

# Forgiveness in Marriage

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[ 0 : 00 ]     What we're talking about here today is not just within marriage, but it's for everyone. because forgiveness is something we all must deal with.! All of us face, because somebody's going to offend you, somebody's going to hurt you.

Those are realities of life. I don't think we can... There's nobody in here this morning who hasn't had something happen within their family or within their work environment.

There's always something when it regards this idea of necessity for forgiveness, but it begins in that structure of the family. Because when husbands and wives display and practice forgiveness, you know what?

It raises another generation that understands what it means. Well, how do you apply forgiveness? What is it? What does God have to say about it? These are important elements.

And this idea of demonstrating and seeing what forgiveness looks like. You know, oftentimes parents, when their siblings get after one another, you know, and siblings are great at offending the other one, you know.

[ 1 : 08 ]     It's just one of those things that just happens. But I want you to understand, as a parent, what do you do? Well, you got to go tell them you're sorry. You know, what are you trying to do? You're trying to teach them forgiveness. But, you know, we need to be careful that we teach them biblical forgiveness and what that means and what it doesn't mean.

Because forgiveness is an area a lot of people, I think, are very confused about. There's a lot of confusion when it comes to forgiveness because they seem to think that forgiveness means it didn't happen.

And I want you to understand, when you forgive somebody, it doesn't mean what took place or what the offense was didn't happen. You're not releasing them from the reality that it happened.

You're releasing them from the retribution that you desire to get even. Because that's really where forgiveness in the core of that is. And we're going to see that play out here today.

And oftentimes we see this and learn this first in family. You know, how to resolve conflict. How to resolve hurt. And, you know, I want you to understand, forgiveness allows two sides that have been offended to be reconciled.

[ 2 : 22 ]     That's the ultimate dynamic of forgiveness is the fact it takes two sides who have been offended. One may have offended the other or hurt the other one. But forgiveness is the first step in reconciliation.

Because in Scripture, you always find God's goal is reconciliation. God's objective is reconciliation. It was His objective through Jesus Christ that we might be reconciled to Himself.

We see this play out throughout the Scripture. And, you know, when you think about what happens, you know, when forgiveness is absent. You know, I think we have a lot of people who have a misunderstanding of forgiveness because it's been absent within the households.

It's been absent amongst their parents and their grandparents. And amongst those that they are around and it's broken. Because when we consider what's taught about it is important of how they think about it.

And how they process these things. You know, but think about how does forgiving one another, how does that impact and restore relationships.

[ 3 : 31 ] And I want you to understand when relationships are restored properly, God is glorified. Because remember, God is all about reconciliation. Bringing offended parties together.

I mean, that's exactly what took place through Jesus Christ. The offended party was brought back into reconciliation within a relationship with Christ.

And we see here this picture here this morning. In Colossians chapter 3, we see some statements made here about forgiveness that we're going to look at.

Because here it describes the necessity of forgiveness. Forgiveness both in our walk with Christ and our relationship with others. I want you to understand forgiveness affects everything about you.

It impacts everything about you. So if you found Colossians chapter 3 this morning, let's go ahead and stand together. In honor of the reading of the Word of God, we'll pick up here in verse 12. Here this morning.

[ 4 : 30 ] Read down a few verses. It says this in verse 12. Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.

If any man have quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

Let's pray. Heavenly Fathers, we come before you today, Lord, as we look at this concept, the application of forgiveness in our lives, Lord, the necessity that it must be there to operate even within our relationships, one with another, especially within a marriage.

Lord, you understand and you reveal these things. Lord, you display what it means. Lord, we pray we might apply those things both to our lives personally, but also in our relationships with others.

Lord, that we might understand the necessity and the application of forgiveness in our lives. And Lord, we just give you all the praise in Jesus' name. Amen.

[ 5 : 44 ] You may be seated. You know, as we look here this morning, we're going to take some time to examine how this idea of forgiveness, forgiveness, because I want you to see here, forgiveness, you might look at it this way.

If you get burned, what do you do? You usually take an ointment or something to put on it that begins the healing. Forgiveness is like that balm that makes provision for healing to take place.

Forgiveness is essential in that nature, because without it, relationships cannot be reconciled one to another. Forgiveness is an essential element of that.

And the reconciliation, our relationships, but especially in marriage, because marriage is where people learn. They learn what forgiveness looks like.

