

# Nathan Rambeck -- Biblical Forgiveness - Practicing Forgiveness

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 18 July 2021

Preacher: Nathan Rambeck

[ 0 : 00 ] on forgiveness, which is how we practically show mercy, just as God has shown mercy to us. Out of an abundance of love for what He's done for us, we ought to forgive others and show mercy as well.

Before I get started, as we've been on this topic of forgiveness, one of the books that I have turned to that's helped me think through this topic of forgiveness is this book, and I've shared it before, but I don't know if I'll remember this at the end, by author Chris Bronze called Unpacking Forgiveness.

He gets into every detail you could possibly imagine. Forgiveness can be a weighty topic and also complex. There's all kinds of situations and scenarios. You know, that we can find ourselves in, and He hits a lot of them.

And, you know, you try to hit the principles, right? But I think He's done a great job of trying to unpack forgiveness and doing it from a biblical perspective.

That's what we need, right? The world has all kinds of answers. We can kind of come up with our own ideas, but we want to live life according to what the Scriptures tell us. So, Unpacking Forgiveness.

[ 1 : 24 ] If forgiveness is something you really want to dig in more, besides the Bible, I would recommend this book. But, since this is our fourth week, this was supposed to be three weeks, but since I'm long-winded, and Pastor Marv decided he wanted another week of breaks, so we're doing a fourth week and really getting into the topic of practicing forgiveness.

So, just a kind of quick overview. The first week we talked about forgiveness between us and God. God's forgiveness of us, His mercy in our lives, and what He has done, and how we receive forgiveness, what that forgiveness looks like, its breadth, its scope.

What is forgiveness? So, forgiveness is putting something away, putting away a debt. And we think about, in financial terms, it's a financial debt that you might have incurred.

And if somebody forgives that financial debt, they've put it away. They've taken it off the books. What is the purpose of forgiveness? And as we've gone through and talked about this, we're trying to relate, one, God's forgiveness and our relationship with Him, His forgiveness toward us, and then relating that towards our forgiveness of one another.

We ought to forgive as God forgives us. But the purpose of forgiveness is what? Why did God forgive us? Why did He offer us His mercy?

[ 3 : 09 ] Because He wanted us to be reconciled to Him. He wanted relationship with us, that reconciliation. Paul says in 1 Corinthians that we have this ministry, 2 Corinthians, we have this ministry of reconciliation, where we're telling the whole world, hey, listen, good news, you can be reconciled to God.

It's called the ministry of reconciliation. And then what is the extent of God's forgiveness? And the extent that we should forgive others. God's mercy has no end.

His mercies are new every morning. And then we talked about the conditions of forgiveness. Is forgiveness something that God requires that we do anything?

Does God just forgive everybody in the whole world automatically? Or is there a condition? And He requires that we turn to Him. And it's not a big requirement.

Some people add all these things that you have to do. You have to do all these religious rituals or tasks, or you have to keep the law, or whatever. But God says, no, that's not it.

[ 4 : 21 ] But we do have to do one thing. Or I guess we could say two things. This is kind of how I put it. We have to humble ourselves. Say, God, you know what?

You're right. I'm wrong. I'm a sinner. And humble ourselves to admit that we need Him and then put our faith in Him and what He did for us through Christ.

We talked a little bit about the difference between worldly forgiveness and biblical forgiveness. We looked at the definitions of forgiveness today. If you open up a modern dictionary, it talks about forgiveness as, or even a modern psychology book, it talks about forgiveness as more of a therapeutic exercise where we do something to kind of release our own resentment, release our own bitterness, or something like that.

And while those things may happen, while they may occur, that's not the reason why we forgive. We don't forgive others for ourselves.

We forgive as God forgives. God did not forgive us so that He could feel better. God forgave us because He loved us, because of His great love.

[ 5 : 38 ] And so we forgive others because of that love that He has put and poured into our hearts. So today we're going to continue on with talking about some practical things regarding forgiveness.

Forgiveness is something that we have an opportunity to put into practice, what, every day? Sometimes multiple times a day? And so I think if we are diligent to put into practice the principles of forgiveness for those small little infractions and offenses each and every day, it will, one, make forgiveness for the bigger things easier, will be practiced up for it, but also it will prevent the little offenses from turning into big ones.

So, the first thing we talked about, again, this is a review from last week, is something that's related to forgiveness, but I think we shouldn't confuse it with forgiveness.

And that is the principle of overlooking a sin. It says in Proverbs 19.11, the discretion of a man, again, Proverbs 19.11, the discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression.

