

# What Kind of Person Forgives

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[ 0 : 00 ] I'm quite certain just after a few of my conversations this past week, the beginning or the introduction of the sermon brought up a few questions with some of you. Perhaps you've thought about them.

Maybe you've talked about them. Maybe you've even had one or two different feelings on the subject. And I know there's some of you who've thought specifically about your own specific situations and how does forgiveness work for me? Well, my prayer is that you will be patient throughout this series.

There's going to be a lot of different scenarios that we're going to talk about, a lot of different aspects of forgiveness. But one of the things that I really want us to hold to is that everywhere or in scripture, forgiveness is always linked to what God has done for us. Okay? I'm going to repeat that. Asking God, asking us to forgive is always linked to what God did for us. This is a very powerful message. I'll just quote a few verses for you. Mark 11 25, Jesus Christ said, And whenever you stand praying, forgive. If you have anything against anyone, so that your Father, also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. Matthew 6 12, in the Lord's Prayer, and forgive us our debt as we have been forgiven ours. Ephesians 5 32, be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you.

And at the conclusion of Colossians 3 13, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you, you also must forgive. I think we can derive from that that forgiveness is important to God. Amen?

[ 2 : 09 ] Amen? It's kind of necessary. For some of you, this is easier than others. And for some of us, it can be really tough. Some of us have had pains that have been done against us that runs tremendously deep in our lives. I mentioned last week, for some of us, our identity is caught up with sin against us.

I have a very sad example of an aunt of mine. Bless the Lord, she's in heaven. But my uncle had sinned against her. He was an alcoholic. It was a very abusive family. And then he passed away. But for over 30 years, she still continued to identify herself with the sin of what my uncle had done against her.

She was just trapped. And in those 30 years, I don't think she made any progression in her spiritual life because everything was rooted to what had been done to her. But I want us to understand something here, guys. I really believe the reason why God is linking this to the sin, to the forgiveness that he offers us, is because he knows how tough it is. And he knows for some of us, it's going to be really tough. And what God is essentially saying, hey, I know how tough it is. And you know what? There's also a cost. You know what that cost was for me. It was my son, Jesus Christ. A part of the forgiveness policy, so we could have forgiveness, a relationship. Someone had to die and that was my son. So it would entirely be hypocritical for you to desire my forgiveness, yet not forgive others.

And we all know the reality that there's countless people who have injured us. False things have been said about us. We've all experienced broken promises. We felt personal rejection. We've been falsely accused.

Last week, I defined forgiveness as a decision to release a person from the obligation that resulted when someone injured us. Okay, I'm going to repeat that. It is a decision to release a person from the obligation that resulted when someone injured us. And I used these word pictures last week.

[ 4 : 58 ] And all these word pictures essentially state throughout Scripture that when I forgive you, I am no longer going to hold that sin against you. I'm no longer going to speak to anyone about that sin.

And I'm not going to dwell on that sin any longer. There was a tragic story. One of my friends, there was adultery in the family, and my friend had sinned against his wife.

And one of the things that we had to deal with as a church leadership is we had to bring her to a point where she said she forgave them. They're still working on their relationship. There's obviously been a lot of pain.

But one of the things that was stopping them from getting traction was she kept reminding him of that sin. Almost every day. You do that again, I'm out of here. You do that again, I'm taking all the money.

You do that again, the kids are gone. Just a constant, constant all the time. Until he finally just said, hey, I can't get anywhere. I'm not forgiven. I'm being beaten up over and over and over.

[ 6 : 09 ] Praise God Jesus doesn't do that to us, right? Can you imagine? I'd be destroyed. I've done some stupid, wicked, evil things just in my heart, my head.

And to be constantly reminded of that, I would feel totally unloved and accepted. So one of the main points that I really wanted to drive home last week is forgiveness is commanded.

Forgiveness is commanded. It's not an option. It's actually commanded. And we actually talked about another way of saying when I talked about the reasons why we forgive.

There's actually fruits of unforgiveness, right? And those fruits include being trapped in the past, right? When we don't forgive, it keeps us trapped in the past, right? We keep that pain alive.

When we don't forgive, it produces bitterness in our heart. One writer, who was actually this NBA player, made this interesting comment during a game.

[ 7 : 18 ] And he says, why wouldn't I forgive that player? He says, for me not to forgive them would be like me drinking poison every day and expecting them to get sick.

I thought that was brilliant. To not forgive is to drink the poison expecting the other person to get sick. It gives Satan a foothold in our life, right?

Unforgiveness violates love. We also read in the pages of Scripture, breaks fellowship with God. And ultimately, it keeps us alone.