You say, preacher, why are people... You're talking about forgiveness in marriage. You know what? If you live with somebody sooner or later, you know what? You're going to be offended. Or you're going to take offense.

[ 6 : 47 ] You're going to take offense at something or what someone said, what someone did. You know? You might love that person you married, but you know what? There's going to be times that you're not going to like them so much because of things that go on.

Because sometimes, either intentional or unintentionally, you can offend the other. When we realize that that can take place, we need to understand that forgiveness is essential because forgiveness reflects Christ's love.

Forgiveness reflects Christ's love. Look at our text here. Look at verse 13 here this morning. At the end of verse 13, and we'll cover all this, but I want you to see here what it tells us.

It says this. If any man have quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. You know, when we consider something here, because here it is.

Paul here is writing to the church at Colossae, and he's telling them, hey, your instruction here is to forgive as Christ forgave. Now, we need to stop and think about what does that mean?

[ 7 : 56 ] What's the picture that we see there? Because if we're to forgive as Christ forgave, and the reality is, as Christ has forgiven you, is the picture that we see.

When we consider Christ as the example, it reveals the nature of forgiveness. You know? I want you to consider. Stop and think for a moment. When you first mention forgiveness, and one of the concepts people have is forgiveness is something that they have to merit.

If they do this, I'll forgive. Oftentimes, we attach merit to forgiveness. I want you to understand, in the biblical picture and Christ picture, merit is nowhere connected to forgiveness.

We don't merit God's forgiveness. It's nothing that we have done that Christ forgives us.

You know, when we consider what Christ has done, even as, do ye, the Bible tells us. You know, think about that. As Christ forgave you, you need to forgive. You know, Paul here is speaking about something important because he's speaking in the context of your very salvation.

[ 9 : 09 ] He's speaking in what God did as part of us being able to be reconciled to him. And when we miss that, it impacts not only our relationship to God, but also our relationship to others.

And this picture is important to understand because forgiveness is not merit-based. It's simply a voluntary release of the offending party of any retribution or to get even.

You're releasing them from your penalty. You're releasing them from saying, I want to get back at you.

Any relationship that's going to reconcile, the first thing that's going to take place is the offended party is going to say, I'm not going to hold a grudge against you. I'm going to forgive you so I don't become bitter.

Lack of forgiveness always leads to bitterness. Anger, resentment. We see a lot within society today of bitter, angry, resentful people. You know where that stems from?

[ 10 : 14 ] Forgiveness. But preacher, you don't know what somebody else did to me. I want you to understand, it doesn't matter what somebody else did to you when it comes to forgiveness.

Forgiveness is as much for your sake as it is for theirs. Because forgiveness allows you to think about it properly. Allows you to understand what's taking place and keep a right spirit and a right attitude.

You know, it's interesting. The root word of forgiveness, we have a translated forgiveness here, is based in the same word that we all love, and that's grace. It's from the same root.

Forgiveness in the Greek is from the same root as grace. It's really grace being applied. It's grace being put into action because we choose to forgive.

You know, think about it. God shows his grace towards you when he came and died for your sin and my sin. You know, think for a moment. Turn back to Matthew chapter 18 for a moment.

[ 11 : 22 ] Matthew chapter 18, because the Bible speaks a lot about forgiveness. And we have pictures of forgiveness and God always forgiving. You know, consider here, look at Matthew 18.

Look down at verse 21. You know, this is one of them passages that you've probably heard much about over the years if you've been around church very long. And if not, it's one you definitely need to learn and to apply a little bit here.

Because here's Peter. Comes to Jesus and he asks Jesus a question. Now, I want you to understand the context of this question isn't Peter humbly coming before God, you know.

Oh, Lord, just, you know, I need to know more about forgiveness. So Peter's coming. I'll forgive them seven times. He's prideful.

Notice this. Then came Peter to him and said, Lord, how ought shall I forgive? Shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Till seven times. Now, notice this.

[ 12 : 21 ] Jesus saith unto him, I say unto thee, until seven times, but until 70 times seven. In other words, we find here that Jesus here is revealing to him not just seven times, but 70 times seven.

Now, oftentimes people say, well, that's 490 times, man. They'll get their book out. Okay. Ching, ching, ching, ching. You know, they start crossing them off. But there's five. Woo! We're getting closer. Jesus' point here is not a score.

It's not record keeping. He's telling Peter, you have the wrong concept because right after this, he goes into a parable. He gives a parable of the unmerciful servant.