So we have plenty of opportunities every day to take offense at the small things. And we ought to, in many cases, just overlook them.

[ 7 : 23 ] Someone cuts you off in traffic. Somebody says something that was not thoughtful, right? Somebody didn't think through how they said something.

And those are opportunities where we can just overlook. We're not going to register that. We're not going to put it on the books. It's not forgiveness, because forgiveness is when we have a debt that's incurred, and then we put it away.

But overlooking is saying, hey, that's not enough where I'm going to actually register that. We talked about the example of that from the Andy Griffith show, which I found out this last week.

We have some friends that have not watched that show, which I think is a problem. But no, I never want to encourage people to watch TV.

But if you're going to watch television, that's probably one of the better shows you could spend your time on. But there was an episode with Barney Fife, and Barney Fife is especially dutiful in his deputy role.

[ 8 : 42 ] And there's an episode called Citizen's Arrest, where he registers every small offense. He hands out parking tickets and pedestrian violations to everybody on the street.

Every small little thing. He passes out a ticket, and he's writing tickets to everybody. By the end of the show, the entire town is just up to here with him. And if you look at the actual law, right?

He was going by the book. He was following the rules to the minutest detail. But what happened? He didn't have that foundation of mercy, which we ought to have.

And because of it, caused all kinds of strife in the community. And at the end, he makes a minor infraction in his police vehicle.

And somebody comes, and they do a citizen's arrest. And it plays out for lots of laughs and is fun. But I thought it was a great example of how we ought not to write those tickets for every little infraction.

[ 9 : 44 ] Some things we just overlook. But at the same time, we can't overlook everything. Some things really do cause real harm, real pain.

And forgiveness, the whole practice of forgiveness, is where we deal with an offense. We have to deal with it. When you overlook an offense, you're not dealing with it. And many times, that's fine.

We don't need to deal with it. Just move on. But sometimes, even small offenses, right, can add up day after day, week after week. And we do need to deal with them.

If we just overlook them, then it's going to cause that estrangement in our relationship, that thing which is what sin does, right?

It causes a separation. Our sins will create a separation between us and God, or have. And then even in our interpersonal relationships, if we have offenses that are not dealt with, that need to be dealt with, then it'll cause that separation.

[ 10 : 48 ] That's not what we want. That's not what God wants. The next thing we talked about was one of the necessary parts of forgiveness, forgiveness sometimes, is asking for an apology.

Now, in the best circumstance, we don't have to ask for an apology, right? There's an offense committed, and the offender, if you will, they immediately recognize that they've done something wrong, that they've offended, that they've sinned against somebody, that they've hurt them.

They immediately recognize it, and immediately apologize, and turn from that offense, and ask for forgiveness. But that does not always happen.

So, in Luke 17, 3, we talked about this. Jesus says this, he says, Take heed to yourselves, if your brother sins against you, rebuke him.

And if he repents, we forgive him. So, forgiveness is something that we want to constantly offer to others.

[ 12 : 04 ] We want a foundation of mercy and forgiveness in our lives. But we do need to deal with offenses as they come. And part of that is we need the other person to admit their faults, to show signs of repentance and humility.

And once that happens, we can complete the transaction and offer that forgiveness. So, and there are ways that we can ask for that apology, and it doesn't have to always be, in this passage, it uses the term rebuke, which sounds very harsh.

But asking for an apology doesn't have to be harsh, right? Sometimes it's just, hey, you know what? You said this, and it came across, you know, really negatively or whatever.

And, you know, it hurt my feelings, whatever it might be. And it's a nice, gentle, rebukes can be gentle, but it's just a correction. And sometimes it's very slight, very gentle.

Other times, rebukes need to be sharp. If somebody's doing something very dangerous, sometimes a strong, sharp rebuke is necessary. Then we talked about how to give a robust apology.

[ 13 : 30 ] And if you are the one that is offended, it's important to communicate in as clear of terms as possible that you are sorry, that you understand, that you realize that what you did was wrong, and that you're seeking after their forgiveness.

So we talked about three steps, and, you know, we can add three steps for this and three steps for that, but it's good to practice maybe these three things, but not every apology necessarily needs to have all these things.

But if you want to do a really good one, this is what I think about. One, just admitting that what you did was wrong. What I did was wrong. I did this, this, or this.

We don't want to say, well, I'm not sure what I did, but, right? That's not really an apology. That's not recognizing that you made an offense. So we want to recognize what we did.

