

The CORE TEACHINGS of JESUS

How to Forgive Anyone for Anything

Rough Transcript

Patrick Morley

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Hi. Hello, men. Welcome to Man in the Mirror Bible Study. We're in this series, *The Core Teachings of Jesus*. And today, we're going to be talking about this topic: **How to Forgive Anyone for Anything**. Before we get going, though, we want to welcome those who are online. And so I wonder if you would join me in giving a very warm, rousing Man in the Mirror welcome to those people online on the count of 3. 1, 2, 3. Hurrah. Welcome, guys. We're glad to have all of you with us.

THE GLUE IN THE GEARS: UNFORGIVEN OFFENSES

Well, I want us to begin by talking about the glue in the gears: unforgiven offenses. Text to start off with here today, is Matthew, chapter 18, verses 21-22. "Then Peter came to Jesus, and asked, 'Lord how many times, how many times, shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me?'" And I was thinking about this early in the weekend. I think Peter must've owned a travel trailer. "How many times must I forgive those who have sinned against me?"

So we were coming back from Tennessee a couple of weeks ago; bought four brand new Goodyear Endurance tires; they're expensive tires, to put on that trailer, so double axle. On the way back, we have not one, but two, flat tires. So we have a tire pressure monitoring system, and it goes, "Beep, beep, beep, beep." And I look up, and it's going from 80, 50, 60, 36 pounds of pressure by the time I actually get it pulled over to the side of the road, in the middle of nowhere, after having 65-mile an hour blowout, right? And I have this little thing; it's called a trailer aid; but it's a little device you can roll up your trailer on to one of the axles, and that lifts the other wheel off the ground.

Well, I couldn't get that thing to work. I spent an hour. Then we have a service, where you can call, and they will send out somebody to change the tire. So at the two-hour mark, they call back to say that, "We wanted you to know that we haven't found anybody yet, but we do have our dispatcher working on it."

So finally, a good Samaritan came by. Thank God for good Samaritans. A young guy named Ryan, 20 years old, who had been on the Wabash River with his family. And they were doing some talking trash with each other; and he got tired of that, so he left. And he was walking home, down the side of the road. And my wife and I had just prayed that somehow we would get some help. So he literally was the good Samaritan, and helped me change the tire. Well, we get back on the road.

Another two hours down, and a "Beep, beep, beep, beep." The tire pressure monitoring system goes off again; but this time, it's a slow leak. Fortunately, I've got one of these compressor pump things, that you can hook up to your battery, and blow up the tires. And so, I kept putting more and more pressure in there till we could get to the campground where we were going to stay overnight, and then get somebody out there, blah, blah, blah, blah.

Next morning, get the trailer into a Quick Lube in Santee, South Carolina; great people, wonderful people. So, the guy immediately figured out what was wrong. He walked over to the tire with a slow leak, and there's a little thing called a valve stem, where you put the air in; and he presses the valve stem over to the side, "Pssssssss." The people who put the four new tires on the trailer did not replace

the valve stems. And so, now I need to go over to the tire store; I was going to do it this week, ran a time. But if I was the owner of the tire store, I would want to know what had happened.

So, I'm not mad anymore. But then on the way home, we have a skylight in the top of the roof, and it blew out; and it was raining all the way through Jacksonville, Florida. And so my wife, her socks got all wet when she went into to go to the bathroom, and she came back out, she said, "Well, I don't understand why my socks are wet?" Well, because it had been raining into the trailer. And so I call over to the store, to the RV store, to get this all taken care of. And you would think there would be some shred of empathy or sympathy for my woes; but I felt like I was an interruption. An interruption.

And so, there are these incredible, little offenses that take place that bother us that shouldn't happen; that people do things they shouldn't do. The situation that Peter's talking about here though, is probably a little bit more serious than our little peccadilloes. "How many times should I forgive? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but 77 times." Or 70 times seven, in one of the versions. It's hyperbole.