Who really wants to have a relationship with someone who doesn't forgive? But ultimately, one thing I need us to keep in mind is that forgiveness is a supernatural act.

The reality is we need forgiveness and we need to forgive if we are to function with one another. One author on the subject simply states, Forgiveness is clearing the rubble of the past so that something fresh and fine may be built in its place.

[ 8 : 30 ] Forgiveness is clearing the rubble of the past so that something fresh and fine may be built in its place.

Last week, I ended the sermon asking you a question. Are you ready to forgive? I hope that you're here.

So please, before we go any further and we get into this letter of Paul to Philemon, I want to ask God's strength for us.

Ask God's permission. And ask God to do a work in our lives so that we would understand this most important subject. Dear Heavenly Father, as we come to you this day, you know each and every one of our stories.

There is nothing that is hidden from your eyes or your mind. You do not turn a blind eye to anything in our lives, O Father. We are really good at hiding things from men.

[ 9 : 39 ] But we are fools to think we can hide from you. Father, right now, I know there's people struggling with the idea of forgiveness. Such words that come up are, I'm not ready.

They haven't asked me for forgiveness. Some people may even be dwelling on the subject of, how can I forgive myself?

Father, I pray as we move through these pages of Scripture that we would be captivated by the people that Paul is writing about.

I ask that you would give us a deep understanding and that we would associate ourselves with the pages of Scripture today. May you use your words to pierce our hearts, inform our minds, and drive our will.

Father, I believe if we are standing in here, or rather sitting here, we desire to be made like you. We want you. We love you. For some of us who are still kind of thinking about Jesus and considering how you fit into our lives, I pray that you would use this as an open door for them to walk through.

[ 11 : 03 ] May this reflect on your character. We see your loving kindness and your divine forgiveness that you grant each and every one of us. A pardon which simply states that our sins are no longer remembered.

So God, I ask that you'd give my voice clarity and you'd give ears to understand and hearts to truly be affected by your words. I ask these things in your name. Amen.

So before I get into this passage, I need to explain the context of this passage to you. It's essentially about three people.

First, it is written by the Apostle Paul. Paul, we believe, is writing this letter from prison. It is believed that this book is written at the same time as the letter to the Church of Colossae, which we know as Colossians, and was delivered to this man Philemon at the same time as Colossians was.

And it was delivered by Paul's faithful friend named Tychicus. The second person in this story is a man by the name of Philemon. We believe that Philemon was a wealthy individual.

[ 12 : 24 ] We believe he was one of the leaders of the Church. And we believe that history tells us that the Church actually met at his home. So as a Christian leader, as the Church and the Gospel came to this small town of Colossae, Philemon got saved, and then he opened his house to become the Church that we know of Colossians.

And the third person in this story is a man by the name of Onesimus. He was a man who was a slave to Philemon.

And we know that he had run away from Philemon. And we also know that he took something that was very valuable to Philemon. And as God would ordain it, he ran away from Philemon and found his way to Rome.

Hidden in the great masses of Rome, thinking he could escape, he ran into a man named Paul, who Paul preached a strong gospel, and Philemon became a brother in Christ.

Now, before I go any further with this, I believe it's important to understand the culture of slavery in the New Testament.

[ 13 : 43 ] When we think of slavery, our minds are brought to the sin that we saw perpetrated to our brothers in the South, right? Where people were enslaved from Africa and brought and made slaves.

That isn't the type of slavery that existed there. That was part of it. Basically, as Rome conquered countries, if you weren't willing to submit, they would not only conquer and kill, but they would take people and put them into slavery.

There was also a different form of slavery. If I had a debt against you, and I could not pay, I could then be legally made a slave to the person that I owed this debt to, to work off, and then I was made free.

And then there was another quadrant of slaves who willingly would come up to a rich landowner or farmer or whatever and say, I would like to give my family in slavery to you, and I would be bound to you for life, not only me, my wife, but also my kids.

And some people would use this as a very harmonious way to live. Now, one of the things that existed in Rome at that time, historians believe that possibly half the Roman Empire were slaves.

[ 15 : 06 ] Think about that. Half the Roman Empire. And it wasn't just by the color of your skin or your nationality. It could be anybody that you went into. You could actually be a doctor, a lawyer.

You could have a different profession as a slave. But one of the things that Rome did in order to keep the stability of the empire together is that if you were a slave who ran away, guess what the penalty was?

Death. The slave ran away. The owner had rights to kill that person. It was the only way in order to have order.

