

Embracing Brokenness

Part 3: No Future Without Forgiveness

2 Corinthians 2: 5-11

We will all be wounded by other people. The question is what those wounds will become in us. In 2 Corinthians 2, Paul addresses a painful offense that had affected not only him but the whole church, and calls the Corinthians to a new posture: forgive, comfort, and reaffirm their love. Forgiveness does not deny the wrong, eliminate consequences, or bypass grief. It releases the right to get even and entrusts justice to God. As people who have been forgiven by Christ, we are invited to walk the difficult path of acknowledging the hurt, grieving the wound, gaining perspective, releasing the debt, and eventually learning to wish the offender well. Without forgiveness, wounds can organize our lives and communities around resentment. There is no future without forgiveness.

Consider / Contemplate

"As we age, we can slim our spiritual and psychological vocabulary down to very few concepts, but one of these is forgiveness. As we age we need to forgive - forgive those who hurt us, forgive ourselves for our own mistakes, forgive life for having been unfair... so that we do not die bitter and angry, which is perhaps the greatest religious imperative of all." Ronald Rolheiser

"Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart." Corrie ten Boom

"Not forgiving is like drinking rat poison and then waiting for the rat to die." Anne Lamott

"There is no future without forgiveness." Desmond Tutu

Thinking It Through

1. This text and sermon asks, "What will your wounds become in you?" When you think about the wounds you carry, what have they tended to produce - anger, fear, withdrawal, compassion, wisdom, or something else?

2. Paul does not minimize the offense, but neither does he seem interested in keeping the offender defined by it. What stands out to you about the way Paul handles the situation?

3. How would you explain the difference between forgiveness and saying that what happened was okay?

4. The sermon describes forgiveness as releasing the right to collect a debt. What kinds of “payment” do we sometimes keep demanding from people who have hurt us?
5. Why is grieving often necessary before a significant wound can genuinely be forgiven? What happens when we try to rush past grief?
6. Paul says he forgave “in the sight of Christ.” How does remembering the forgiveness you have received from Jesus change the way you see someone who owes you?
7. Forgiveness does not necessarily mean restored trust, removed consequences, or the absence of boundaries. Why are those distinctions important?
8. The sermon warns that communities can become organized around an offense - united more by what they are against than what they are for. Where do you see that play out in our world today?
9. Of the five movements described - acknowledge the hurt, grieve the wound, get perspective, release the debt, and wish them well - which feels most difficult for you? Why?
10. Is there a wound, resentment, or old debt that you sense Jesus inviting you to address? What might one faithful next step look like?

Prayer Points

- Pray for courage to tell the truth about wounds without allowing them to define us.
 - Pray for grace to forgive as people who have been forgiven by Christ.
 - Pray for wisdom about grief, boundaries, justice, and reconciliation as we walk the path of forgiveness.
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