

Women's Retreat: "Forgiveness" Session 2

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Preacher: Lorna Ashworth

- [0 : 0 0] Okay, in this session, I want to hit head-on the confusion surrounding how Christian forgiveness is to be practiced on the ground. So, what do we do with this vertical forgiveness that we get from God?
- I think, as I said yesterday, we understand it quite well. I think if we attend church, you know, and we've read our Bibles and we've had good teaching, we kind of go, yeah, I get this amazing gift. And then we put it horizontally and we go, ooh, now what?
- It's uncomfortable. But I believe our problems come, or problems arise in our understanding of the practice of forgiveness because of the absence of repentance.
- So, again, I was reading a popular book recently on forgiveness, and so much of what it had to say was about reconciliation, which we're going to come to tomorrow. But there was very little reference to repentance.
- And it's like that repentance is, that's where everything hinges on forgiveness. So, what I said yesterday, you know, God looks to forgive, but he doesn't always forgive.
- [1 : 1 0] That's not to make God sound like a tyrant. It's going, some people choose not to care. Some people choose not to repent. So, we don't come to God without repentance.
- So, the problem comes as we, as Christians, I'm going off script, try to practice forgiveness without the word repentance. And then we kind of wonder why we've got problems.
- Like, we're wrestling with, this doesn't work, and then why doesn't this work? So, let's be clear about what the word repentance means. Repentance means sincere regret or remorse.
- It's to turn away from, in the Christian term. We turn away from something. But remember, there is sincere regret or remorse. And this is key, because repentance is the way of the gospel.
- That's so important. Without repentance, we have no gospel. Well, there's lots of you, don't we? We've just celebrated Easter, right? Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have no gospel.
- [2 : 1 6] God has covered it all. But, because repentance is the way of the gospel, we have to be very aware of what can seep in the background.
- And I want to quickly look at two false practices of forgiveness. There are two false practices of forgiveness. And the first one is universal forgiveness, this idea of universalism.
- And actually, it's more prevalent, I think, than we realize. And this is the assumption that everyone gets pardoned.
- Because that's God's job, isn't it? Isn't that what he does? Doesn't God, he's a God of love. He forgives, right? But that means that we would be released from guilt without repentance.
- Regardless of whether or not, like, you don't even want it. Universalism, universal forgiveness. If we were practicing this belief, it simply means everyone goes to heaven.

[3 : 23] Christ is irrelevant in this model. We don't need him. The cross is redundant. The last four years before I came here, some of you will know that after I stepped down from the national governing body of the Church of England, I became a funeral director for four years.

Like, wow, so different. I have some stories there. But as I was doing that, you have these conversations that, regular conversations, and they've gone to a better place.

Everyone goes to a better place when there's universal forgiveness. It doesn't matter who you are, what you've done. You go to a better place without repentance, without care. So go ahead, murder, steal, rape, plunder.

There's no fear of consequence. No wrongdoing needs to be acknowledged. No repentance required. And no justice is expected. That is universal forgiveness or universalism.

The second false practice is transactional forgiveness. This model says that you can have forgiveness, even if you've hurt me, but you have to earn it before I can give that to you.

[4 : 36] Now, if you are a Christian here today, that should sit really uncomfortable. Because it stands opposed to grace. You see, I know that I can never earn God's forgiveness.

That's what Scripture tells us, over and over and over again. So this should strike horror to our very core. And if transactional forgiveness was the model, the working model, you know, we'd be a bit scuppered.

Because what if I wanted to seek forgiveness from someone? But how would I know that I've done enough to earn it? And like, what kind of day are they having?

Today have I done enough? Oh, sorry. They're PMTs, so that's all right. So, no, you haven't done enough today because I'm really grumpy. So I'm not going to actually give you forgiveness. It's totally subjective.

So who decides what's enough? So I could simply change my mind, depending on how I'm feeling. But you'd have to earn it.

[5 : 40] So then we think, oh man, is that what God's like? So if God's having a bad day and I do something wrong, he may not grant me forgiveness. Like, it doesn't work.

We come back to Scripture, we go, no, universalism does not work. There is no justice. There is no Jesus. There is no repentance. For instance, transactional forgiveness doesn't work because it requires works.

And I can't do enough. I can't earn forgiveness from God. And how am I supposed to earn forgiveness from you? I mean, you may have liked me last week, but you may hate me this week.

What am I going to do? Who's the decider? Who's the judge? But here is the warning. As you and I seek to practice forgiveness and experience forgiveness, both of these models are going to attempt to rear their ugly heads and distort the beauty and wonder of biblical Christian forgiveness.