If they allowed people to just run away and not deal with it, it would have killed the whole Roman Empire. So Rome, in their wisdom, decided, hey, we're going to kill anybody who's an escaped slave to stop people from escaping.

It's kind of, if you're a historian of the wild, wild west, you would know another death penalty was if you stole the horse, right? Horse thieves, because that would be a really easy thing to do.

[ 16 : 22 ] So what the laws of the land dictated at that time, we have to put such a severe penalty on it that people won't do it. So this is this context.

So all of a sudden, Philemon hears a... It's not a very good knock, right? That's a little bit better. A knock at the door. He opens the door, and guess who's there?

Onesimus. With a man named Tychicus. And one day I'll teach you about Tychicus. Tychicus is actually one of my favorite characters in all the New Testament. He was a faithful servant to Paul. When Paul wanted to send somebody out with a message that was important, Tychicus was the man who came. So Tychicus kind of traveled with this authority.

Oh, it's Tychicus. This is Paul's guy. And with him was this letter. And this letter is what Dave read to us this morning. So on the subject of forgiveness, Paul identifies for us the qualities of a person that forgives.

[ 17 : 34 ] All right? We're going to be looking at five qualities of a person that forgives. And we're going to see this in the pages. So first I can just read the first seven verses.

That's where we're going to spend our time today. Okay. So it begins, Paul, a prisoner for Jesus Christ, and Timothy, our brother. So Paul, Timothy, another one of Paul's faithful servants, are in prison.

They just get this letter to the church of Colossae. Yet there's this special letter to Philemon that we read here. To Philemon, our beloved fellow worker, and Aphia, our sister, and Archippus, our fellow soldier, and the church in your house.

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints.

Who here wouldn't love to receive a letter that said those words? Wouldn't that be wonderful?

Right? I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, because I hear of your love of the faith and that you have toward the love Jesus and for all the saints.

[ 18 : 55 ] Wow, what a testimony. And I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.

For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my Father, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you. Amen?

That's an awesome letter. I think that's the kind of letter we need to write each other, right? When you see a brother and sister, we need to be encouragers. This is a whole side other note, right? I was just talking about, you know, what vibrant Christian fellowship is supposed to be, and it's supposed to be an encouraging community.

So the first quality of one who forgives, we see, is a love for God. A love for God. If you open up your bulletins, I kind of give you five points to write them down.

It's a love for God. First of all, when you love God, what do you want to do? You want to follow God, right? You want to obey God. And the reality is, as we stated before, forgiveness is a supernatural act.

[ 20 : 06 ] So if I'm going to do a supernatural act, whose power do I do it through? It's got to start with God. It has to start with God.

Notice what he says in verse four in the beginning of five. I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus. Man, that's a great reputation. So Paul immediately is appealing to who he is in Jesus Christ and he loves Jesus. And Paul knows that Philemon cares about God and if he cares about God, he wants to do what God's calling him to do and he heard it from Paphirus, his pastor, and Onesimus, the slave, that Philemon loves God.

But he knows that it has to begin with the supernatural. This is Paul not shining Philemon on. This is Paul praising for Philemon for who he is in Christ.

Philemon loves Jesus. Philemon cares what Jesus wants and he wants to please his master.

[ 21 : 22 ] As a believer in Christ, Philemon has a desire for the Lord and the things of the Lord. Last week I touched on the idea of not wanting to forgive is actually an open rebellion against God.

Think about that, right? To disobey God. We think of, we understand that breaking the Ten Commandments is disobedience against God, but this is one of those serious things. Hey, you have to forgive.

So we need to start thinking about if I'm not willing to forgive, there's something broken. So here, Philemon does not want to disobey God, not at all.

And this is where it begins with us. Forgiveness doesn't come from the flesh, it has to come from the Spirit. Forgiveness has to come from the Spirit.

The reality is, we need God's power to forgive. I'm sure some of you, when you hear about forgiveness, there's no way I could ever do that.

[ 22 : 28 ] And you know what? You probably are right. There is no way in the flesh that you would ever be able to forgive. But, but, but, with the power of the Holy Spirit, God doing a supernatural act in you, you can come to that point to forgive.

And we begin with praying, and by beginning with praying, what are we doing? We're submitting it to God. Amen? We're submitting it to God. And it's okay, to begin with a prayer, God, I don't want to forgive.

It's okay. God, I find it hard to forgive. It's okay. We need to begin with prayer.

And we need to start, Lord, I need to give this to you. Me and my flesh do not want to forgive. The pain hurts.

It's tough. You know what's really interesting about forgiveness, I was thinking about, is sometimes forgiveness is not always, or the unwillingness to forgive is not actually directly correlated to the amount of sin done to us.