The point is, however many times it takes; however many times you are sinned against, the amount of times that you are to forgive is unlimited. It's unlimited. So, the problem that Peter is addressing here, the rabbinical rule, was that if somebody sinned against you, you were required to forgive them three times, and then you weren't required to forgive them anymore. So Peter himself, introducing a little hyperbole, "Should I forgive them seven times?" And Jesus says, "No. 77 times. However many times it takes."

Here's the problem. The problem is, is that we are getting offended all the time; and we are offending others all the time. It's just part of human nature. It's part of our lives. And so, when we are offended, we tend to either lash out or we withdraw, or we do both, and it affects the people that we love the most. If we don't address these grievances, these offenses that have been committed against us and by us; if we don't address them, then what's going to happen is that we will develop spiritual and emotional calluses. We will bear grudges. We will become grumpy young men. And if you have become a grumpy young man, then you also are at risk to later become a grumpy old man as well.

So why does it matter? It matters because you can get yourself trapped in the mind of a child, and it can affect your other relationships as well, and especially your relationship with God. Take a look at another little story I want to tell you, about social media. I think it would be a tone deaf message not to say a little something about the effects of social media. Because social media has made it easier to wound, and harder to heal; easier to wound, and harder to heal.

So, I have been deeply injured by social media. Some of you may have been deeply injured, too. Now, I will confess that I am overly sensitive to criticism. I came by that honestly, through some childhood experiences; but I am overly sensitive to criticism. There was a time early on in my twenties, when I was hyper sensitive to criticism; but I still am sensitive to criticism. So I jumped in to social media full bore when it... everything, right when it first came out. I am PatrickMorley on Twitter. Out of all the millions of Patrick Morleys, or however many there are in the world, I am Patrick Morley on Twitter. When you go to Facebook, it's PatrickMorleyAuthor, and blah, blah, blah. And I remember making lots of contributions, and trying to make a difference and so forth. And then in 2000, and then seven years ago, seven years ago, I posted this picture on social media. It's a candid of me painting our granddaughter's toenails green.

Our daughter snapped this picture, and I thought it was precious. I thought it was cute. So I put it up on social media; and some stranger, who I have no idea who they are, never met them, some stranger said, "That looks posed. That looks like that's been set up. That's staged." And in my naivete, I wrote back, "Oh no. That's a candid that our daughter took." And he wrote back, "Nope. Staged." Like that. I don't know. It crushed me, and I frankly, I've never gotten over that. So am I oversensitive? Yes. Call me a girl

if you want to; but I will tell you that, although I still move in and out of social media; for the last seven years, I'm just... I was so injured by that, that I'm just not interested in being a full participant anymore.

And many of you; and if you're old enough, your kids, and if you're older, if your grandkids are involved in this easy to wound, hard to heal kind of situation. Now, I forgave that guy, and I forgive the guy that did the tires, and... That's fine. But here's the problem. The problem is, is that you can forgive, and then 24 hours later, it can come back again. And so there needs to be sometimes repetitive forgiveness for injuries. I was completely over this, until I remembered it this week, and decided to put it in the talk. And then I relived the whole thing again. And so, now I had to forgive this guy for injuring me seven years ago, and I don't even know who he is. I went back through all my Facebook posts, trying to find that. Apparently, I was so offended by it, I deleted the post. So I can't even find the guy.

All right. So why does this matter? Here's why it matters. This is out of the Lord's Prayer; "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." And then, right after the Lord's Prayer, Jesus says, "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your Heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." Do you see it? Do you see it? **Reconciliation may not be possible; but withholding forgiveness is not an option.** And that's the Big Idea for the day.

Reconciliation may not be possible with the person who put on the wrong tires, or the person who dinged me on social media. Or it might be with a child who just hates your guts, or it could be with an ex-wife; reconciliation may not be possible, but withholding forgiveness is not an option, for lots of reasons. But the main reason that is not an option, is that you can't have fellowship with God if you withhold fellowship from other people, or withhold forgiveness from other people.

