



Sermon Title: 2 Corinthians – Our Comfort part 3

Sermon Title: Forgiven and Free

Date: March 27, 2022

The underlying theme of what Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 1:23 – 2:11 is forgiveness. The Corinthian church treated Paul unfairly and deeply grieved him. Yet, Paul chose to forgive them. Forgiveness is the reason that Paul is able to carry on in his relationship with the Corinthians, and he instructs them to offer forgiveness to the man who hurt them.

Big Idea – Unforgiveness Imprisons You, Forgiveness Frees You

Unforgiveness Imprisons You

Unforgiveness takes you captive and prevents your minds from moving forward after hurt, it prevents growth in your relationships, and it prevents you from truly drawing close to the Lord. Whenever you are wronged, that means that something is stolen from you – whether it was your peace, dreams, a childhood, etc.

Forgiveness goes against our human nature. If we forgive, it feels like it would be diminishing the severity of the offense, and forgiving means giving up our right to get back at the person who hurt us.

In our passage today, Paul explains that a man stole from the Corinthians. He stole their trust, their peace, their reputation regarding what Paul thought of them – yet Paul tells them to forgive him because he knows that unforgiveness will prevent the growth of the relationships within the church. Paul also knew the schemes of the Satan, and he knew that unforgiveness would eventually permeate many relationships within that church.

When Jesus was crucified on the cross He said *“Father forgive them because they don’t know what they’re doing.”* In saying that Jesus was surrendering His right to hurt His accusers and executioners for hurting Him. Now, it’s important to understand that Jesus was not a victim **John 10:18**.

Nonetheless, the Roman guards did execute Him. They were guilty - yet by forgiving them Jesus cancelled the debt that they owe him. He and set the example for forgiveness.

Forgiveness Frees You

Forgiveness provides freedom to victims, healing in relationships, and unhindered worship. Choosing to forgive breaks chain that ties us to events of the past, providing us the chance to heal from the hurts of our past. God tells us that we need to get rid of them by forgiving. **Colossians 3:13**

The intent of this message isn't to make forgiveness sound like its something really easy to do. It's not. The reality is even mature Christians struggle to forgive. God knows that you will never experience healing and freedom until you forgive the people who offended you.

Forgiveness isn't just a small thing in the bible- it is everything. As you listen to this message maybe you realize you are holding on to unforgiveness and you know you should move towards forgiving someone else but you aren't sure how to do that. In order to truly forgive someone there are some necessary steps that must happen.

One helpful tool that lays out the steps for us is the REACH model of forgiveness that was created by Dr Everett Worthington. REACH is an acronym where each letter stands for a word

R = Recall the hurt. In order to heal, you have to admit that you've been hurt
E = Empathize with the other person. This isn't saying the other person was right in any way for doing what they did. Rather it's seeing the other person as broken as we are all broken people

A = Altruistic gift. Forgiveness is an unselfish gift to others. It's not that the other person earned the forgiveness but by forgiving them you are offering them a gift.

C= Choose to forgive. Forgiveness is making a deliberate choice to forgive someone who hurt you.

H = Hold onto forgiveness. When we forgive someone it is something we need to recommit to do every day. It is not a one time thing – it is ongoing. When you wake up each morning you need to make the choice again to forgive the hurt that was done to you. And the longer you forgive someone the easier it will get. Choose to hold onto forgiveness even when the emotions of the past try to revisit you.

God is a forgiving God, Christ is a forgiving Lord, and a truly godly person will be known because he or she has a forgiving heart. God forgave so much more than we can ever imagine. He forgave us a debt that is unpayable, providing us with a chance to have unhindered worship, and therefore, He expects us to freely forgive others. Make the choice to forgive.

Discussion Questions:

- What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?
- What are the benefits or detriments of forgiving?
- How has the internet and social media impacted the attitude of forgiveness in others?
- Is it ever acceptable to NOT forgive? Explain
- Is forgiveness a sign of weakness? Are forgiving people just getting steamrolled?
- How do you forgive someone when you don't feel like it?
- Are you called to forgive someone who refuses to change? Explain
- When someone forgives you do you receive it well or do you struggle with it?