

**Enter In Series
To His Mercy, Part One
11/2/24
Newport News**

Opening/Introduction

-(Stan)

-(preschool painting)

-We are in a series entitled “Enter In” (talk about series)

-God wants to use your life to spell **Jesus** to the world!

-(talk about tonight being a question asked...)

Introduction

-When you hear the word **“forgiveness”** what comes to mind?

-Questions for tonight?

- 1. Are we over using the word forgiveness?**
- 2. Does the Bible textually support our concept of forgiveness?**
- 3. Have we been parroting a belief that is not fully true?**

- 4. Does forgiveness mean I have to release my expectation of justice?**
- 5. Does forgiveness mean I have to forget?**
- 6. Does forgiveness mean I have to reconcile my relationship?**

-Definition: **Forgiveness is a release of ill will for a person who is penitent regarding their sin against you...forgiveness is about the releasing of the emotional debt.**

-Luke 17:1-4

-What I have said to people many times...

>“You have to be willing to forgive in exchange for the apology you might never receive.”

>(talk about NOT finding a loopole!)

>(talk about experiences you have done with people in proxy)

>(I am questioning that viewpoint...are we to blame for their delay?)

Popular Forgiveness Verses

-Matthew 6:7-15

-Matthew 18:21-35

-Mark 11:25

>But this is my question, have we been defining forgiveness incompletely?

1. **aggrieved person + penitent person = emotional debt released**
2. Outcome: releasing emotional debt
3. Process: aggrieved person + penitent person
4. This is forgiveness!
5. Luke 17:1-4 (re-read)

-2 Kings 22:19 (ESV) - penitent

1. **Acknowledgment of wrong**
2. **Feeling remorse**
3. **Genuine desire to change**
4. **Sincere effort at restitution**

Forgiveness In Practice

-(read Corrie ten Boom excerpt from **The Hiding Place**)

-Matthew 18:21-22 (END PART ONE)

-Forgiveness does NOT necessitate the restoration of relationship.

1. Love is unconditional, relationships are not.
2. Relationships form around the bond of trust.
3. Trust is earned, trust is kept, trust can be lost.

-(suggest The Bible Project Podcast – Sermon on the Mount Episode 23)

-Forgiveness does NOT mean an offense must be forgotten.

1. Accountability vs. Leverage
2. Layers of Healing vs. Shaming
3. Helping Others vs. Privacy Violated

-Forgiveness does NOT require abandoning justice.

1. Justice as a societal need
2. Justice as accountability
3. Justice as a personal value

>Proverbs 21:15

Our Alternative

-Luke 6:36

-Matthew 5:7

-Lamentations 3:22-23

-Micah 6:8

-Psalm 23:6

-Lessons in Mercy

1. Lean into your anger and resentment.
2. Be ready to let go of the emotional debt.
3. Don't resist the feelings of mercy that soon follow.
4. You can't rush the process.

Band

-How do I know when I am ready for mercy?

>Luke 23:34

>When your prayers move from imprecation to intercession!

-(set up communion)

It was in a church in Munich where I was speaking in 1947 that I saw him - a balding heavysset man in a gray overcoat, a brown felt hat clutched between his hands. One moment I saw the overcoat and the brown hat, the next, a blue uniform and a visored cap with its skull and crossbones.

Memories of the concentration camp came back with a rush: the huge room with its harsh overhead lights, the pathetic pile of dresses and shoes in the center of the floor, the shame of walking naked past this man. I could see my sister's frail form ahead of me, ribs sharp beneath the parchment of skin.

Betsie and I had been arrested for concealing Jews in our home during the Nazi occupation of Holland. This man had been a guard at Ravensbruck concentration camp where we were sent.

Now he was in front of me, hand thrust out: "A fine message, fraulein! How good it is to know that, as you say, all our sins are at the bottom of the sea!"

It was the first time since my release that I had been face to face with one of my captors and my blood seemed to freeze.

"You mentioned Ravensbruck in your talk," he was saying. "I was a guard there. But since that time," he went on, "I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from your lips as well. Fraulein - "again the hand came out - "will you forgive me?"

And I stood there - and could not. Betsie had died in that place - could he erase her slow terrible death simply for the asking?

It could not have been many seconds that he stood there, hand held out, but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do.

For I had to do it - I knew that. The message that God forgives has a prior condition: that we forgive those who have injured us. "If you do not forgive men their trespasses," Jesus says, "neither will your Father in Heaven forgive your trespasses."

Still I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. "Jesus, help me!" I prayed silently. "I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling."

And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes.

"I forgive you, brother!" I cried. "With all my heart!"

For a long moment we grasped each other's hands, the former guard and former prisoner. I had never known God's love so intensely as I did then.*