compassion. When you respond in repentant faith and trust in Jesus God forgives you of all your sin past, present, and future. Everything is wiped away.

[20:16] You're forgiven totally. Guilt is gone. You're reconciled with the father. You're one of his own. You must respond and trust Christ.

Trust Christ and you'll be forgiven. Trust Christ and all your sins will be washed away. Trust Christ and you'll have the assurance that God forgives you.

That huge debt that you owe. Isn't that good? That's why Jesus died. He took upon himself that loan, that weight, that debt so you can be set free when you put your trust in him alone.

And trust in him is not just necessary, it's sufficient. a massive debt is forgiven. A massive debt is forgiven.

But now a meager debt is unforgiven. 28 to 30. Notice how the storyline shifts.

[21:23] But that servant stands in major contrast to the king's compassion. That servant going out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii.

Chump change. A few bucks, so to speak, compared to what he owed the king. And look at his, look at his actions.

Seizing him, he choked him. Saying, pay back what you owe. Seizing him, he choked him. Pay me back. And now, he's assaulting his fellow servant, demanding him to be repaid.

Demanding that he repay him. The king didn't even do that to him. And then look at his fellow servant. Verse 29.

Therefore, falling down, that sounds familiar like we've read that before. Exactly. Falling, therefore, falling down, his fellow servant entreated him, and notice what he says, have patience with me, be long-suffering, like he mentioned that to the king, this first servant, and I will repay you.

[22:46] Interesting. He doesn't say, I'll repay you everything, like the first servant said. He doesn't say that. The fellow servant does almost the exact, says almost the exact same thing, but the first servant said he would pay back everything, which was impossible.

This one's answer implied a partial repayment, or that he would pay what he could. So in other words, this fellow servant, the second guy, was almost more honest with his answer.

Verse 30. But he was unwilling. But going out, he threw him into prison until he should pay back what was owed.

He refuted merciful forgiveness and had him thrown into prison simply for 100 denarii. One writer says, this first servant was forgiven 579 times the amount he refused to forgive his fellow servant. He was forgiven zillions, but he refused to forgive mere peanuts. The first servant did not do to his fellow servant what was done to him.

[24:08] Remember Matthew 7, verse 12, do unto others you have them do unto you. One writer says this, he, quote, hypocritically accepts mercy but is not willing to grant it to another.

End quote. His request for mercy and his act of kneeling down was nothing but a sham. He didn't really mean it.

It was all a hoax. It was all a sham. It was duplicity. He was being hypocritical. So meager debt is unforgiven.

Well notice what happens now. A massive forgiven debt is reversed. Verses 31 to 34. These fellow servants, verse 31, seen what had just taken place, they were deeply grieved.

Where were they? Were they around? We don't know. We don't know all the details. Jesus doesn't, he doesn't care about all these details but somehow these fellow servants caught wind or they actually saw what took place and they were deeply grieved, even horrified.

[25 : 32] Sometimes they seem but angry over how their fellow servant treated this one. They saw the first servant's hypocritical duplicity knowing that he should have responded with mercy as he was shown mercy.

I notice they went out, last part of verse 31, and reported to their Lord all that had happened. How the servant did not forgive the debt, threw him into prison, everything to base what they saw.

Look at this and this is what happened. Instead of showing great grace, mercy and forgiveness, he withheld it. And then look at, look at how the king responds.

Verse 32, summoning him, his Lord said to him, wicked slave. His true colors have been shown. His true character has been revealed to his Lord. The truth just came out. I forgave you all that debt because you entreated me.

[26 : 49] And here in the New American Standard, verse 33 says, should you not also, it actually should read like this, is it not necessary that you also to have had mercy? It's the Greek word day, which means it is necessary.

It must happen. And it's put in the negative. Should it not have happened, you would show mercy even as I had mercy on you? If the king had shown him such forgiving mercy, it was totally necessary for this servant to show that same mercy to another.

We are recipients of extraordinary, amazing mercy and grace in the Lord Jesus Christ. Brethren, why can't we get along and be forgiving?

It just doesn't make sense. One writer says, those who receive extraordinary grace should act in accordance with the grace they receive.

End quote. And look what happens in verse 34. Becoming angry, his Lord delivered him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him.

[28 : 17] Becoming angry, he reversed the forgiven debt. Handed him to the jailers, the torturers, to be severely punished for his lack of merciful forgiveness and you know what this depicts?

This depicts eternal judgment. That's what this depicts. He'd be tortured until repayment was made. You know, the irony is that this first servant was treated the very way he treated his fellow servant. How ironic. So this massive debt was forgiven, a meager debt is unforgiven, and now a massive forgiven debt is reversed.

And then look at Jesus' conclusion here. Verse 35. It says, in numeric incentive, so shall. Literally, it's like this.

in the same way also, which is even stronger. In the same way also, my Father who is in heaven will do to you if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.

[29 : 33] the Father will treat crafty, hypocritical, so-called Christians in this way.

Those who want to be shown mercy but are completely unwilling to show that same mercy towards fellow believers. And notice it's from the heart. Which means this truly happens.