[ 23 : 51 ] And what I mean with that, have you ever found yourself in a position, someone just says a simple word that bugs you? Right? And you can't sleep at night and you can't let it go, right?

We're supposed to seek forgiveness for that too. And sometimes, we're easy with the big ones, but it's these small little ones that sometimes get on our minds, right?

We have this nagging feeling. But I'll tell you why those little things bug us. Usually, those small words, usually it's because it insults our pride and it reveals our shame.

That's what usually happens, right? Sometimes it's an inconsequential person. It could be a shopkeeper. Someone just says something, oh man, that bugs me. You know, so I don't want you to think that forgiveness is always for these big things.

Sometimes it's for these small things that seem to affect us. And how do we know we affect us? We lose sleep. We think about it. We're talking about our wife. Can you believe that guy over at the garage?

[ 24 : 53 ] Can you believe he said that to me? Right? We're just dwelling on those things. So the first thing we need to understand is that we need to seek God's power and we need to love God.

So when we say, hey Lord, I am wanting to forgive. I'm actually stating, God, I love you and I want to follow you in this. And I know it's going to be wickedly hard, but I know you are with me.

All right. The second reason that we are to forgive is we're to have a love for people, right? Love for people. Verse five. Paul writes, because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints.

Philemon was known as a man who loved other. He loved other Christians. Now this word love here is translated from the Greek, which is agape, right? This is the love of the will, not a love of the emotion.

So what happens when it's a love of the will is you actually have to choose to love that person.

Right? I got to make that conscious choice that I'm going to love this person.

[ 26 : 07 ] One of the realities is without forgiveness, there can be no enduring relationships. You know that? Without forgiveness, there can be no enduring relationships. People who've been married long time, 30, 40 years, right?

Man, there's plenty of time to pile up a ton of sin in that relationship, right? But in order to have that is they have to have a spirit of forgiveness. Friends who've been friends for a long time, you have to have a spirit of forgiveness.

The easiest person to not forgive is the one you have no relationship with. They're the easiest ones. Who cares? I'm never going to see them again. What does it matter? But that's why we have to make a conscious decision to do it.

Now, some of the questions that come up is, do I approach my brother or sister in the Lord and when not to approach? We're going to talk about that in the next couple of weeks.

We're going to talk about when to seek forgiveness and when to let people know we've been hurt by them because a lot of people hurt us without them knowing, right? Some we know, but some don't know.

[ 27 : 23 ] And it's still hurting us. And we need to forgive them because sometimes they might not do anything. So we're going to talk about that. Some people, we actually need to use that word confront, right?

Sometimes it's hard. I know very few people who love to confront. I'm horrible at confronting. Sometimes I'll let that person, but once I go on, go on, I just don't want to confront it. But what I really need to realize is before God, they're continuing in that sin and I'm not serving them any favors by not confronting. So we're going to actually learn that confronting is actually an act of love.

Doesn't mean we're mean or horrible people when we do it, but to do it with Christ-like love. But right now, I need us to understand that being a follower of Jesus Christ means loving Christians. It means loving Christians. And the desire to forgive people is proof of genuine saving faith. Reading an interesting book that came out in, I think it was the 80s or 90s, probably be the 90s, and a lot of churches really went crazy for this book, and it talked about people with a lot of their issues, and this Christian psychologist or something was writing down, and he had this list of these are the reasons why you're not growing in forgiveness.

[ 28 : 49 ] And I think he had number seven as you need to forgive. I would put forgive top three easy because you've allowed bitterness and all those things.

So when you're wondering why you're not growing spiritually is because you haven't been forgiving. And one of the things to be challenged with, if I am not willing to forgive someone, maybe I'm not saved.

You see, our concern for people gives us the ability to forgive, right? If I want that relationship with someone that I love, I need to be able to forgive.

My love for you requires me to have forgiveness in order to function. If we are to have a true and right relationship, we need to be able to forgive. Forgiveness leads us to reconciliation, and reconciliation leads us to restoration.

The reality is, if we have a key that will release someone from the prison of their sin, why wouldn't we turn it and let them out? If we can forgive a debt that will lift a great burden, why wouldn't we?

[ 30 : 05 ] You see, forgiveness is a direct reflection of who we are. The reality is, if you're the type of person who carries a long list of names, people who hurt you, chances are, you are both short on friends and need to be looking at whether you are truly saved.

It's safe to say that your concern is for yourself and greater than for others. It says, you think more importantly about yourself than them, and it's a clear indication of your spiritual health.