What I did was wrong, and spell it out. I did this, this, or this. And the number two, I'm sorry. So make the apology explicit.

[ 14 : 45 ] Sometimes we think, oh, well, I just admit that what I did was wrong, and then it's supposed to be assumed that I'm sorry. And that can be fine sometimes, and I think if we're on the other side, and we don't get that explicit, I'm sorry, then we shouldn't make a big deal about it.

But, at the same time, if we have the opportunity, when we communicate, right, we can go that extra step to be very explicit, very clear, very robust in our apology.

So say explicitly, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have done that. And the number three, ask for forgiveness. Will you forgive me? We shouldn't assume that we'll get the forgiveness, though as Christians, we ought to be always ready and willing to forgive.

But I think it's good faith. It's good practice to ask for that forgiveness. And then, like I said, be willing.

If those three steps aren't taken explicitly, we don't necessarily need to say, well, you skipped step number two, right? We should be willing to accept even a poor apology.

[ 16 : 03 ] Right? It doesn't have to be robust. Sometimes, somebody might just say, you know what, you're right. And that's it. And I think that should be good enough.

We don't need to make somebody do penance, you know, grovel, do any of those things. Sometimes, you're right, or I shouldn't have done that.

I think it's good enough. But at the same time, we don't want to accept fake apologies, and we talked about that last week. I'm sorry your feelings were hurt, but, or, I'm sorry, but if you hadn't have done this, this, or that, right?

Those are fake apologies. It's not a real apology. And so, when we give an apology, it needs to be, it needs to be real, it needs to be genuine. And, we need to, if, what happens if somebody gives a fake apology, and we give what really, I think, turns out to be a fake granting of forgiveness?

You haven't dealt with that thing, right? We're just going through motions, and we haven't really dealt with the, with the issue at hand, with the offense. We need to deal with it in real terms.

[ 17 : 15 ] And so, sometimes, we need to work through that, and say, you know what? That's not good enough. I need you to really understand that what you did was wrong. What you did really hurt. And, until you, until you can get there, you can't really have that, that robust dealing with the situation.

So, that was giving an apology. Sometimes, we need to ask for that apology, like we said. And, sometimes, that can look like, here's just an example.

What you did hurt me. I really want to forgive you. It's good to communicate to people, before we grant that forgiveness, that we are willing to, that we really want to have that offense dealt with.

But, then say, listen, I need an apology for that offense. And, sometimes, you don't, sometimes, you don't necessarily need to go through all those steps before somebody is willing to recognize, okay, yeah, I do need to apologize.

But, some people are knuckleheads. And, they need the full, all three steps. They need an explicit request. for an apology. Next is, next, and I don't think we got here last week, so we'll, kind of, slow down a little bit.

[ 18 : 43 ] And, we're going to talk about how to grant forgiveness. So, somebody has asked for an apology, or maybe they haven't yet, but, or somebody's asked for an apology, and, the next step is to grant that forgiveness.

forgiveness. And so, again, with, with the goal in mind is that we want reconciliation. We want the relationship to be reconciled. we can say, one, thank you for an apology.

So, if you're taking notes and you want to write down step one, two, and three, we'll give them to you. But, number one, thank you for apologizing. I think it's important to acknowledge when an apology is given.

Some of us are uncomfortable with receiving an apology. It feels uncomfortable. I'm not sure why.

Maybe we think we're not important enough or we're just not comfortable for whatever reason with that. And, I felt that way at times. Well, you don't really need to say you're sorry.

[ 19 : 51 ] When actually, sometimes, it is very important for somebody to go through that step. And, if we say something like, oh, you don't really need to apologize, even though they do, then sometimes people don't need to apologize.

So, in that case, it's fine. But, there are cases where somebody needs to apologize and we need to recognize that and not take away that opportunity. And so, somebody might say, oh, well, don't worry about it.

Or, oh, it's not a big deal. And, we need to be careful about saying those kinds of things when somebody is trying to show contrition.

And so, instead of saying, don't worry about it, say, oh, well, thank you for the apology. That's what we can say instead. A lot of times, we're just uncomfortable because there's, it creates friction, you know, between us, they did something, but I'd really rather not deal with it, but we should deal with it.

And, if they're willing to apologize, we need to be willing to recognize that and say, thank you. Recognize that it was appropriate. And then we communicate clearly with our mouth, I forgive you.