So many times Jesus brings this up within Matthew's gospel happening from the heart because from the heart the mouth speaks. So it's truly something that happens. It's really there.

It's genuine. The Father's actions will replicate the Lord's action against this servant because, as one writer put it, quote, his plea for mercy was a hoax.

It was all a sham. He didn't mean any of this. This servant would never be able to repay his Lord.

[30 : 39] This is why this depicts eternal hell. I mean, you think about it. How can we presume upon God to forgive us the huge debt owed to Him which cost Him the death of His eternal Son all the while we're unwilling to forgive a fellow Christian, pastor, church member, etc.

We should be known to act like this, friends. That's why it was in my prayer, at the end of my prayer, that we would be known as a humble, serving, gracious, forgiving church in the Verde Valley.

We'd be known as that. when conflict happens and it will happen, when you put two humans together, conflict is bound to happen and we're unwilling to show mercy and grace to each other, forgiving each other and moving forward, we're in danger of showing our true hearts and we're in danger of God's judgment.

judgment. We forgive each other because God has forgiven us so much.

So, no offense against us is too great or can even compare to the weight of sin we've been forgiven by God. no offense, no sin compares nothing.

[32 : 16] That's what Jesus is saying because the cost is eternal damnation in hell. That's the cost. Now, should we allow our church family to be disrupted by sins and offenses?

Well, of course not. Remember Jesus said in chapter 18 verse 7, offenses are inevitable. Conflict is going to happen.

I mean, it's just the nature of part of being a fallen humanity. We have conflict. So, should we allow our church family to be disrupted by sins?

No, of course not. We need to deal with that. Yet, at the same time, we should, by God's grace and power, resolve those offenses with a merciful, forgiving attitude.

And we forgive each other wholeheartedly from the heart so that life and our relationship with each other returns to normal. There's no grudges. You just return to normal.

[33 : 20] Life as it was. as I was going through this, studying through this, it triggered my thinking.

I think it was maybe a year, a year and a half, maybe two years ago. We went through peacemaker things and there was actually a message that I had on forgiveness and I went, oh, I'm gonna bring these things.

These are really good. Great reminders for me. Great reminders for all of us. So I'm like, oh, put those up there. five essentials to forgiveness. What are five essentials to forgiveness for us to grab a hold and to remember?

Five essentials. Here's number one. We can't forgive in our own strength. We read Ephesians chapter four, verse 30. Don't grieve the Holy Spirit.

We need the power of the Spirit to help us forgive. You can't do this on your own. God, I need you to help me to forgive.

[34 : 22] I need your grace. Spirit, work in me to be able to let those things go and forgive. It's only by God's grace and remembering Christ. So the first essential to forgiveness, we can't forgive in our own strength.

Here's number two. Forgiveness is not a feeling, not forgetting, and not excusing. Forgiveness is not necessarily a feeling.

Be careful. Feelings are deceitful. They don't portray truth necessarily. Feeling, excuse me, forgiveness is not a feeling, not forgetting, and not excusing.

It's an act of the will in obedience to God and His Word. The feelings will follow. And if we wait for the feelings to come, we might never obey God's command.

You can't put your hope in feelings. It's not forgetting. Well, you just forgive and forget. You've heard that, right?

[35 : 52] Fine. I snap at you. I say a negative comment to you. You used to have a negative comment to me. That's one thing.

We got it. Physical abuse? Sexual abuse? Forgive and forget. Yeah, right.

Are you kidding me? Adultery? That's another thing, man. Oh, you just need to forgive and forget. Oh, yeah, come here, buddy, let me slap you.

It still hurts, right? Doesn't it? But forgiveness is not just a past event, it's an ongoing process into the future.

Because we can be tempted to slip into bitterness in the future. When we see the person, when we start thinking about how they've offended us, sinned against us, then the root of bitterness can well up inside.

[37 : 08] And then we end up piling that sin on top of old sins. And thus it makes it more difficult for us to cancel the debt and forgive. This is why we forgive once and continue to forgive the same sin.

maybe a better phrase is forgive in order to forget. It's not feelings of not forgetting, but it's not excusing either.

Sin needs to be dealt with. It cannot be excused. And also included in this, forgiveness is immediate, but trust may take time.

Right? If I sin against you, then yes, you should forgive me, of course, but I also need to let time pass for trust to build once again.

So forgiveness is not the same as trust. Yet, having said that, we have to be careful that we don't withhold trust because that means we still haven't forgiven and we're holding a grudge.

[38:25] well, I don't trust you, so I'm going to, well, now you're not really forgiving, you see. If we love someone, we will do what we can to put the best possible interpretation on what she or he does.

whatever is of good report, whatever is good, excellent, praiseworthy, think about such things. It's hard to trust your offender again, but you can trust God. You can trust God to work through him or through her and to protect you from what God wants you to face, to protect you from what God wants you to face.

So forgiveness can be done in your own strength. It's not feelings, forgetting, or excusing. Number three, forgiveness is absorbing the cost of the sin myself.

Matthew 6, verse 12. When someone sins against us, there's a debt that needs to be paid.