Where this servant comes before his master and is forgiven much. It says he was forgiven 10,000 talents. Now, if you consider, they say a talent is a year's wages.

Think about that for a moment. He was forgiven 10,000 years of debt. And this servant is rejoicing in the fact he's been forgiven this insurmountable amount.

[ 13 : 35 ] But he goes out to somebody who owes him and wants to extract everything he can. This is a picture that Jesus gives.

And this servant is forgiven of his master. But yet he had been, when he doesn't take that same forgiveness and put it towards others. He wants to extract those things.

He wants to keep score. He wants to get even. But look down at verse 33 in Matthew chapter 18. The conclusion of this, notice what he says. Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?

This is the same thing Paul's talking about. As Christ did, you do. All of us carried with us a weight of sin and offense against God that we could never overcome.

But yet God has forgiven. And he says, if God can forgive you, you ought to be able, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the power of God, say, I'm going to make a choice to forgive somebody who's offended me.

[ 14 : 51 ] To do that in this nature is important. Jesus is illustrating something here. Forgiveness is not merit-based, but grace-based. Just as the servant had been forgiven, he was to extend the same to those that were indebted to him.

Because forgiveness is not determined by the quantity nor quality of the offense. You know, I want you to understand this morning, oftentimes we'll hold on to offenses in our life.

We'll hold on to those past hurts in our marriage. We'll hold on to those hurts in our family. Or anyone that has hurt you. I mean, the list goes on.

I mean, people get hurt all the time. Oftentimes people think, well, why me? You know what? The reality is the Bible makes it clear that if you live, you're going to have people that are going to offend you.

People that are going to hurt you. You say, why is that? Well, the thing is, you've hurt somebody. You've offended somebody. Whether it's intentional or unintentional, we all are guilty of the same offense.

[ 15 : 56 ] None of us stand clean of it. And Jesus is reminding them here that it doesn't matter. So this morning, you know, when you think about your past hurts in your marriage, in your family, in your relationships, or anyone that has hurt you in the past, we need to remember Christ's forgiveness towards you.

Christ's forgiveness is important. It'll help you release the bitterness and offer grace towards them. Now, remember, forgiveness doesn't heal, but it's the ointment that goes on that allows and paves the way for reconciliation to take place.

Because you know what? It takes two people to reconcile. Both parties have to be willing to reconcile. You know, one of the problems you have oftentimes is one party wants to reconcile and the other party doesn't.

You know what? It's impossible to reconcile if both parties aren't willing. Let me give you a point here that you need to understand. Because forgiveness is the part of the person that is offended or been hurt.

Recognizing it and telling you and asking for forgiveness or asking for and admitting reconciliation is on the part of the offender. You know, somebody can come and sincerely say, I'm sorry.

[ 17 : 16 ] What I did was wrong. But, you know, sometimes people still don't forgive. Is that relationship reconcilable at that point? No. Same token. Somebody can say, I forgive.

I've done my part to reconcile. And the other party is stubborn and obstinate and doesn't want to do their part. It's still irreconcilable. The same picture with God.

God provided when Jesus Christ came. He provided everything we have in need of from his side that he can do to provide reconciliation of a sinful person to a holy God.

The ball ends up in our court when it comes to salvation. God's done everything he can. And he says, whosoever will. Whosoever will can come.

Whosoever can call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. This is the reality in which this operates. Even in our relationship with God, it acts the same here in our physical relationship one with another.

[ 18 : 16 ] Because forgiveness allows wounds to heal. It allows those things to take place. Look here back in verse 13 for a moment. It says, forbearing one another and forgiving one another.

If any man have a quarrel against any. There's been a wound. A quarrel. When you have a quarrel against, this word is speaking not of a perceived offense, but it's of the merit of an offense.

It's a legitimate complaint against somebody. A hurt that is plunged into you like a knife. A hurt that causes a problem between people. It's a genuine, real situation.

And what Paul's saying here, there's going to be times that people genuinely hurt you. Right to the core of who you are. There's all sorts of things you could list that fall under this category.

All sorts of abuse. There's things that happen in this world that ought not, but they do. Sin is a wicked, terrible, destructive thing. We live in a sin-laden world.

[ 19 : 23 ] People are going to do things against other people. The question is, what are we going to do? How are we going to respond when it happens to us?