NOT FORGIVING IS NOT AN OPTION

Now let's talk about how not forgiving is not an option. Let's talk about that. There are four scenarios that you could find yourself in. And the question is, "What are you going to do about it?" The first scenario is that you've been wronged, and they're not sorry. You've been wronged, and they're not sorry. And this might be something off social media, it might be somebody on the highway who does something unkind or unsafe or rages you; you've been wronged, and they're not sorry. What happens if you don't forgive them? It just builds up. It adds, it layers on, and sooner or later, the burden gets heavy enough, and then what happens? You explode. Do you explode, though, on them? Well, maybe you do, but where do you probably most likely explode? You're probably going to explode at your kids, you probably explode at your wife. Maybe you explode at God.

Second scenario. You've been wronged. They're sorry, but you're withholding forgiveness. Can't do that. Maybe you've had a spat with your wife, and maybe she did something she shouldn't have done. She's sorry. But you're still mad about it. You're still mad about it. You're withholding forgiveness. Can't do that. You have to say, "I forgive you."

Third scenario. You've done wrong, and you're not sorry. You're still mad about it.

Fourth scenario. You've done wrong; you've asked forgiveness, and it's being withheld from you. Okay, so you're the one who's done wrong. You've said, "Please forgive me." But, forgiveness is being withheld. Well, what do you have to do when forgiveness is being withheld? Forgive the person for not forgiving. It's the Bible, brothers. It's the Bible.

Carrying on in that passage from Matthew, where Peter asked Jesus, "How many times must I forgive?" At the end of a parable there, where Jesus talks about how a master is owed a lot of money, and the person who owes the money can't pay; so he comes to the master, and judgment is proclaimed, but then he begs. He begs to be forgiven. And the man forgives him of this huge, multimillion dollar debt. Cancels the debt. Cancels the debt.

The servant goes out, and finds another man who owes him a little bit of money. The man also begs to be forgiven, but the man has been forgiven the big debt, grabs the guy with a little debt, and has him thrown into prison until he can pay the very last penny. And then, some of the other people came and told the master about it. Jesus says this, "Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had on you? In anger, his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured until he should pay back all he owed. This is how your Heavenly Father will treat each of you, unless you forgive your brother or sister from the heart." From the heart.

So the idea here is, is heartfelt forgiveness. Now how do you do that? How do you do that? Well, the only way we can forgive like this, is to forgive by faith; to forgive by faith. If you've benefited; and for example, if somebody sinned against you, and they're not sorry about it, and you don't forgive them, then you become a prisoner of the anger that that creates in you. But the Bible says you are to forgive unconditionally, without regard to whether or not the other person is sorry. Do you get that? Unconditional forgiveness, without regard to whether or not the other person is sorry.

How do you do that? The only way to do that is by faith. Bill Bright, early in his ministry, Bill Bright, the founder of the largest parachurch ministries in the world. At some point, they had 100,000... I don't know how many people they have now. At one point they had over 100,000 people on, full and part-time staff, all around the world. That's a lot of people. He had seven of his top leaders confront him one day, and demand his resignation. So he said, "Let me pray about it." He invited them back the next day, and he said, "I prayed about it. I want all seven of your resignations."

And as it turned out, only two of those men ever repented for what they had tried to do to him; and the other five were never heard from again. Because of their behavior, sinful behavior; and it was. I'm skipping part of the story, but it was sinful behavior. They were never heard from again. The other two men went on to have quite nice careers. One of them was Hal Lindsey; late, great Planet Earth guy. But Bill was able to come up with the idea that, "The only way I can forgive is to forgive by faith. Faith, and the trustworthiness of God and His word. Faith that relationships are sacred. Faith that God has my back on this." The Big Idea today: **Reconciliation may not be possible, but with holding forgiveness is not an option; not an option.**

STEPS TO RECONCILE

And then, let's finally do some steps to reconcile here. Here's a little graphic. This would be worth taking a picture of, rather than trying to write it down, I suppose. But just mapping out reconciliation. So forgiveness, repentance, reconciliation, and worship. So worship is the ultimate fellowship with God and other people as well.