So a person who's willing to forgive, one, has a love for God, two, has a love for people, and three, has a love for the church.

Has a love for the church. verse six. How many of you guys use an ESV Bible? You guys use an ESV? Who's using a New American Standard Bible?

All right. A couple of you guys got New American Standard Bibles. There's going to be a reading here, and I believe the translation in the New American Standard Bible is better than this, but I'm going to explain why.

[ 31 : 25 ] Notice in the ESV, it says, and I pray that the sharing, this is verse six, that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing.

This is a key passage. Now, in your NASB, it says, and I pray that the fellowship of your faith, ESV uses sharing, the NASB uses fellowship, and the reality is it's the Greek term koinonia.

Have you guys heard that word koinonia from the Greek before? A lot of churches call themselves the koinonia church. Anyway, Greek, class 101 in session right now, right?

Koinonia is a very New Testament churchy term, and what it essentially means is the type of fellowship that only exists because we are both saved.

That's essentially what it means. It's this relationship that you and I have. We have a commonality. That's why you can travel anywhere in the world, find a church, sit down, you will make a connection with someone.

[ 32 : 32 ] I have experienced this in China. I have experienced this in France, in England, and yes, even in the United States, right? I sit down with brothers and sisters, they open up, and all of a sudden it's like your best friends.

I've had lunches paid for, people inviting me to stay in their homes. That only happens in the church. You know, that's crazy, and it's a great love that we have.

So, it means like participation fellowship. One book calls it the act of sharing in the activities or privileges of an intimate association of a group because of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Christ. So, what he's saying here in verse 6, I'm going to reread it, right? And I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become more effective for the full knowledge of every good work. And this is really key. Reality is, without forgiveness, there can be no fellowship. Right? We're in this church, and we have no forgiveness. forgiveness.

[ 33 : 43 ] What kind of church do we have? Right? It's like going to a family reunion. You know, everyone's got that one uncle nobody wants to talk to, and nobody wants to address.

Right? That's what happens when we don't forgive. This person comes in and it just kind of messes up what's going on. It destroys the harmony that we're trying to create.

or not create. That should be there. Could be an unresolved issue. It could be a sin. It doesn't matter. But this is what happens in a church where forgiveness does not occur.

And koinonia means so much more than just enjoying one another's company, but it includes the mutual sharing of all life. It's like our growth groups, right?

When there's an issue between two people in the growth group, you know what usually happens? Person doesn't show up. They quit going. And it breaks that fellowship, right?

[ 34 : 43 ] We're used to these same ten people coming around our growth group, but all of a sudden there's a couple missing. And if it's because of some unresolved issue, we're just missing something.

And it's the concept that goes on in our church, right? Now notice the end of this verse. It says, effective for the full knowledge of every good thing. That word effective actually translate as energies, which we get the word energy, okay?

This is so cool. This fellowship is the energy for every good thing that happens in our church. You get that? This is awesome.

This is the gas that keeps us going as a church. If there's no forgiveness in the church, we've got no gas to work.

We just become an empty shell of a bunch of people that meet in a room, hear preaching, whatever, sing some songs, but there's no energy, there's no power there.

[ 35 : 49 ] So what Philemon is being called to do here is to forgive Onesimus, and in so doing, he's sending a powerful message to the church about the importance of forgiveness.

The reality is when we see church leaders or people in the church who are unable to offer forgiveness and seek repentance, it is a death blow to a church. You know that?

It is a death blow to a church. Leaders who cannot model repentance kills the church. And it says right here, effective for the full knowledge of every good thing, without forgiveness, everything else withers and dies.

To not forgive, what does it tell everybody about our church, right? Hey, come over to Squamish Baptist Church. Come and not be forgiven. Right? Come and insult someone easily.

What do we want to be marked as? Right? We're already marked as Christians who both love God, love people, and we love this church and we care about the fellowship that happens here so very much.

[ 37 : 04 ] The character of one who loves Christ is concerned about this church. So one, they have a love for God.

Two, they have a love for others. Three, they have a love for church. And four, they have a love for maturity in others. Love for maturity in others.

I know for some of us, this is hard to understand, but our lives aren't our own. You know that? Our lives are not our own. If you're a single like I used to live for 46 years of my life, it really wasn't all about me.

Right? It's easy to think it is all about you when you're the only person at home, but it really isn't.

How I conduct affects a multitude of people. Check it out, verse 7. For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.

Man, it's like that fragrant aroma. Remember that passage that talks about we can be fragrant aroma? I'm going to tell you, who doesn't want to be around someone that forgives? We want to, right?