So let me go back to my present. Very shiny. Okay. Okay.

[6 : 50] So last night I used this image to describe if this was God's forgiveness. It's just, it's priceless. But here is forgiveness that I need to give.

So, this is what universalism looks like. It's like, ah, you've run over my dog and you don't care. Here you go, I forgive you. Joke, joke, Mario. You know. Or, we see it on the news.

And this, yeah, maybe I'd have to unpack it. But it's like, you've done something horrendous to me and I'm going to demonstrate Christian love. And just say, you know what? I forgive you. Oh, here you go.

And they're just like, why? I didn't ask for forgiveness. So universalism just throws this out indiscriminately. Because somehow we think that that's modeling God's gift of forgiveness. Don't worry about asking.

I'm going to chuck it out to you anyway. It doesn't reconcile. We don't believe in universalism. But somehow in our Christian walk, we end up modeling it at some level.

[7 : 54] Because we think we have to say, I forgive you. That's the right thing to do, isn't it? That's what everyone, that's what everyone who's a Christian can say.

Or, if you believe in transactional forgiveness, I can say to you, okay, you've hurt me, so I, here, here. Oh, nah, nah, you didn't do enough. Okay, come on.

No, no, seriously. I'm just kidding. You really annoy me. Oh, here. And then, you know, and then, and we're doing this all the time. That doesn't work either. But we do need to be careful.

Because both of those ideas, even at the basic level, just come creeping in. So if both are incorrect, and if both are unbiblical, where do we go from here?

An understanding of what Christ himself has modeled in light of his work on the cross has been so liberating for me. It has helped me to see why I couldn't previously reconcile the disconnect between how scripture describes forgiveness and what was seemingly expected of me.

[9 : 09] So where do we go from here? I believe that biblical forgiveness is made up of two components, or there are two components with biblical forgiveness.

And this is where I believe we can begin to understand how we practice Christian forgiveness biblically. That honors not only Christ, but honors the pain that we've experienced.

Because God cares. So the first one is, it doesn't flow. Attitudinal forgiveness. Work on that one. It's obviously about an attitude.

But it's called attitudinal forgiveness. The other is called transacted forgiveness. Not transactional. We looked at transactional, so don't confuse the two.

Easy to do. Transactional, transacted. I'll try to break that down. Attitudinal forgiveness. Transacted forgiveness. I believe that in the word of God, we will see that attitudinal forgiveness is required at all times.

[10 : 21] 24-7. Whereas transacted forgiveness is granted after being requested in light of repentance.

But it's also unlimited. But I'll explain that. First, we're going to look at attitudinal forgiveness. And this is where our theme verse brings some focus.

Ephesians 4, 31-32. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, and slander, along with every form of malice.

Malice is the intention of the desire to do evil. The second part of that verse will come more into focus later. But still, be kind and compassionate to one another.

Forgiving one another as Christ in God forgave you. So, that was the NIV version. The ESV says, let these things be put away from you.

[11 : 26] Put away from you bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander. Put those things away from you. Get rid of it. Because this is what's required at all times.

Matthew 5, 43-44. You have heard it said, love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

That's hard. That is so hard. But it's what the Lord asks of us. It's what he expects from us.

So, attitudinal forgiveness is not to act on the basis of my hurt or anger. It is not to seek revenge and to allow my heart to become bitter.

And that's important. It's not to act on the basis of my hurt or anger. It's not to seek revenge and allow my heart to become bitter. It is, instead, to choose to love my enemy in my heart as Christ commands us to do.

[12 : 53] And you know what this looks like. It's to live growing in the fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control. I say those words so easily.

I don't live it. I'm working on that. But I know the best way for it. But I'm trying. That's attitudinal forgiveness. I must always walk 24-7 with the attitude, the willingness, the readiness to forgive if I am asked.

I love my enemy. But we're in the care of the great high priest. So when loving my enemy is the last thing in the world you want to do, you go back to the great high priest.

And you scream help. Because I know this is what you are asking of me daily. So I never want to see them again. But you know what? I might pray for them today.

It's an attitude. And that's where the wrestling match with God comes into play. Because a wrestling match it is. And I'm not the only one that knows that experience.

[14 : 07] When I have been hurt, I want to see revenge. I want to massage my anger. But giving way to this will allow the seeds of bitterness and resentment to grow and to take root.

