

Pastor's Corner: The Freedom of Forgiveness: A Journey of Faith

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One of the central pillars of our Christian Walk is forgiveness. It's woven into the fabric of our faith from the very beginning, exemplified by Christ's ultimate act of love on the cross. Yet, despite its importance, forgiveness can often feel like one of the hardest things to practice, especially when we've been deeply hurt or wronged. **In these moments, we are called to lean into our faith, trusting that the grace God has extended to us can also flow through us to others.**

Forgiveness is not merely an emotional response; it is a spiritual act of surrender. When we forgive, we release the bitterness, anger, and resentment that can so easily take root in our hearts. Jesus, in Matthew 6:14-15, reminds us of its importance when He says, **"For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."** Our capacity to forgive is intimately tied to the forgiveness we have already received from God. It's an act of obedience and trust in His justice, believing that God, who is both merciful and righteous, will make all things right in His time.

But how do we embrace forgiveness when it feels impossible? In tough situations, forgiveness starts not with our feelings but with a decision to forgive, even when our emotions don't align. It is helpful to remember that forgiveness is a process, not a one-time event. We may have to choose to forgive repeatedly as we walk through healing. **Prayer is essential in this journey, asking God to soften our hearts and give us the strength to let go of the offense.**

It's also important to remember that forgiveness doesn't mean condoning wrongdoing or forgetting the harm that was done. It is about releasing our right to seek revenge or harbor bitterness, trusting God to bring healing and restoration. As we take steps toward forgiveness, we find freedom from the chains of anger and resentment, allowing God's peace to fill our hearts.

As followers of Christ, let us reflect on the forgiveness we have been given and extend that same grace to others, even in the most difficult circumstances. It is through forgiveness that we experience true freedom and embody the love of Christ in the world.

**"Forgive our sins as we forgive,
You taught us, Lord, to pray;
But You alone can grant us grace
To live the words we say."**

In Christ,

+Pastor Ben