[ 38 : 16 ] We can just be ourselves. I remember I was at this church, I was about 25, 26, and I sent out this email, and it was an attachment, and it was a funny email, but there was a wrong word, and I missed the word, and so that church just came down, hammered on me, like, oh, we're going to

remove the Bible study from you because it was, I just missed it, and I remember being at this church camp where I spent a lot of time, and I'd gotten the email when I was there, and I just happened to be one of my other brothers, and he says, isn't it great to be known?

You know, they love me. They know it's a mistake, right, because they're going to think the best. That's who we're supposed to be, to think better of others, right? Philemon here has a reputation for love.

He was an appropriate leader among the people because the reality is forgiveness is tough all around. We need leaders that are going to model this.

Not only are we called to love one and be concerned for fellowship, we as older believers need to be concerned with those who walk with us, and older, I also mean mature. You can be young and mature.

How you act will affect other believers of the faith. We are to be an encouragement to them, to be an example, and guess what?

[ 39 : 39 ] We're to be an encouragement, an example, even when we don't feel like it, right? But we know we have to do it. An example, like how many people really like or feel like getting up at 6 a.m.?

I know there's some of you freaks exist that do that, right? But I don't feel like that, right? But I still have to be if I want to get to work, right? We still have to do what's necessary in order to live. We can't live our life based on feelings. We often get caught up that our feelings are some basis of truth, of reality in our life.

And let me tell you now, and I will repeat it from till I die, or the pulpit is somewhat removed from me, is feelings aren't an indicator of truth, all right? They're not.

They're not truth detectors. Fact is, our feelings are never to be used as an excuse for not listening or obeying God.

[ 40 : 46 ] We see this as a perfect example in the life of David. I've just been reading through the Old Testament. David and King Saul. Remember the story? Dave is hiding out. He knows King Saul is trying to kill him.

And he's hiding out in a cave. And it just so be that Saul needs to sleep. And he comes to the cave where David is actually resting in. Like he's in the back of the cave.

Like he's got a perfect opportunity to take that spear and just set it. David already knows that he's been anointed king. He knows that God has chosen him as king.

But he knows it's not the right time. And as much as he wants to put that spear through Saul, he can get his wife back because I don't know if you remember, he was actually married to one of Saul's daughters.

And when he started to hate David, he took his wife and sent her off to be with another man. Like tell me, that doesn't grind your heart, right? This is the woman you've loved.

[ 41 : 42 ] This was his first wife and she's taken away. So this guy had all the reasons to plunge that spear but he chose not to, right? So love is, forgiveness is a promise.

Now I'm going to interrupt my sermon and do something a little bit different here today. I'm actually going to invite my friend Nathan to come up and I'm going to get Nathan to share a little bit about his testimony and how it relates to the subject of forgiveness.

So please give Nathan a warm welcome. I had the pleasure of getting to know Nathan a few years ago. We started attending our church in Victoria.

So he's an island boy, born and raised, right? So I'm just going to ask him to share with you guys just about how forgiveness has been modeled in his life.

This is my story. This is my story, but more than that it's God's story of power and grace in my life.

[ 42 : 49 ] And I'm sharing this with you with the intention of glorifying the Lord and giving him the credit and the glory for what he did in my life and also as an encouragement to you, hopefully.

My life was going great. I was in my 30s. I had a professional career and a house and I was married, wife with children. I even had the picket fence.

And I did. And religion, for me, sounded like a good idea for people who were insecure or had little in life and it was a hope for them.

But I was doing just fine. So why would I need God? And then one day it all came crashing down and that's when my wife at that time decided she didn't want to be married anymore and very quickly just abandoned everything that we had.

We had children and it was crushing to me and I immediately went into the place. This was probably 2006. So this was before I was saved.

[ 44 : 00 ] I just want to clarify. My immediate reaction was hatred, vengeance, and so many of the verses we heard this morning are completely directed at that, Romans 12 and Ephesians 5 and Philemon.

But I had homicidal tendencies. Literally, I even had a plan. I was so angry at her for throwing away our marriage and our children.

But at first, I tried to do all the right things in the eyes of the world by giving her more than she had an entitlement to and sleeping in the car so she had the house.

But all of this was really the beginning of my grieving cycle. And while I was in a state of absolute grief, feeling rejected and unvalued, I started drinking a lot to help me get to sleep at first and anything that just sort of numbed the pain.

But I was beginning to play the role of the victim when in actuality, I now know it, that I was the offender in God's eyes. But I had no idea at that time I was a sinner.