Without a doubt. There is nothing pretty or painless about loving my enemy. But while we thrash through this, remember, we do so in the care of the great high priest.

Attitudinal forgiveness is a choice to be obedient to the command that God has given me. God has commanded us to love our enemy. He has commanded us to do not let rage, anger, bitterness, don't let those things take root in your heart.

It's a command. Don't do it. It's toxic. It will destroy us. So, he says, the Lord says to me, the Lord says to you, walk this way.

Walk in the upside down kingdom. Walk counter-culturally, just as Christ commanded. Just as Christ demonstrated. We, in our obedience to Christ, we choose to reflect his character, despite our weakness, our pain, and our lack of desire to do so.

[15 : 26] What I want to do now is I want to look briefly at three passages in the New Testament that refer to our attitude of forgiveness. But I think these verses have been misapplied or misunderstood and have been taken to go, oh, no, no.

I have to, like, I have to grant the gift of forgiveness. But let's look a little bit more closely. Let's look at the Lord's Prayer. Matthew chapter 6, verses 12, and then verses 14 and 15.

Sorry, I should have had these up on the screen. But you'll know it well. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. It goes on to say, for if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you. And then we're like, ooh. So even though that person has basically, you know, hit and killed someone as a drunk driver, I have to say, if that involves me directly, someone in my family, I have to say, I read that and go, I have to say, I forgive you, because God's not going to forgive me.

So I'm going to say, I forgive you. And I go, oh, hang on a minute. That sounds conditional. Sounds like there's conditions applied here. And then I start going, hang on, that's uncomfortable. Is that what the gospel is?

[16 : 56] We can never forget Ephesians 2, 8 and 9. Our faith is not by works, it is by grace. So if I interpret that passage as God's forgiveness is conditional to me, it's dependent on me forgiving you, then actually, forgiveness has nothing to do with God, it has everything to do with me.

And then the cross slipped upside down. And then, oh yeah, now we don't need Jesus. You see how easy it is? Because now I become the person responsible. And that's not what that passage is saying.

To the contrary, I'm going to come back to one of my favorite theologians, Carson. And when he unpacks this passage, he points out that what we see here in the Lord's Prayer is about adopting an attitude that makes forgiveness possible.

Attitudinal forgiveness. If we are not able to grant our enemy the gift of forgiveness when we are asked, we have failed to recognize the costly gift of forgiveness that's been given to us through Christ.

So you see there's two things there. I need to adopt an attitude that makes forgiveness possible. But it hasn't happened.

[18 : 16] Because I am, in this wrestling match with God, asking for his help to love my enemy, to bless those that persecute me, to not let bitterness, rage, and anger, and malice take root in my heart, so that I become deformed and twisted in my own understanding of God and my view of the world.

So when we see the Lord's Prayer, and it says, forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors, are we prepared to?

Are we prepared to? Not, okay, they don't care. Harm's been done. They haven't acknowledged it. There's no repentance.

But you better do it anyway, because God's not going to forgive you. Let the warning bells ring. God is gracious. Our faith is not by works.

But let's check our attitude. Psalm 66, 18. It says, if I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.

[19 : 25] So here's a recognition. If I had cherished, massaged, cradled, adored, bitterness, rage, anger, malice, it's going to interrupt our relationship with the Lord.

Now, nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. We know that in Romans chapter 8, and everywhere else in the Bible. But you know, the communication lines can get a little foggy, because when we choose not to obey, when we choose to allow things contrary to Christ, to grow and to root and to be nurtured in our heart, there's going to be, you know, there's going to be a little trouble there.

He loves us. He's like, come on, clean the communication lines, people. I love you. I want those lines to be open. So how can we fix this? And we allow him to work on us.

So do not cherish iniquity in our hearts. Do not massage bitterness, rage, anger, malice, and the like.

And as hard as it is, love. Let's love our enemies. Lord, help us. So here's another verse.

[20 : 47] Mark chapter 11, verse 25. And whenever you stand praying, forgive. If you have anything against anyone, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you.

So again, it sounds conditional, but it's the same principle. If we were to do a study of that, which if you've been following Mark's study that we've been doing at church, what comes before that are challenges about how to have effective prayer.

How do we pray effectively? And to pray effectively, to keep the communication lines open with God and where we are in a place of listening and discerning and walking in his peace, both faith and forgiveness are required.

But we must keep in mind that receiving forgiveness from God is not conditional or dependent on forgiving others. God's gift of salvation is by grace alone. But for prayer to be effective, it must be offered in faith.