[39:46] Will I make this person pay the cost or will I cancel the debt owed to me and absorb the cost upon myself?

Amen. Which leads to the fourth one. Forgiveness is motivated and based on the gospel. This is what we've been talking about since the very beginning of this message, right?

That's why we read from Ephesians just as God has forgiven you. We forgive because God's forgiveness motivates us to forgive.

This is really the only way you can forgive. This is really the only way there can be true forgiveness because Jesus has absorbed all our sin upon himself and upon us we get the forgiveness, grace and mercy and compassion of God.

He pours that on us. So that's why we're able to forgive each other in this way. We should set the example to the world, the world which watches us closely.

[40:55] We should the offenses that are against you are nothing in comparison to our sin against God which leads to the fifth one, number five.

Forgiveness is a decision modeled after God's forgiveness as far as the east is from the west, so far as I removed your transgressions from you. I will remember their sins no more, Jeremiah 31. Well, God knows everything.

He chooses not to remember. It's an act of the will. Whether you feel like it or not, we decide to obey God and thus forgive our offender.

The stronger the offense, the harder it is to forgive and exercise our will. That's very true. And then within this, number fifth point, forgiveness is a decision modeled after God's forgiveness.

And the peacemaker talks about the four promises of forgiveness. The four promises of forgiveness. I promise first, I promise I will not dwell on this incident.

[42:01] I promise I will not bring up this incident and use it against you. I promise I will not talk to others about this incident. Which goes back to Matthew 18 verse 15.

Your brother sins against you, you go and talk with a conversation between you and him only. This way. Not this way, and this way, and this way, and this way, and this way, no, this way. You go talk to that person.

And I will not talk to others about this incident. Bring this up with them. I won't dwell. I will bring this up and use it against you. I will talk to others about this incident. And the fourth promise, I will not allow this incident to stand between us or hinder our personal relationship.

That's a big one. forgiveness. Because there's forgiveness, but I don't want to talk to you ever again. How does that make sense?

it's something we need to practice, and it's not easy. Jesus never said it was going to be easy. Realize, too, the only way to grant true forgiveness is when the other person repents.

[43:15] We should always have the attitude of forgiveness, but real forgiveness happens when that person repents. They said, I've sinned against you. I repent. Please forgive me. Repentance brings true forgiveness.

I'm struck with chapter 19, verse 1 and 2, where Jesus still displays the very thing that he is commanding. Notice chapter 19, verse 1 and 2.

When Jesus finished these words, he departed from Galilee. He's making his trek to Judea. The crucifixion is in full view now. He came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan, and great

multitudes follow him, and notice, and he healed them there.

Look at his mercy. Here he's commanding mercy from his followers, and Jesus still displays that same mercy. We should not leave straying sheep alone.

We should seek them out willing to receive them back into the fold. And you know, if we're faithful to keep this balance, where we stop sin and yet we mercifully resolve things, we will find that so-called Christians will remove themselves from us.

[44 : 41] As the Father seeks out the straying sheep, we're his agents. We should seek each other out as well. So how do we sum up this whole section on church relations there in chapter 18?

That's what we talked about, right? The very beginning, two, three weeks ago, when we began this chapter 18, it's about relationships within the church, within a local church. How can we sum this up?

Here's how. We come to Jesus in a humble serving attitude, worshiping him alone like a child. And we receive each other as children. We shepherd each other as lost sheep, patiently and decisively dealing with should be repentant sinners ready to forgive as much as needed.

That's how we can sum up this whole section, all of chapter 18. And with these values at the forefront of our relationships, as a faith community, these relationships will become stronger and will enable us to remain steadfast against the storms and the conflicts that we will face, the conflicts of today and the conflicts of tomorrow.

There's going to be conflicts, it's just the nature of it, it's the way it is. God can work in that and shows his grace in that and we show grace in that.

[46 : 07] God has shown us in Christ Jesus.

It's all wrapped in the tortilla of forgiveness. Hard things. Spirit of God, we pray, help our hearts. hard things for us to see. Hard things to read what Jesus has said. And yet, thank you, Father, that you've shown us amazing grace just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Thank you, Jesus, for being our substitute, a fragrant aroma to the Father. Father, oh, Spirit, thank you for opening our eyes, regenerating our wills so we run into the arms of Jesus.

And Spirit, we pray you will continue to work in us, direct us, mold us, shape us, lead us into holiness and godliness that will be known here with each other and to this community.

[47 : 36] Cottonwood Bible Church is a forgiving church. They're full of mercy and grace. May we be known as that. Lord, we pray you and we will be to the Lord.

I want to encourage you as we do each Sunday, just time between you and the Lord. We'll do our giving, sing a couple songs, closing prayer, eat together, have our members meeting, blah, blah, blah, blah.

But right now, just you and the Lord, it's like a minute, minute and a half, whatever. Let these truths sink deep into your heart. Maybe it's a time of confession, maybe it's a time of repentance, maybe it's a time of maybe it's a time where you forgive someone, I don't know.

Let these truths sink deep into your heart and soul. Let your mind dwell on these things.

Let your mind dwell on these things. Thank you.