[ 45 : 19 ] And I certainly never gave any thought to the idea that this was all happening because of my sin. So everyone in my family, my friends, my other people I worked with, they all said, oh, he's a great father, a good man.

He's a good friend. And all of these things seemed true to me. I thought I had tons of accomplishments. But none of it mattered.

And then things took a turn for the worse. My dad had his melanoma, which metastasized, and he was dying quickly.

So I went to tell him, Dad, I know you're dying, but I've just separated and it doesn't look good. And I remember the look on his face of, because he had been married three times, of absolute commiseration for me.

And my dad never cried, but he cried that day. And then I watched him pass away and I went back. And I remember going to church with my dad a lot in childhood.

[ 46 : 31 ] And I remember him loving Jesus and loving the Bible. So I really believe he's in heaven today. Glorify your name.

I often heard about hell as a kid in Pentecostal churches mostly. But I can't remember a single sermon about sin. And I certainly never heard the gospel of salvation.

So I started drinking more as my problems became worse. And then I turned to drugs as well. And I got involved in a relationship with a woman who called herself a Christian, but was actually a satanic witch.

I know it sounds laughable, but the power of her persuasion was in a time of my vulnerability coupled with the seductive nature of what she was offering me.

So her relentless hatred toward my ex-wife and her jealousy was one of her main qualities included my children. And I went along with it because I was following this seduction, looking for a place to help my personal problems, which of course the doctors diagnosed as clinical depression.

[ 47 : 58 ] So after about six different antidepressants, none of which had really any effect, I just bought drugs on the street, Oxycontin and tons of Valium and did a dangerous amount of those things.

The reason why they didn't work is because the doctors didn't have the right diagnosis. I was suffering from quote, congenital human depravity for which the doctors had no cure.

Only the great physician had a cure for that one. I needed a wake-up call and I needed someone to tell me. At this time, I went in front of the Supreme Court judge and I voluntarily laid down my custody and guardianship with my two boys.

I was so stupid, obviously, but I was so blinded by my own self-pity and my own hatred of my ex-wife that I used this as a tool to hurt her.

Just laying it all out here. Because I think in doing so, we'll see the grandeur of his grace. So one night, this witch I was living with for three years cast a curse on my children and all I did was drink a bottle of rye and went to sleep.

[ 49 : 27 ] I was ashamed. So, I lost my career. My boss fired me and he was right to do so.

I missed a lot of shifts. But I had to find some work. So the only job I could find was cutting posts for farms. This is around Princeton area.

So fairly geographically remote. So I got the night shifts, of course. And it was three in the morning or something and I couldn't stay awake. So there was an old ghetto blaster in amongst the sawdust. But because it's way out there, there's no reception. So I spent about three hours of my shift jerry-rigging the speaker wire and some coat hangers. And I literally spent three hours on this. And I thought I was going to reach the BBC. But all I did was found a fuzzy, scratchy radio station and I said, aha, a human voice. I finally can stay awake.

[ 50 : 26 ] But every night, these guys would come on the radio, three in a row. And they would preach. And I thought, oh, this reminds me of my dad. Great. It'll keep me awake. But this last guy, he would come on and he was so sure of himself, confident in what he was saying.

And he didn't have some sort of fancy message. He just opened the Bible. And then he pulled it apart. Just like Greek exegesis, he explained the meaning of the text.

Because if you don't have the meaning of the text, you don't have the Bible. You don't have God's word if you don't understand it. That's what he said. And I believed him. And it turns out one night, he was preaching on love.

And his text was Ephesians 5. Be, therefore, imitators of God as beloved children and walk in love just as Christ also loved you.

and gave himself up for us. An offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. And I was convicted. Do you hear the gospel in that?

[ 51 : 39 ] Because I sure didn't until, by the way, this guy was John MacArthur in case you're wondering. And the radio station was on, it was called Grace to You. That's his ministry. But after months of listening to his preaching, expository preaching, by the way, exposing what God said, this night, listening to Ephesians 5, convicted me completely of my sin against him in that I was not going to be able to be an imitator of God or walk in love in a way of dying.

Dying for people who hate you like Christ did for us. That's why it's a fragrant aroma. Anyway, that night in the bucking deck amongst a myriad of tears of conviction, by the way, going one verse at a time is extremely painful.

Not for those who are regenerated, but for those who have been convicted of their sin by the Holy Spirit and are desperately needing salvation.

Going one verse at a time hurts. But, that's the scalpel quality of the word of God. It's a hammer that shatters, but it's also a scalpel that can clean up all of the sin.

So, I begged God to forgive me. I knew that I wasn't worthy of it, but I knew from Ephesians 5 that atonement had been made for my sin in Christ and my trust in Him was a sufficient sacrifice for my salvation.