But it must be offered in the spirit of forgiveness. Faith and a willingness to forgive are two conditions for efficacious prayer, for effective prayer.

[22 : 04] Faith and forgiveness. So attitudinal forgiveness is about walking in a state of readiness.

And the only way I can do that is to continually bring myself before the Lord. And beg Him at times, please Lord, don't let the rage, the malice, the bitterness, the anger take root in my heart.

Because I know it can only be toxic. Give me that attitude. So even if that transaction hasn't taken place, forgiveness with someone because they haven't come to me, this is the state that I will walk in.

I choose, in the name of Jesus, to walk obediently to His command. Love my enemy. P.S. I really don't like them. Help me, Jesus. Let's be real.

Let's not be poisoned. Okay, let's look at another verse. Jesus hanging on the cross. Luke chapter 23, 34.

[23 : 12] Jesus is hanging there. He looks down and He says, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And we see this also, if we read on in Acts, we're not looking at Acts, by the way, as our Bible study at St. John's.

Read the whole book. It's a great history novel. And it comes with everything about God in it. Oh, it's just explosive. Anyway, just had to say that. But when you get to Acts chapter 7, there's a young faithful man called Stephen, and he's being stoned.

And he says similar words to what Jesus said on the cross. He said, Lord, do not hold their sin against them. Can I just say that when we read, that when we see Jesus saying, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do, He is not providing absolution.

He is not practicing universalist forgiveness. This is not universalism. If that's what was meant, as Jesus hung on the cross, He may as well have gotten down and continued on with His life.

So what's He saying? Jesus on the cross is remaining true to His own vision. He has not stopped loving His enemies, and the possibility of forgiveness is offered even to those responsible for executing Him.

[24 : 42] Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. He is hanging there so that His enemies can repent and come to Him and receive forgiveness and join Him in paradise.

The very people who drove the nails into His hands and feet. The possibility of forgiveness is there for them. That's why He's doing what He's doing. And if we need that to be confirmed, we go back to Acts chapter 3.

Oh, Acts is so good. So here's Peter, right? You know, big mouth Peter, flat, flat, flat Peter, never gets it, big mouth, yakety yak. The Spirit of God comes on him and oh my word, all the pieces of the puzzle, more than a thousand pieces, come together.

The pennies dropped, he is filled with the Holy Spirit, and now he is teaching. He is giving the Israelites, anyone, they're all still in Jerusalem, I mean the place is buzzing. And he's like, right, okay, from Genesis, here I go, brrrr, and then he tells them the whole story.

And they're just like, wow. So, chapter 3, he's talking to the Israelites. Verses 17, 18, and 19.

[25 : 56] I did bring my Bible. Anyway. It says, now fellow Israelites, I've got part of that written down here. Now fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance when you crucified Jesus.

You acted in ignorance. As did your leaders. They were ignorant. You know, the chief priest, the council, the ridiculous trial, the kangaroo court, the whole thing, they acted in ignorance.

So, repent then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out. That's what Christ achieved on the cross. He was not granting universal forgiveness.

He was saying, forgiveness is now possible even to you guys who are putting the nails in my hands and feet. He is living out his vision, his mission. Love my enemy.

So even after they've executed him and he is dying, he's going, do you know what? Forgiveness is possible. Forgiveness is possible. It's for you. I can only try to do that.

[27 : 03] I can only hope and trust that if I was ever in such an extreme situation that I would say the same thing. Not, you are forgiven, but you can be forgiven.

Do you see the difference? So we must live and model forgiveness even before the exchange has taken place just as Jesus did. Romans 5.8 God showed his love for us that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

We were his enemies when he hung on the cross. He did it so that forgiveness is possible. So many times we see Christians are keen to model forgiveness and I get that.

I see the heart. Do you know what? It was only yesterday morning that I was watching clips of the street preacher in the UK. He was, he had his little marquee set up.

He was on the street in downtown in some, I don't know, some town. He had his microphone and he was saying, come to Jesus, repent and receive forgiveness. He said, he's speaking absolutely right.

[28 : 14] Come. Some guy walks up and it punches him right in the face. He didn't even fall. He just kept talking. It was remarkable. But what caught my attention is that he then turned in the direction that this guy punched him and then walked away and he said, I just want you to know I forgive you.

I forgive you for punching me in the face. You think, yeah, that's lovely. Now hang on a minute. Hang on, just one cotton-picking minute. That's not what you just said five minutes ago when you said, come to Jesus, repent, receive forgiveness, be reconciled to God.

