

Walking in the Way of Forgiveness

Luke: All Things New



Series Goal

That Mercy Hill Church would be made new as we follow the One who is making all things new!



Sermon Text

Luke 17:1-4



Big Idea

The church, while beautiful, is still broken. It is full of saints still wrestling with sin. And in our sin we hurt one another. It is, therefore, critical that we all learn to walk in the way of forgiveness.

What should make the church a safe place now is not that it's a sinless place, but that it's a place where, at the core, at the foundation, there's this commitment to forgive, this covenant of grace if you will—that binds together and supports the entire community.

(1) The Rebuke of Forgiveness

The word “rebuke” here often grates on our modern sensibilities. We hear “rebuke” and think immediately of a Pharisee wearing his long robes and looking down his nose. It sounds smug, self-righteous, and demeaning. Better, to capture the heart of what Jesus is after here, is the equally valid translation: “Warn.” That brings out nuances of care and concern, love and compassion. The rebuke here is not communicating I’m somehow better than you. It’s communicating I love you.

(2) The Extent of Forgiveness

What we will find, if we are willing to tune into the inner workings of our own hearts, is that, when it comes to forgiveness, we are constantly looking for loopholes—ways of getting out of this call from Jesus.

Potential Loophole #1: Limited Forgiveness

Potential Loophole #2: Conditional Forgiveness

(3) The Way of Forgiveness

(1) God Has Forgiven Me—We are prone to forget that, when it comes to our relationship with God, in our sin, the scales were tipped irreparably against us. The debt was beyond repayment. And yet God comes to us not vindictive, not demanding payment, but offering his Son. When you get that it breaks the scales in every direction. When you see the grace given to you freely in Jesus, no longer do you come demanding from others, you come with something to give.

(2) God Is Working for Good—Joseph knew, deep in his bones, that even in the midst of such heart-wrenching abuse and abandonment, God was working for good. And it kept him from entering into the insanity of vengeance and things. There's this remarkable calm and kindness about him even in the face of the very ones who hurt him so deeply.

(3) God Will Make the Wrong Right—Understanding that God will make all the wrong right on the last day frees us up to love and forgive. We are released from trying to get justice for ourselves, or prove our point, or make our case, or whatever it may be because we know God will do that for us in the end.

Reflection Questions



- When it comes to the church and Christian community are you more prone to be idealistic (“the church is perfect!”) or pessimistic (“the church is a mess to be avoided”)? Why do you think? What ways have you had to extend forgiveness to your brothers and sisters in Christ? What ways have they had to extend forgiveness to you? How have these experiences actually helped you grow more mature in Jesus?
- In vv. 3-4, it seems like Jesus is saying that you don't need to forgive a person who doesn't repent. How do you understand this? What other Scriptures come to mind to support your thinking?
- Is there someone in the church right now that you are having a hard time forgiving? How might the three truths outlined under point three above help? What else would you add to this list? Why is it important that you not give up but instead ask, with the disciples, for an increase of faith? What one step can you take to move towards forgiveness and reconciliation with this person?