[ 53 : 22 ] So, I put all my trust in Him. And, almost immediately, I had an immediate sense of emancipation from that guilt. The very thing that caused me to make all these bad decisions in the past.

So, I said to the witch, I'm going to get my boys. It was almost an immediate transformation. I had no clue.

I had no money. I had no plan. I got in the car at 3 in the morning, but before I did, I pulled my drawer and that's where all my drugs were because, you know, you're not going five minutes down the street if you're addicted to drugs without your stuff.

I slammed that thing shut and I said, I don't need that stuff anymore. And, that's what's certainly a true statement. My hope was in Christ now.

And, so I came back to the island. My brother helped me. I had to do the hardest thing in my life, which was to go to my ex-wife and ask her to forgive me. And, it wasn't perfect, but, I got my boys back within weeks.

[ 54 : 52 ] So, here's the forgive yourself part. it's, it's something I still have to remember and, and remember that guilt of the past and it's a temptation to even sin now to not remember that it's an all sufficient sacrifice.

Within weeks, I had my boys back in my life 50% of the time. I made it a priority to pay off all the reviers for child support. And then, God gave me a love for his word.

God, so, right around this year, Grace to You Ministries opened up the vaults on all John MacArthur sermons. They're free. You name the topic and I was like, clickety, clickety, click, like a kid in a candy store.

I couldn't get enough of the Bible because it was becoming alive because of great expository preaching. When I came back to the island to get my kids, I also got my career back and I met a woman.

God gave me a godly woman to be my wife and I had no plan for that. I certainly wasn't looking for it but he knew how desperately I needed her and she's a great support.

[ 56 : 07 ] Anyway, nowadays, we have a blended family and her story is similar to mine. But God's put us together. We have five kids together. The kids now watch us, you know, interacting with our exes in a way that's loving and they see us, there's a stigma and I think it even exists in the church with blended families.

Those have been divorced but there's more power in seeing the power of forgiveness in lives lived out than there is in stigma and divorce. I know God hates divorce but he's forgiving and this is an opportunity for us to let your light so shine so men can see your good works so that they may glorify your father in heaven.

So how can we tell people to be reconciled to God if we ourselves can't even begin by demonstrating that in our own lives? We, my wife Christina, her husband also left her and there was a great amount of child support owing and now Christina has, you know, it's a large amount and she told her ex she was writing off the debt.

The kids, the kids see a new creation.

Our exes see a new creation. So, I just want to encourage you with those words to show that you're a new creation and it's all through his power and for his glory.

[ 58 : 06 ] Okay, thanks. Thanks. Thanks. Thanks. Thanks. Thanks. Thanks. Thanks. Thanks. Thanks. Thanks. Just to bring you guys, is my mic on now?

Yeah, just to bring you guys a little bit up to date, I had the pleasure of bringing Nathan down to meet John MacArthur down in California and Nathan has now started studies at the Master's Seminary. So, God indeed forgives and he does show us grace and mercy, does he not?

So, that brings me to my final point, guys, is those who forgive have a love for God's glory. Those who forgive have a love for God's glory.

Verse 6, it reads, every good thing is in us for the sake of who? Christ, right? It's for the sake of Christ.

It goes along with both love and unity. The only reason we can have testimony if it's in for Christ's glory, not our own. It's one of our chief witnesses.

[ 59 : 10 ] We are to be united church, a loving church, and a forgiving church, as we are to be united in our relationships. One of the chief reasons for not forgiving is that we do not trust God, right?

Remember I said that last week. Some believe that if I forgive, it must mean that they do not deserve justice. It must mean that they are right. It must mean that they are free of consequences. It must mean that the sin was not serious. That has nothing to do with it. None of those things happen. What it means is when you forgive, you are trusting God to be the deliverer of justice. You are trusting God to be the deliverer of justice. Often when we refuse to forgive others and seek our own revenge, we usurp God's authority. We think that by not forgiving, we are punishing, and we presume to be the judge for God.

When we say this or do this, we are saying A, God is unjust, God is indifferent, and God is unable to judge. And guess what? Those are all lies and blasphemy.

[ 60 : 23 ] The reality is God is far more able to deal with offenses against us than we are able. So I want to assure you in conclusion, one, God has complete understanding of our situation.

two, God has supreme authority. Three, God is impartial and just. Four, God is omniscient and eternal.

And lastly, God is wise and good and does everything for his glory. Amen? Let us pray. Godpor■■■  
os hepísimo listen it's good and can you wait?