

Be Different Part 6: Unchained

Objective: To encourage us to make the difficult choice to forgive those who have hurt us so that we can be free from our past hurts.

Read together:

Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. 9 Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For, “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. 11 They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it.

I Peter 3:8-11

And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.6 For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. 7 But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

Now hurry back to my father and say to him, ‘This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don’t delay. 10 You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me—you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. 11 I will provide for you there...

Genesis 45:5-7, 9-11

Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God?20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. 21 So then, don’t be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.” And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

Genesis 50:19-21

- Why do you think past hurts tend to linger with us longer than past victories/joyful experiences?
- When you've been hurt, does the impact of the pain depend on who hurt you or all hurts equal?
- Why do you think we have such a hard time letting go of past hurts? Think about your own past hurts; do you want to let them go or do you want to stay chained to them?
- Can you think of an example where being chained to the past has damaged or destroyed a present relationship? If you are comfortable, share some of that story with the group.
- Do you think a misunderstanding of what forgiveness is and is not has made it hard for you (or someone you know) to choose to offer forgiveness for past hurts?
- The pastor said that forgiveness is a choice. When we forgive we choose to cancel the debt, trust God in spite of our pain and even to bless those who have hurt us. Does that definition change the way you view forgiveness? Does it make it easier or harder for you to forgive past hurts?
- How would your relationships be different if you were made the choice to be unchained from your past?

Final Thought: When I make the choice to offer forgiveness, I am unchained from my past and I open the door to a new and better future for me and for those around me.