Starting with forgiveness, it's offering mercy and grace, just like Jesus was talking about in that verse we looked at; not justice. The idea behind forgiveness is not justice; it's mercy and grace. And it's the words "I forgive you. I forgive you." There's six words here, which are life-changing. And no matter what the offense is, whether... Even if it's criminal behavior; or even if it's an accident. The man who used to take care of pest control at our house; his teenage son, a drunk driver ran a stop sign, slammed into his son's car, son died. And he was able to forgive. He was able to say, "I forgive you." The pain, of course, didn't go away, but he was able to extend mercy and grace and say, "I forgive you."

And then notice that I have forgiveness before repentance. So, forgiveness proceeds repetitive; because Jesus is saying repentance, this whole process of reconciliation, it doesn't hinge on repentance. That's not the starting point; the starting point is forgiveness, just unconditional forgiveness; and then, repentance. So repentance would be an act of humility. So it could be on your part, or the other person's part. And the three magic words here, or the three golden words here are, "Please forgive me. I'm sorry. Please forgive me." "I forgive you. Please forgive me." These are the keys to forgiveness and repentance.

Repentance does precede reconciliation. There can't be reconciliation unless there is repentance. So the guy, if I could ever get in touch with him, and I'm not interested, really; but if I could get in touch with the guy; it's water under the bridge, who had posted that I was a phony. That's what he was saying; I'm a phony. "I forgive you. I forgive you. I forgive you." The guy that did that, there could be no reconciliation with him unless he came and said that, "I'm sorry."

So in Matthew, chapter 18, verses one and following, there's a little process for that. I'll mention that here in just a moment. But reconciliation is going to take, in some cases, time. Sometimes it can be very quick. My wife and I had a little disagreement on Friday, and we were able to patch it up by Saturday. Okay? But sometimes, if you've been losing your temper every day for five years, and then you've come to repentance, reconciliation might take a little longer, don't you think?

So then there's the issue of trust, when trust is broken; when you've done something, when you've sinned against somebody, or they've sinned against you; maybe it's marital unfaithfulness, or something like that. And trust has been broken. That's going to take some time to heal. Sometimes reconciliation, in order for it to be full orb, there needs to be some kind of restitution that takes place.

And then also, just because sin is forgiven, doesn't mean there are not consequences. If there's some kind of, some marital infidelity, it could end in a divorce. Or it could be a financial kind of sin that required some jail time or restitution. There's all kinds of different things, of course, that could take place there.

And then,, worship. Once you have forgiveness, repentance reconciliation, then you have the ability to worship. Let's look at a couple of verses on this. So forgive, regardless, this is the first part of this first step in reconciliation. Forgive, regardless. Mark 11:25. "And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone..." This title of the talk is what? How You Can Forgive Anyone for Anything. "And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive your sins."

And then the second step is repentance. Matthew 18:15. "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you will have won them over." So if somebody has sinned against you, you've already forgiven them, but they're withholding their repentance from you. You should go to them. And then the rest of the passage in Matthew 18 talks about if they don't agree, then you take somebody else, and so forth. And you can read that on your own.

And then, reconciliation precedes worship. If you don't forgive others their sins, then your Heavenly Father is not going to forgive your sins. Reconciliation actually proceeds worship. Matthew 5:23 and 24. "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First, go and be reconciled to them, and then come and offer your gift." Reconciliation precedes worship.

Wow. So what do we do? So what do we do? We know that the Big Idea here today is this: Reconciliation may not be possible, but withholding forgiveness, that's just not an option, men. Then that's just not an option. So let me ask you this question. "What is the grudge that you're holding onto? What is the thing that you have been holding onto, that you have not been willing to forgive? Who is it? Who is the person who has offended you? Done something wrong, and you have been withholding forgiveness from them. Who is that? And what are you going to do?"

Let's pray. Our dearest Father, we thank you for this core teaching on forgiveness. Lord, you have shown us already that relationships are so sacred. And now you have shown us a core teaching, a key teaching, on how we can resolve conflict, and help eliminate the excruciating pain of broken relationships. I pray that you would tutor these words from your scripture to our hearts; burn them into our hearts, and give us this understanding that even though we might not be able to bring about a reconciliation, we are not,

as disciples of Jesus, to withhold forgiveness from anyone, for anything. And that's how we can forgive anyone for anything, by faith in Jesus. Amen.