How are we going to respond when those things take place? Because I want you to understand our natural response to a legitimate hurt in our life is to retaliate or to seek retribution towards the offender.

And I want you to tell you here that it's going to lead to something. It's going to lead to unaddressed and unhealed wounds that are going to hinder you the rest of your life.

Because you're going to have bitterness and anger and wrath that's going to dominate your heart and your mind. Unforgiveness chews you up.

You say, well, preacher, how can I offend? You don't know what they did. I want you to know that Jesus said, you can do it because of what I've forgiven you. The problem is oftentimes we don't see our sin, our failure against God the same way we see people's failure against us.

[ 20 : 26 ] Our sin hurts God as much as somebody that hurts you. And when we get a right perspective, we understand that picture. Because forgiveness doesn't mean something didn't happen.

You know, that's one of the misconceptions people have. Why forgive me? It'll be like, no, that's not what forgiveness is. Forgiveness doesn't deny that it happened. Forgiveness is you releasing them from your retaliation against them or even you're justified.

Because sometimes, yes, accountability is justified. But forgiveness says I'm willing to let that go. Not because I'm a good person. Because I recognize what Christ forgave me.

I didn't merit it. I had not a bit of merit towards my salvation. But Christ forgave and opened the door that we might be saved.

It's not built on merit. That's part of the problem. But it's a voluntary releasing the offending party of reprisal. It's something that transpires whether the offending party deserves it or not.

[ 21 : 31 ] Or whether they apologize. It's based on the offended party's feelings, attitudes, and behavior. Not on the offenders. Forgiveness is for those who have been offended.

You know, I want you to understand that forgiveness does not condone or excuse the offense. You're releasing them from your retaliation or retribution.

There's offenses that carry things outside of you. There are offenses that if you do against somebody, you're going to go to jail or you're going to face others. Forgiveness doesn't mean they've been released from all that.

It says you're letting it go. Forgiveness, I want you to understand, is for your benefit. Not the one who offended's benefit. You know, we need to understand forgiveness does not condone or excuse the offense.

Look over to Genesis chapter 50. We have a great example here of Joseph. Joseph's, I think, a great example of forgiveness in action. Because oftentimes we look here at Genesis 50 and we say, well, Joseph was reconciled to his brothers.

[ 22 : 38 ] Let's take a look at what it says. It says, when Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, that was Jacob, they said, Joseph will purventure hate us and will certainly requit us all the evil which we did unto him.

Now, I want you to consider this for a moment. This is his brothers speaking, not Joseph. I want you to understand, Joseph forgave them a long time before this.

And I want you to get a picture here because Joseph forgave them 17 years earlier. You say, preacher, what do you mean? Remember when they came down into Egypt and they didn't recognize Joseph?

Joseph recognized them. Joseph had absolute authority. Joseph could have had all them killed and nobody would have thought twice. But through that, Joseph had to deal with something when he was confronted with his brothers.

He had to make a choice of what he was going to do. When you read through a little earlier in Genesis, you'll find twice mentioned that Joseph went by himself and just wept when dealing with his brothers.

[ 23 : 41 ] I think Joseph was dealing with forgiveness. Lord, how do I forgive them for what they did to me? And I don't think anybody here, if you know the story of Joseph, would say, man, his brothers certainly deserve some retribution for what they did.

They sent him into slavery. Joseph faced some terrible things in his life, some terrible hurts and accusations. And then his brothers come and Joseph makes a decision to forgive them.

He says, come on down, bring the family down to Egypt and I'll take care of you. Now you're at the end of this dynamic and Jacob has now passed from the scene 17 years later.

And his brothers are saying, hey, you know, Joseph has just been play-acting, I think, in here. Dad's gone. Now he's going to take retribution.

But what you see in Genesis 50, something totally different. You see a Joseph who came to the reconciliation and the forgiveness of his brothers. He had already forgiven them before they came.

[ 24 : 43 ] You know, when we see here, they had a definite quarrel against his brothers. There's no doubt that his brothers offended. But they thought his kindness was for the sake of their father.

They knew the evil that they had perpetrated upon Joseph. The web of lies that they had spun towards their father. It wasn't until Jacob died that his brothers sought to reconcile.

But where did it start? It started 17 years earlier with Joseph putting on the balm of forgiveness to the situation. Joseph waited 17 years, reconciled to those who offended him.

You know, we get upset. Well, why forgive him? Why can't we just get through this? I want you to understand, sometimes hurts take time. It took to this point before his brothers were willing to understand and to take accountability to do their part.

