



WEEK 3 – I'M NOT THAT GIRL

CHECK-IN

How are you? Where have you seen God working in your life in the last week? And... today, we're going to talk about a major turning point in the journey of forgiveness, where things don't look like they used to. So, what has changed most about your personality in the last 10 years? Have you "grown up" and gotten more responsible? Or have you given up on growing up, and it's rebellion time! Share!

OPENING PRAYER

God of Transformation, help us to let go of what was, and live into the person you would have us be.

INTRODUCTION

Today, we reach a pivotal moment on our forgiveness journey. Remember, forgiveness is actually a process with 4 steps, and today is one that sets us up for life moving forward. We began week 1 with

step 1, *Absolution*; that is, making the initial decision to choose grace over the grudge, refusing to let the injury hold power over us. Absolving someone is not saying that what they did was okay, or that everything is now fine. You're simply releasing the pain, and letting the offender know it. Then, last week, we talked about step 2, healing. Absolution frees you from the chains of the hurt, healing begins now that you can start walking. It begins with removing the negative behaviors that keep us in the hurt, and becomes most efficacious when we take on the positive behaviors that begin to mend us. When we've worked this step for a while, we run into pivotal point on the journey that will free us up to complete it. And if we don't take this step, we may end up stuck in the healing process forever.

Intro Question: If you are in a situation where you are on the journey of forgiveness... how's the healing coming? Have you been able to take off the negative behaviors and put on the positive? What would make the healing easier?

THE SONG

Well, ladies and gentlemen, we've moved from the first act to the second, in both this series and the musical. We finished last week with the showstopper, Defying Gravity, and Elphaba, (the misunderstood "wicked" witch,) deciding the next steps of her journey and having to take it alone. This path ultimately brings her to a crossroads. She is standing at a moment of painful clarity, realizing that the world doesn't see her the way she hoped and that her

dream, her longing, her love, may not come true. She's not the fairytale heroine; she's the misunderstood outsider. And in that moment, she finally admits this...

Listen to “I’m Not That Girl” from wicked. (Movie or Broadway, your choice.)

For Elphaba, this not just heartbreak, it's identity break. Elphaba sees that the picture she had of herself, the one shaped by longing and comparison doesn't match the reality of who she is. It's raw. It's humbling. And it's deeply human. Earlier in the show, Elphaba envies Glinda her beauty, charm, and ease in the world. This song is the turning point where envy starts to dissolve into acceptance. She stops fighting who she isn't and begins to face who she is.

Question 1: Consider the lyrics. What themes emerge from Elphaba's realization? What feelings catch your attention as she considers this turning point in her journey?

THE SCRIPTURE

So, we've absolved the person, said, "I forgive you," and released the chains of the hurt. We've begun to heal, removing the negative behaviors that hold us down and adding the positive ones that move us forward. Do we just keep doing this until what happened fades into a distant memory? Not exactly, we have two more pivotal moments that can put some finality to our forgiveness journey. The first comes

from yet another verse in the chapter we've been living with from Paul's letter to the Colossians. Let's take a look.

Read Colossians, chapter 3, verse 10.

Put on your new nature. When one chapter of life closes, God invites us to clothe ourselves in something new... a new life, a new purpose, a new character, that may not look like what it did before the hurt happened. When we live into this new creation, everything changes.

Question 2: What do you think Paul means? If you were listening to this being read to you in the first century in Colossae, what would you have thought? Would you have been encouraged, challenged, or would you have cocked your head to the side and replied, "huh?"

REFLECTION

In this quiet, mournful song, "I'm not that girl," you can hear the first seeds of a transition taking root, not through power or magic, but through self-awareness and surrender. For us, this same sort of transition on the forgiveness journey begins with the same honesty. As we are healing, we admit, "I'm not that person anymore," or, "I'm not who I thought I'd be." And God replies, "Good. Now I can show you who you truly are." All this leads to step 3 on our forgiveness journey...

TRANSFORMATION

Transformation can take many forms. Sometimes, it comes through our intentional effort. But often, transformation comes when life doesn't go as planned. It's not always chosen, sometimes it's forced. Yet, in these moments, God can do His deepest work – reshaping our identity, not around what we do, but around who we are in Him. In our verse from Colossians, Paul reminds us to “put on the new self, and be renewed as you begin to know your Creator.” Transformation begins when we stop clinging to who we thought we'd be and start becoming who God has always known we are. That's what transformation is all about—taking off the old self, the guilt, the bitterness, the fear, and putting on something new—something redeemed and fully alive in Christ. As we heard in the song, “I'm Not That Girl,” we're reminded that we're not who we used to be—and thank God, we don't have to be.

Question 3: When have you had a *transformation* moment in your life? That is, share a pivotal moment in your life when you were faced with leaving behind the person you were and beginning a new chapter in your life. (This can be difficult to share. Hold space for the emotions involved.)

What can help us embrace this transformation and let go of the old self that keeps us in the hurt? Well, on Sunday, Randy gave us clue. If we look at the original Greek in which this verse was written, the word that Paul uses for “being renewed” is in what you might call the present continuous tense. That is, it might be better translated, “be renewed and *keep on being* renewed.” This means that

transformation might be a daily decision. You might need to remind yourself to take off something of that old self, and put on something that defines the new self daily. “Some days it feels like progress; other days, it feels like starting over. But each time you choose love over anger or forgiveness over bitterness, you’re becoming more like your Creator.” (Randy) Transformation begins when we realize we’ve changed. It starts with recognizing that we’re no longer who we were. We don’t have the job we thought we would. We don’t have the relationships we thought we would. We don’t have the life we thought we would be living. Before God can renew you, you have to notice that you’ve outgrown your old self. “Putting on the new self” means letting go of the old identity, the one shaped by hurt, guilt, or pride, and choosing to clothe yourself in who you’re meant to be in Christ. Transformation doesn’t erase your past; it redefines it.

Question 4: Given your answer to the previous question, would this understanding have made it easier? Or, consider this in context of a forgiveness journey that you’re on... what does the transition look like? What do you need to leave behind and what would the new you look like?

CLOSING

So, step one is absolution... make the initial step to drop the chains of grudges and revenge. This allows you to begin the 2nd part of the journey, healing... acknowledge that the work is just beginning, and letting go of the negative things that hold you back from walking the path, and then clothe yourself with the things that will move you

down the path. But now, we reach a point at the top of the hill, the point beyond which you have to let go of who you've been. Take this step, transformation. Let go of the person you were when the injury occurred and be renewed into a new Creation. Because, when God renews your heart, He also renews your vision. You begin to see yourself through grace, not guilt, and others through compassion, not condemnation. Transformation changes how you think, how you respond, and how you love. Absolution sets you free. Healing makes you whole. Transformation makes you new. And that's the journey of grace, from who we were... to who we're becoming, a new Creation in Christ.

**Take some time to share prayer requests or celebrations
and close in prayer.**