[ 21 : 00 ] So, again, not, no big deal, not, don't worry about it, but I forgive you. Or, I'm happy to forgive you. That's even better, right? Or, even something like, of course, I forgive you.

Because, ultimately, we want to communicate what Jesus taught, that 70 times 70, we should be willing to forgive those who sin against us, who offend us.

Of course, I'll forgive you. Explicit communication, when it comes to forgiveness, especially, is always better than inferred. We don't want people to infer that we've forgiven them.

We want it to make it clear. And then the last step, I think, is to, in our hearts and in our minds, to wipe away that debt.

So, if we say the words, but we hold on to the offense in our heart or in our minds, then, we haven't really completed that transaction.

[ 22 : 09 ] And, what happens a lot of times, right, is that there is a record kept, right, for next time.

This is going to happen again, or maybe it will be something else, and I'll hold on to this record so I can have something extra to hold against them.

Is that what God does with us? No. Not at all. And to get into, to get into this a little further, I had taken questions, and we'll hopefully have time for some additional questions at the end of this service.

But we had some people put some questions back in the offering box, and I think one of them was regarding this question of forgetting offenses.

Is it necessary or required that we forget? You know, we forgive, but then do we always have to forget? So I want to speak to that. You know, nowhere in the Bible, I think, is it, in my estimation, in my kind of looking at the scriptures, are we told that we should forget?

[ 23 : 22 ] I don't even know that we have the ability to forget offenses that are committed against us. But we do have some scriptures that talk about God forgetting or not remembering our sins.

Isaiah 43, if you've got your Bibles, you can open up to Isaiah 43, verse 25. Isaiah 43, 25 says this, I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.

I won't remember them. And then also, next door to Isaiah in the book of Jeremiah, chapter 31, verse 33, it says this, but this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days.

He's talking about the new covenant. I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord, for they all shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquities, and here's the kicker, and their sin, I will remember no more.

Even in Micah, and you don't have to go to this, but in Micah, there's this picture given. He says, he will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities.

[ 24 : 48 ] You will cast all of our sins into the depths of the sea. That's quite a picture, right? Our sins going into the depths of the sea. So, do these scriptures mean that God actually forgets?

You know, I think if anybody has the ability to forget our sins, to forget an offense, it's the Lord. Whether this means that he actually forgets them, or if it's more of a figure, I think the important thing to look at right here is that God treats us as if the sin never happened.

he doesn't hold it until later on when he might bring it back up. The offense is wiped away for good. All of our offenses.

And so, we ought to be willing, I think, to do exactly what the Lord did for us. So, we might not be able to forget.

the memory might haunt us, it might come up again in the future, especially if there's another offense that comes up, right, and this happens a lot. Oh, they just did that.

[ 26 : 03 ] Oh, I remember when they did something like that before. It's hard to forget. But, should we bring it up? Should we bring up the memory, or should we lay it to rest and keep it in the depths of the sea?

That's what we ought to do. So, I think there's two things that we can, as far as forgetting, or at least not bringing up past sins, is one, more externally, so don't voice those things, don't bring them up, if there's an opportunity to.

Don't bring it up again. But then also, on the inside of us, I think there's an opportunity, because we have a tendency, right, to dwell on things.

And so, you might say, well, I'll never bring that up again, but we end up in our hearts dwelling on it, you know, day after day.

And I think that we need to be careful about that. Put those things away, don't bring them up, and don't dwell on them anymore. So, there's a proverb that goes with this, like with many principles in the Bible.

[ 27 : 18 ] Proverbs chapter 17, verse 9. It says this, he who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates friends.

I'll say it again, he who covers a transgression seeks love. So, you have a transgression among friends or siblings or spouse, and it's been dealt with, you cover it up, you do away with it, but he who repeats a matter separates friends.

We don't want to bring it up. So, next I want to talk about the actual act of forgiveness, and sometimes forgiveness does not come easy.

Sometimes it's hard. And so, what do we do when we lack the motivation to forgive? forgiveness is an act of sacrificial love.

It's a sacrifice on our part. It's something, we're kind of giving something up. We're giving up our right to revenge or resentment or whatever it might be.

[ 28 : 39 ] And so, it's an act of sacrificial love. And sometimes it can feel like that sacrifice is more than we can muster.

So, what can we do? And I think this is where some of what Jesus had to say in the Gospels can help us out.

Let's go ahead and open up our Bibles to the book of Luke chapter 7. And Luke chapter 7. And we're going to look at the story of a woman who came to Jesus in tears and she anointed Jesus' feet and she washed his feet with her tears.