Joseph had already done all he could do. His brothers now had to do their part for reconciliation to take place. Look down at verse 19 here in Genesis 50. And Joseph said unto them, Fear not, for I am in the place of God.

[ 25 : 59 ] But as for you, you thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good. To bring to pass as it is this day to save much people alive. Now, therefore, fear ye not, I will nourish you and your little ones.

And he comforted them and spake kindly unto them. I want you to understand, Joseph didn't forgive his brothers when they came and sought reconciliation and acknowledge of their sin.

Joseph had already dealt with it in his life. He looked at it and said, look what God has done, what God has provided.

You meant for evil and God did good. He had all the ability to take retribution and didn't. Why? Because he had forgiven them before they even sought reconciliation.

Forgiveness has to do with you and me. He shows them kindness. Forgiveness, it was Joseph's decision years before that paved the way for the restoration to take place.

[ 27 : 07 ] Forgiveness brought healing and restoration to his family. I want you to understand that same thing takes place within a relationship, whether it's marriage or any type of family or friends or even people you don't know.

Forgiveness is a choice that you make because somebody offended you and says, I'm not going to seek retribution against them. It starts with you. Because you know what the reality is?

You can't control what the other person does. Oftentimes, if I don't forgive them, I'm going to get even. You know, it doesn't affect them a bit. It just makes you angry and bitter. You stop to consider what steps have you taken to address the grievances within your marriage, within your other relationships.

Is there forgiveness? Is there understanding in the dynamic? How is your attitude towards forgiveness impacting those in your family?

You know, there's a lot of families in trouble because forgiveness doesn't take place. Forgiveness is essential. It's the center of this passage. You know, think about here in verse 13.

[ 28 : 11 ] Notice what it says once again. It says, forbearing one another and forgiving one another, for even if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

But this verse in verse 13 is sandwiched between two other verses because the two other verses, 12 and 14, give us a context to which forgiveness operates.

Notice what it tells us here. Look at verse 12. It says, put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved. Now I want you to understand here, Paul is talking to those who know and understand what Christ has done for them.

And he says, if you understand what Christ has done for you, he says you need to put on bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering.

Verse 14 goes on to say this, and above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. Perfectness means completeness of who we are.

[ 29 : 20 ] Because forgiveness is an act of love that seeks reconciliation and unity rather than vindication. Look over to Ephesians chapter 4 for a moment.

Ephesians chapter 4. Notice what he tells him here to the church at Ephesus. He says this in verse 31. He says, let all bitterness.

Think about what's bitterness come from. Comes from what? Lack of forgiveness. And wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking.

Be put away from you with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has what?

Forgiven you. You know, forgiveness is something that we all have to put into practice. The contrast between these two verses is clear. One is the road of bitterness and anger and chains of resentment and malice towards the offender.

[ 30 : 24 ] The other is to love them and to be humble enough. Because, you know, one of the problems with forgiveness is we place ourselves above that we never offend anybody.

To be humble enough to realize that, yes, you're going to offend somebody. And I would want that same. If you're truly sorry for offending somebody, you would want that same dynamic put back towards you.

Forgiveness is something that's rooted to the very core because if you don't forgive, you know, think about that word malice. It says with all malice. You know what malice is? Malice is the inner fire that drives the other emotions that people may or may not see.

Malice is in the heart of an individual. You know, people can cover up malice pretty well sometimes. But malice is what takes place. It has to do with how you think and feel and then act.



He says that instead of malice and all the emotion of bitterness and anger and be chained to resentment that comes when we don't forgive. He says we ought to be fueled by charity.

[ 31 : 27 ] That is love and humility. You know, think about that same Peter that boasted about, Lord, I'll forgive him seven times. Look over to 1 Peter chapter 4.

1 Peter chapter 4 and verse 8. Here's Peter writing later in his life. You know what? The disciples and the apostles grew in their knowledge and application of the truth of God's word, just as every believer ought to.

Here's Peter writing. He says, What is Peter saying? He says, Charity is what fuels forgiveness.

Love fuels forgiveness. This love requires mercy and kindness and humility. Requires meekness and longsuffering. Just as Joseph forgave his brothers way before reconciliation took place, his humble act of love towards him reflects the same type of love that Christ displayed towards us.

