

DON'T BELIEVE IT (Part 5): FORGIVENESS

Scripture used: [Job 42:7-10 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

In this fifth sermon of the Don't Believe It! series, Pastor Hurmon focuses on the phrase, "I can't (or won't) forgive you." Don't believe that there are some situations which force us to be trapped in unforgiveness. Forgiveness is the ultimate vehicle to character growth and spiritual redemption. In our Scripture, Job went from being "touched by grace" and effortlessly successful in every way of life, to someone struck by calamity in his health, family, business, and circle of friends. His friends tried to find sin in his past to explain the stunning series of misfortunes in the present. We are too often like Job's friends - we say hurtful things in a vain attempt to explain things, and we don't apologize in a way that truly aims at healing. In this message, we learn practical steps to both asking forgiveness and offering forgiveness.

KEY POINTS

- 1) Words and actions can have the same impact as a butcher's knife. They cause grievous wounds. The damage is compounded when we are too proud to apologize in earnest: "I'm sorry, but...". We don't get on our knees and express our utmost regret in a way that acknowledges the pain we caused (a good phrase to begin with is "I'm sorry because..."). It takes humility and empathy to acknowledge the magnitude of the harm we caused, to make amends, and to pledge new conduct. The reality is that we have a chance to practice this almost every day!
- 2) God's restoration in Job's life begins when Job starts forgiving and actually praying for his friends, instead of lamenting about his fate and finding culprits. [Romans 3:23 \(NIV\)](#) reminds us of the evil in the world, and the power of forgiveness. After white supremacist Dylann Roof killed nine black parishioners at an Episcopalian church in Charleston, SC on June 17, 2015, relatives of the victims looked him in the eye in court and prayed for him. They offered forgiveness. They did not condone his act, or forget the awful event, or somehow include him into their lives - but they moved past the wound and into redemption & grace. Forgiveness liberates the victim. In the words of Lewis Smedes, forgiveness sets a prisoner free, and the forgiver realizes in the act of forgiving that they were the prisoner.
- 3) Forgiveness begins with choice, entails grieving, and happens over time. It is facilitated by prayer and intercession. [Luke 6:27-28 \(NLT\)](#) and [Luke 23:24 \(NLT\)](#) shows the power of forgiveness, including from Jesus on the cross when he asks the Father to forgive his torturers as "they don't know what they are doing." There is always more to the story than we know, and we often aren't aware of the wounds and trauma that cause hurt people to hurt other people. As the wounded, one of the ways we can open our hearts to healing is by the discipline of intercessory prayer. When we stand in the gap even for our enemies and those who have wronged us and ask that God would intervene with mercy in their lives, and we release our anger and desire for justice to God, we are set free. Anger does not need to have the last word. Letting go of preconceptions and anger is the path to purpose and restoration.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Pastor Hurmon asked people struggling with forgiveness to stand and receive prayer at the end of our Worship Gathering. If you feel comfortable and are actively struggling with forgiveness in your life, consider sharing with your life group the circumstances of the struggle. If you aren't currently struggling with forgiveness, share a time when forgiveness was difficult, and the outcome of choosing to forgive.
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Consider [Luke 6:27-28 \(NLT\)](#). What is the connection between experiencing grace and forgiveness from God and offering forgiveness to others? If you'd like to go deeper, consider the parable Jesus taught about an unmerciful servant ([Matthew 18:21-35](#)). How does God's grace to us enable our forgiveness to others? Why is it still so difficult? Have you experienced prayer helping to bridge this gap?
- 3) **DO** - We were invited to respond by "Doing the work of forgiveness." Work is often hard, but having others alongside can often help. What is your next step in forgiveness this week? How can your life group be a blessing to do this hard work?