Luke 7, verse 40. Am I in the right spot?

Actually, let's go up a few verses. Verse 36. Then one of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him. And he went to the Pharisee's house and sat down to eat. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table of the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil and stood at his feet behind him weeping.

[ 30 : 16 ] And she began to wash his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. And she kissed his feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. Now when the Pharisees who had invited him saw this, he spoke to himself saying, this man, if he were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner.

And Jesus answered and said to him, Simon, I have something to say to you. So he said, teacher, say it. So Jesus was having a side conversation with Peter but was doing it to explain something to the Pharisee.

There was a certain creditor who had two debtors, one owed 500 denarii and the other 50. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both.

Tell me therefore, which of them will love him more? And Simon answered and said, well, I suppose the one who he forgave more.

And he said to him, you have rightly judged. Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, do you see this woman? I entered your house. You gave me no water for my feet, but she has washed my feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head.

[ 31 : 41 ] You gave me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss my feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint my head with oil, but this woman has anointed my feet with fragrant oil.

Therefore, I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven. For she loved much, but to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little. And we'll end right there because I think that makes our point.

This is a woman who was a great sinner and had many debts against her account. And she knew that Jesus offered forgiveness for her great debt.

and because of it, her love towards him was great. And much more than this Pharisee who, you know, if we examine their lives, you might find that his sins were on par with hers.

You never know, right? Some sins are worse, some are greater, and some people are greater sinners than others. But when it comes right down to it, I think all of our sins, right, have separated us from God, have brought us to where we deserve judgment and justice.

[ 33 : 06 ] And so I think looking at this story and realizing that, again, forgiveness is an act of love.

if we're having trouble loving someone, we need to, again, look to God, look to what he has done for us. It says in 1 John, I think, it's not that we have loved God, but that he has loved us.

He loved us first. His love abounds in our heart. He has poured out his love in us, and it comes abounding out from his love in our hearts out towards others.

So, if we're having trouble forgiving, I think one of the things that we could do is look at our own lives and just remind ourselves. Sometimes we need a reminder. Where were we at when Christ saved us, when he rescued us?

Sometimes we tend to diminish our own guilt, our own sin. But I think if we take an honest look and see the greatness of God's love for us and the debt that he forgave for us, that will give us the motivation, the heart, the love to do that for others.

[ 34 : 36 ] I think the parable of the unforgiving servant that we read a week or two ago is also relevant. That was again, there was one servant who had a huge debt that would have taken ten lifetimes to pay back and another who had a debt that was much smaller, that might have taken a week of labor to pay back.

And so that was supposed to be an illustration of God's forgiveness towards us, forgiveness which is so great and how willing should we be to forgive other offenses against us which in comparison are so small.

So I'm going to answer now some questions that we received and try to address them as best I can and as time allows we'll maybe take some more questions.

One of the questions that came up was what if someone won't apologize? Has that ever happened? It does sometimes. And I think this of all the questions that came up is the most difficult to answer so I'll take it first.

we'll try to answer this as best we can. One, I think it depends.

[ 36 : 10 ] We talked about when it comes to minor personal offenses we need to just be willing to overlook it. Even if we don't get any kind of apology or whatever, sometimes we just need to overlook it.

When it comes to serious things and these things obviously happen. We have an example of infidelity without any kind of repentance.

Or you might have a friend who accuses you falsely and there's no repentance in sight. They're not sorry at all. They're continuing to hold on to that accusation.

Some people might say, well, we should just forgive them and go on. And again, we've talked about that in the last couple of weeks. I don't think that's the right thing to do. One, it does not deal with it. You still have that unreconciled relationship.



We need to try to get that repentance so that we can complete the transaction with the forgiveness. And when we do that, we can't actually enable people.

[ 37 : 12 ] We can enable people in their rebellion against God. And when we do that, when we forgive people without them repenting, we can tend to teach the world, and the world does get this message.

I've talked to people. They get this idea that, well, God's just going to overlook all of my sins. He just forgives everybody automatically without condition. And there's nothing I need to do. There's no steps I need to take to receive the gift that he offers.

And people will get that idea. one of the things that might be necessary, I think, in terms of crimes committed against us.

Somebody is stealing money from the church, and they're not repentant about it. There's a verse in 2 Timothy, chapter 4, verse 14.

2 Timothy 4, 14, and it says this. This is Paul. He says, Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. And I forgive him, and I think that all of you should forgive him as well.