Yes. And now you're saying you're totally forgiven. forgiven. Is that the right thing to say? So this is me just being really, you know, trying to pick it apart.

Hang on a minute. It's like, hey buddy, Jesus died for you so that you could be forgiven. Come here. I want to pray for you. We have to model it right, correctly.

Because what I, this is, and this is where my heart breaks. What makes me so sad is by continually saying statements like that. You've just punched me in the face. Or you've just, you know, you've just, you've just committed adultery.

[29 : 36] Or whatever. And I say, you know what, I forgive you. We feel that we have this obligation that I have to say that. I forgive you. And I have to carry this.

Now it's about me. And then it becomes this gift of forgiveness that is so costly that I need to give to somebody is being given to people and it's so costly and they haven't asked for it and they don't want it.

And I feel obligated that I have to carry this. I feel obligated that now I'm going to pass it to you even though you haven't asked for it. Is it that cheap?

It's not that cheap. So what do I do with this? Okay, great. High priest. Can you help me carry this? Because I know you might, I might be asked one day to give this to somebody who's hurt me.

They haven't asked for it. God, it's heavy. Can you help me carry it? And teach me now to love my enemy? To help me walk in an attitude of forgiveness and pray for them?

- [30 : 41] Even when it hurts? To not let rage and bitterness and malice and anger take root of my heart? But I'm not going to tuck them this. They haven't asked for it. This costs a lot.
- So Jesus, help me. Carry this, please. And that's what we do. But what happens instead is we're passing it out.
- We're passing it out. We're passing it out. We're just like, it's not working. I don't get it. They don't even care. They don't this and that. And we're just like, what am I supposed to do?
- And then I just think we begin to develop a guilt, a sense of guilt. I haven't done this right. And then bitterness starts to grow. Not because we want it to grow, but we find that we keep passing out this forgiveness and we think, but I still feel this way.
- What's wrong? It's because we just need to tweak that model a little bit. Walk in an attitude of forgiveness that makes forgiveness possible when asked.
- [31 : 42] It is required 24-7, every day of our life, attitude of forgiveness. The second component is transacted forgiveness.
- This is when the gift of forgiveness is given to the repentant offender. When that transaction happens in a healthy, biblical way.
- So if we continue to follow the biblical model, I think it looks something like this. I think it does look like this. There is an acknowledgement of our wrongdoing.
- Or, yeah, our wrongdoing, our wrongdoing. There's an acknowledgement of the wrongdoing. There is a repentance, a sincere remorse, a regret. There is an asking of forgiveness.
- And then there's reconciliation. That's the ideal model. We'll come to that tomorrow. Acknowledgement of wrongdoing, repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation.
- [32 : 49] Here's some more verses. So about all these verses, you know, if we were just doing a passage and working through it, it would be so easy. But because we're doing a theme, I'm all over the place. Matthew, chapter 18, verses 21 and 22.
- Peter came to Jesus and asked, Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?
- Jesus answered, I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven. We see that also spoken of in Luke, chapter 17, verses three and four.
- It's worded a little bit differently. Pay attention to yourselves. If your brother sins, rebuke him. And if he sins against you seven times in the day and turns to you seven times saying, I repent, you must forgive him.
- Seventy times seven. So this is fascinating. It was the rabbinic consensus in the day that a fellow Jew should forgive someone up to three times.
- [33 : 59] Three times is a good number. It shows that you've got really good character. Not just once, not just twice, three times. That's what they decided. This is good. Fourth was not necessary.
- It's okay. But Jesus, as usual, takes such religiosity to the next level and he shames it.
- there is no such thing as an upper limit when repentance and the request of forgiveness is asked. Because he doesn't limit it.
- Do you know what? I would have used it all up on the day one of my salvation. All done. Like I'm stuffed now. No. Oh my word. Can you imagine? So why then if we are modeling a biblical framework of forgiveness would I think that limit is required?
- It's not. You know, seriously, you have messed with my head so much. I'm done with you. Three times, whoop, you're out of here. Like, I don't want to see you again. Um, 17 times 7.

[35 : 09] We come back to biblical numbers. It's perfect. It is. This is beyond. It's innumerable. And it hurts. But if we are asked for forgiveness, 17 times 7 means limitless.

That's transactive forgiveness. So, attitudinal forgiveness means that we are to be in a state of readiness to forgive. That gift is ready.

I might not be able to hold it. The Lord's going to help us. Attitudinal forgiveness. We are not to have unforgiveness in our hearts.