Look over to the book of Romans, Romans chapter 5 for a moment. Notice what the scripture tells us. But God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

[ 32 : 45 ] What's the basis, the starting point of God's forgiveness, his love for you and me? If we're going to forgive others, it has to be built and established in love, in charity, a genuine concern and care for somebody else.

It says, Much more than being now justified by the blood, and we shall be saved from the wrath through him. I want you to understand he has this picture for us.

Just as Christ forgives you, we need to display that towards one another. Ultimately this, forgiveness isn't about forgetting the hurt. That's another falsehood that people have.

Well, if I forgive, I forget. I want you to let you know God may forget our sin and put them away, but that's a divine nature. Because our fallen, sinful nature often has, most of the time, doesn't put it away.

The hurt is still real. But God says you ought to deal with it properly. You ought to deal with it appropriately. Because forgiveness is what, it's about choosing healing over bitterness, anger, and resentment.

[ 33 : 53 ] You cannot control the hurting part, the party that hurts you, but you can control your side of the equation. To forgive. And especially in marriage, the example of a husband and wife, a child towards a parent or parents towards their children.

No matter, it ought to point others to the love of God that was pointed towards you and I first. But God commendeth his love toward us. What a picture.

Have you ever thought about how your display and your practice of forgiveness impacts what other people think about God? You know, oftentimes, I think people that don't know Christ as their Savior are impacted because they see the bitterness still in believers.

You talk about forgiveness and a God that forgives, but you don't even practice it. Say, preacher, you're stepping on toes. Well, I step on my own too. Because, you know, all of us have a problem with it. All of us have to make that decision. And it starts and we learn in those basic relationships of marriage and kids.

It displays those things. You know, have you considered how your demonstration of love and patience and forgiving allows others to see Christ in you? You know, maybe you're here today and don't understand what forgiveness is or God's forgiveness towards you.

[ 35 : 05 ] Or how to forgive. You know, sometimes I wonder if people don't know how to forgive because they don't understand what God did for them. It's never become personal to them in the first place.

They've never trusted Christ as their Savior saying, I know that you have forgiven me, that you've made a way. You paid the penalty for my sin. Everything I merited, but you took it on yourself and provided a way that it would be off me and on you if I just call upon you.

You know, today, if you've never understood or experienced the forgiveness that Christ has made available to you, I encourage you today, it might be that day, to understand what true forgiveness looks like because it begins in what God displayed towards us, that we might display it towards others.

You know, look over to 1 Timothy chapter 1 for a moment. Here's the Apostle Paul, and I want you to think about this verse. Verse 16 says, You know what Paul's saying?

He says, I didn't merit God's forgiveness. Paul had taken believers out and killed them. Paul spoke blasphemy against God. And he's saying, you know what?

[ 36 : 23 ] God's long-suffering towards me when I came to the realization of who Christ is and what he had done that it was for me. Because notice what he says, it's a picture that might show forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them which should thereafter believe on him to everlasting life.

I want you to understand the picture of forgiveness is an important part of even our testimony as believers. To understand how forgiveness plays out because if Christ is your Savior, then you ought to understand what forgiveness is and put it into practice.

Well, to apply the very thing that God gave us. That principle that's there. To practice it in our marriage, in our relationships, to allow grace to heal and to restore even places that we've been hurt in our life.

Because forgiveness is the starting point of reconciliation. Where are you at today? Where are you at with the Lord?

Where are you at with others around you? His heads are bowed and eyes are closed this morning. I want you to stop and to consider. Because you know what?

[ 37 : 39 ] Each one of us can very easily harbor resentment and bitterness and anger. It can be well hidden. Is God speaking to you today about a need of forgiveness towards others?

How about God's forgiveness towards you? Heavenly Fathers, we just come before you today. Lord, you know each heart, each life here this morning. Lord, you know the needs. Lord, you know the things, the hidden things of the heart of an individual.

Lord, you know all that we think and process. Lord, you know what's going on right now this morning. Lord, I pray just work upon hearts and lives so that we might truly understand the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation and the reality of what you've done for us.

Lord, if we have an opportunity to respond today, Lord, that we might take seriously the things that your spirit is working and convicting and convincing and working upon hearts here today.

Lord, that we might not depart out the doors the same way we came in. And Lord, we just commit this time to you as we have an opportunity to consider those things before you. And we ask it all in your precious name.

[ 38 : 52 ] As the piano plays, what about you today? Amen. Thank you.