[ 38 : 26 ] Actually, that's not what he said. He said, may the Lord repay him according to his works. You also must be aware, or beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.

There are times where it is appropriate where somebody has committed a grievous offense, and we need to warn others. this person, they are not repentant, and they can be dangerous.

They can be dangerous to the church, they can be dangerous to individuals, and we need to warn others. Let's turn to Romans 12, and we'll talk a little bit more about this.

Romans 12. Romans 12, Paul talks about, he's not talking about forgiveness per se, but he is talking about when there has an offense been made.

And he's talking about when somebody has sinned against you, and this could be a believer or an unbeliever. He says this in verse 17, Romans 12, verse 17, Repay no one evil for evil.

[ 39 : 42 ] Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as it depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath, for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. And we'll stop there. So here's a principle.

You have somebody who sinned against you, and we might think of this in terms of a crime. Somebody stole from you. Somebody committed some other crime. This is a grievous offense.

Number one, we're not called to avenge ourselves, to get back, to get even. Paul says that very explicitly. Repay no one evil for evil.

And then the second is we want to show love. We want to bless those who persecute us. Bless those who sin against us.

[ 40 : 46 ] It says in Matthew 5, verse 44, but I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you, and persecute you.

So, sometimes there is no reconciliation. In fact, he kind of hints to this in verse 18 in Romans 12, 18.

If it is possible, as much as it depends on you, live peaceably with all men. And he kind of says, well, as much as it's possible, as it depends on you, and peace with men does not always depend just on us.

It's not just one person. It takes two people. So, someone might be persistent in their sin, and we can't have that final reconciliation.

Sometimes we need to warn, but we should always bless and not curse, and we should always pray for those who spitefully use us and persecute us.

[ 42 : 04 ] There's also, I think, some principles to this in 1 Corinthians chapter 5. So, if you turn there, 1 Corinthians chapter 5. And this is a situation where there's sin in the church.

There's a man who is committing adultery with his father's wife, which is kind of a bizarre situation.

But, again, this is not just a sin in general, but this is obviously an offense against his father, but also sins, a lot of times, don't just have one victim, right?

Many times our sins have multiple victims. And so, Paul talks through how to deal with this offender, but basically saying we need to judge the situation, and ultimately what he says is, and we'll skip ahead to verse 13 for time's sake, but those have, well, let's see, we'll start with, let's do verse 11, so chapter 5 verse 11, 1 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 11, but now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, not even to eat with such a person.

Now, we did say just a couple of verses ago, now I'm not saying that you should do that with everybody, there are people who are not believers, and that's how they live their lives. And so this is for somebody who is in the faith, who has the same moral code as you do.

[ 43 : 54 ] For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? That's not where we need to do this judgment. Do you not judge those who are inside, those who are in the church?

But those who are outside, God judges. Therefore, put away from yourselves the evil person. So again, he was talking about a separation. In this case, he needs to be separated from the whole local body.

This is a person who is not repentant. They've committed a grievous act that has not only been an offense against his own father, but against the whole church, and is not repentant. We need to actually not even eat with them.

And so sometimes that kind of thing can become necessary. forgiveness. But always, we want to offer that forgiveness.

And what happens, we read in 2 Corinthians, we read about how this whole thing turned out. Because is this an act of revenge that Paul is talking about here with this person that had his father's wife?

[ 45 : 00 ] It's not an act of revenge. it's trying to get them to turn, to repent. And in 2 Corinthians, we read about this.

In fact, let's go ahead and just look at it, just so it's clear. I didn't write this down, so I got to find it. chapter 2, 2 Corinthians chapter 2, verse 6, this punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man.

It's talking about this man, and most people believe it's talking about the same guy. So that on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow.

Therefore, I urge you to reaffirm your love for him. So there was an opportunity here where there was some harsh judgment that had to be done in order to get that repentance, get that remorse, get that humility.

But once it was accomplished, what's Paul's instruction? Forgive, and then don't just forgive, but continue to reaffirm your love for him.

[ 46 : 11 ] We want him to always know that we're not holding on to his sin, we're not holding on to his offense. It's been forgiven, it's been cast into the depths of the sea, and we want to not just forgive one time, but say, hey, listen, we want to reaffirm over and over that we love you, you're accepted, what's in the past and what's been wiped away is gone forever.

Another question that came up. what if we disagree about whether there was an offense?

Has that ever happened? It happens sometimes. Here's something that's happened to me.