And, at the same time, the New Testament is very clear. A forgiven sinner must forgive others. But the condition is clear. Repentance.

So, here's a couple of the big questions then that have hovered in my mind. What if my offender never asks for repentance and doesn't think that they've done anything wrong or they, quite frankly, don't care?

[36 : 18] we've had our answer. I am to model Christ by loving them. Loving them will look different, by the way.

It may not mean wrapping up a little box of chocolates and leaving it on their doorstep and hope that, you know, oh, I've been a naughty girl or a naughty boy now I'm going to cut.

No. Do you know what? Your enemy can be a vile git. I mean, I have no idea what you've experienced in your life. I know what I've experienced.

You know what you've experienced. Loving my enemy may be mumbling and trying and striving to get the words out in a in a weeping rant before the Lord.

Help me, Jesus. That might be loving my enemy one day and that might change over the years. Until the gift of forgiveness is requested from me, it must not only be held by our Lord, but it must be available.

[37 : 31] It remains available. We are in the care of the great high priest. Okay, now here's a real git of a one. What if my offender who has hurt me, I mean, horribly, unimaginably, oh, and I'm angry, and then you know what?

Then they become a Christian. Yeah. They find forgiveness in Jesus. Yay! That's what we want, isn't it? Yes!

You know what? The guess is the right answer, by the way. This just sounds so immature, but I've got to say it.

It's like, really? Where's the justice in that? And the reason why we're going to struggle with it is because when sin has been committed against it, against us, there are consequences for sin.

even if somebody comes for Christ, there is scar tissue. You may bear a big, ugly scar because so-and-so did this to you. And then they find forgiveness in Christ.

[38 : 45] Hmm, cheap. So unfair. So unfair. Where's their justice? Okay. Do you know what? Do you know Jesus has an answer even for that? Do you know that we can't escape God's perfection?

It is mind-blowing. Listen to this. Come, just, that's amazing. Romans chapter 12, verses 18 and following. I have misused this verse all the time for pure fun.

I have been corrected as I have been preparing. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.

To the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink, for by doing so, you will heap burning coals on his head.

Do not overcome, do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Okay. So, God has an answer even for this one.

[39 : 55] We recognize that it is not up to us to take revenge on others who have wronged us. Despite wanting to. Because God has reserved that right for himself.

Every wrong in the universe will ultimately be paid for. Did you know that? Every wrong in the universe will ultimately be paid for. Either it will turn out to have been paid for by Christ when he died on the cross, when our wrongdoer becomes a Christian, or it will be paid for at the final judgment for those who do not trust Christ for their salvation.

So let's come back to the paid for by Christ thing. There's always going to be justice and accountability, but it might just be in the form of the cross for them.

And here is where our hearts are going to be tested. Do we believe that Christ's forgiveness is available even to the vilest offender?

And I mean the vilest offender. Is God's forgiveness available to them? If we don't believe that, then we might just need to step back in our pain and take some time to consider what took place on the cross.

[41 : 32] There is somebody in the UK in a town where we once lived. he murdered his wife. He went to jail.

And while he was in jail, he became a Christian. He got out of jail and lives a very quiet, lonely life.

He's aware of two things. One, he has experienced a forgiveness that he, to even articulate the forgiveness that he has received from Christ blows his brain.

How can God forgive someone like me? That's the one thing. The other thing is he's also very aware that his wife's family had a daughter, a mother, a cousin, a sister, whoever, murdered.

That's painful. Now that's obviously an extreme example, but that's real life stuff. He's aware of that. He lives quietly, grateful that he has received Christ's forgiveness, but painful, and he knows that the damage that he has caused, there are no words to describe it, and he knows that.

[43 : 02] So he lives quietly. And then I think back to what I said yesterday, you know, the person who offended me, you know, they went off all happy, forgiven by Jesus, forgiven by me, just like, yay, whoopee, whoopee, off you go, and then my wrestling match begins.

God, help me, help me not to be angry, help me not to massage and nurture bitterness. forgiveness. But you see, that's, that's the beauty of God's forgiveness, attitudinal forgiveness.

It's the state of our heart. Always be ready to give that gift, transacted forgiveness. The gift should be given when asked.

And in the meantime, where are we? Where we can. of the great high priest. This afternoon, we're going to look at the pursuit of forgiveness. But we're just going to leave that there right now.

And if anyone at any point have questions about anything I've said, please feel free to sidle up to me and have a chat. But we'll leave it there for now.