Somebody says to me, well, this is something that happens a lot in marriage. Marriage is a great ground for learning forgiveness, isn't it? You know what?

You spoke to me in an awful tone of voice. I'm like, I wasn't using a tone. I don't know what you're talking about.

[ 47 : 28 ] That wasn't rude. I was just stating the facts. And so even for little situations like that in marriage, right, we could have this disagreement.

Well, I didn't really say it that way. Well, what do we do? So there's this disagreement. Do you hold on to your ground? Well, I'm right and she's wrong.

Yeah, how's that working out for you? So here's the principle I think we need to look at. 1 Corinthians chapter 13 is the chapter about what?

Love. And it describes all the things that love is. And there's one interesting part where it says something that might be confusing at first.

In verse 7 it says this love well, verse 6, does not rejoice in iniquity but rejoices in the truth.

[ 48 : 38 ] Verse 7, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Some of those are more clear than the other, but what does it mean to believe all things? does believing all things means that you just believe what everybody tells you no matter what?

No, that just does not sound right at all. So what does it mean to believe all things? So love is willing to trust that what somebody else is telling me is true unless there's evidence otherwise.

Right? Sometimes people do lie to us and we need to recognize that. But if there's no evidence that somebody's lying to us, then we need to believe them. I think that's what it means, believes all things.

And so if somebody says, if our spouse says, you know what, the way that you said that was very disrespectful, I think we should believe them.

Right? It's not always easy. Because we have this thing called pride that kind of rises up. I don't think so. But you know what?

[ 49 : 53 ] We can say, you know what, you're probably right. I mean, you're a trustworthy person. You don't just make things up. And even on the other side, if somebody says, well, I didn't mean to say it with a tone, or I didn't mean to be rude about it, we should believe them.

We should believe them. Love believes all things. And sometimes, you know, if there's a misunderstanding, we could just, sometimes two people both need to apologize, right?

sometimes somebody said something that was rude, and sometimes people take it the wrong way, but regardless, we can come together and say, maybe we were both wrong.

Another question that came up was, what about forgiving ourselves? Sometimes a Christian might have trouble forgiving themselves, or wondering if God really did forgive all those things that I've done.

And somebody sent in a note, and I think it was more of a comment. You know, forgiving yourself isn't something the Bible really talks about, I think, but we kind of understand the idea.

[ 51 : 19 ] And ultimately, we need to accept God's forgiveness, and live in that. And sometimes, I think the only problem is, it's a matter of faith.

And it makes me think of that person that said to Jesus, I believe, but help me with my unbelief, right? And so, sometimes we need that extra faith.

And in the comment that I got back, it talked about the importance of the body of Christ. The body of Christ in helping us with those things. In Romans 15, 1, it talks about bearing up the weak.

In 1 Thessalonians 5, 14, it talks about upholding the weak. And so, if we have people among us who are weak in faith, then we can be there to uphold them and remind them of what God said, of what God did, that they can trust that God is willing and able to forgive anything that we've done, no matter what it is.

There was somebody here in the church who told me about a time they were talking to Pastor Marv and struggling with their own past sins. And is God really willing to forgive everything?

[ 52 : 43 ] Because I'm not sure. He mentioned what Pastor Marv said, and it was basically this. Well, if you don't believe that God is able to forgive those things, then your concept of God is just too small.

God is a big God. His mercy is great. And we need to recognize that. I think that's all we have time for.

I have some more notes. But just to kind of wrap up, we'll take five minutes and see if there's any questions.

Last time I said only easy questions, and I did get one hard one. But I have forgiven for that difficult question, and I hope Ed will forgive me for giving a less than adequate answer.

there. But any questions that kind of come up? There's one back here, David. Once when we were going through Corinthians, Marv once said that the division line between 1 Corinthians 13 and 14 was placed in the wrong place.

[ 54 : 12 ] it should have included chapter 14 verse 1. And my translation says, eagerly pursue and seek to acquire this love.

Make it your aim, your great quest, and earnestly desire and cultivate the spiritual endowments, especially that you may prophesy, interpret the divine will and purpose in inspired preaching and teaching.

Thank you so much. that's a great point. Pursue love above all else. Anything else? Steve? David, right up here?

Just more of a comment, and I think would be along the lines you're talking, but if I, well, maybe I have a conversation and I answered somebody sharply or something, and at the time I thought it was appropriate, and then I go home and think about it that night, and I shouldn't have said it quite that way.

My tone was wrong. Yeah. Or some such thing, that it would be perhaps ideal, is what I'm saying, if you would go to that person to ask for forgiveness without knowing for sure whether they were offended.

[ 55 : 35 ] Yeah, absolutely. Just to clear it up in your mind, and then it would be a quick resolution, because they may be the type of person that would hold on to whatever that offense was and would never tell you about it, but it could be bothering them even though it was unspoken.

That's a great point. If there's ever a doubt, I think we need to resolve the doubt. If there's a doubt that we may have offended somebody, even if we didn't mean to, sometimes we need to apologize for things we didn't mean.

We're being unthoughtful, that certainly is. It can cause offense, it can bring about an offense. Whichever side of the offense we're on, we should be the one willing to do something.

If you're the one that needs to apologize, be the first one to do it. If you're the one that needs an apology, be the first one to ask for it. So, yeah, if there's a doubt, clear it up.

They might not have taken offense, and that's fine, that's great, but if they have, we don't want that to remain. Roger? a little bit of a different rabbit trail, but Jesus died for our sins 2,000 years ago, made us all savable, and I wonder if he's in heaven, people unsaved, he wants to save them, but they have to recognize him in order for that to happen.

[ 57 : 04 ] so he has forgiven us our sins, and sometimes I really study when we, if people go to hell, are they going because of their sins, or are they going because they did not recognize Jesus as Lord?

That's just a, that's not a question, it can be, to you, but I just, and you know, they've got, there's been fractures in the grace movement over that, that very thing, you know.

Yeah, 2nd Corinthians 5, and some people have used this to teach universalism, that God just forgives everybody, and it's where it talks about the ministry of reconciliation, it says that God is not holding people's sins against them, and so that's the message of reconciliation, but I think it's more, I think you have to take it as more of a figure of speech a little bit, because it's not that God isn't holding people's sins against them, but he's not willing, he's willing to let go of anything, if anybody will come to him.

That's what his offer is to all of us, and so, but we do know that there will be a judgment day, and there will be basically two groups of people, those whose sins have been paid for by Jesus, and those who will pay for their own sins.

that's it, and some people, they have maybe heard the gospel and decided that they're going to live based on and get judged for their own actions, and that's what they want, and that's what will happen, and others, you know, hopefully everybody here today, but, you know, this is a great opportunity.

[ 58 : 49 ] This is the gospel. This is the message of reconciliation, that God is offering to anyone, that if you're willing to receive that gift, and God is willing to forgive every sin, and all those sins are put on Jesus, he received the punishment so that we don't have to, and, but for everyone else who rejects that gift, they will stand for their own sins and have to pay for them.

Anything else? Okay. Well, Steve, just in time.

I just wanted to, I guess, reaffirm something you said in the process that it's important to ask for forgiveness, forgiveness, but if you're the one apologizing, I think it helps to say to the offended person, will you forgive me?

And if they can't say, yes, I forgive you, then I'm not sure where that leaves things, but if they do say it, I think it's a benefit for the person that was offended to acknowledge at least in their head, I forgave them for that offense.

So, if you're apologizing, make sure you ask to be forgiven and kind of insist on, if you can, as much as possible for their response to that request.

[ 60 : 37 ] Yeah, if you apologize, sometimes somebody might say thank you, and you can receive that as forgiveness, but I think it's always better to be very explicit, to be very clear.

Say, you know, and we can ask for it, will you forgive me? Yes. So, if they just say, oh, thanks for the apology, you can respond and say, well, will you forgive me?

And then they have, it's either yes or no. And if they say no, I mean, sometimes that does happen. And we didn't really talk about what to do then, but, I mean, really, again, you can't completely reconcile until that transaction has totally been complete, but you can only ask.

You can't forgive for somebody, you can't make somebody forgive you. So, thanks for all the comments. Well, we'll finish up there. Thanks, everybody, for all the great questions and comments, and hopefully we were able to address at least some of these to, at least some level of satisfaction.

but let's go ahead and end in prayer. Father, some of these situations can be so difficult. I've heard stories even here of estranged relationships and difficult situations where there are offenses that have not been resolved.

[ 61 : 57 ] We ask that through these scriptures, through the things that have been taught here from the scriptures, that you would do a work in any of those situations that continue to be outstanding to help bring those to resolution.

what you want, what you wanted with us, is to dwell with us, to live in our hearts, to commune with us, and you want us to live at peace with one another. We ask that you would continue to work in our hearts every single day, in the little things and in the big things, to practice forgiveness according to your word, that we would always be at peace as much as it depends on us.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.