

<b>Study</b>	Gamma 14
<b>Topic</b>	Forgiveness Part 1
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Today we are going to look at forgiveness and I tell you forgiveness is not easy. I find it to be the hardest thing in the entire world. It is such a difficult thing and yet if we don't understand this and we don't incorporate into the way we live then we really haven't really understood the gospel. It is actually very-very key. All of us are involved in this. There will be two parts. Today, we will talk about, why is it so important, what is what, why is forgiveness so hard and how can I find it in me. I mean the resources to actually forgive. Next week, it will be a bit more practical. We are going to look at:

- How do I forgive, what's the practical approach?
- What about the people who are unrepentant do we forgive them and how we deal with them?
- Wouldn't conditional forgiveness foster bitterness? If you only forgive people whom ask for forgiveness wouldn't that just foster bitterness.
- What if Christians don't agree who was wrong? How do you deal with that?
- How do we stop thinking about it?

So the first thing we are need to look at very clearly is:

### Why is it so crucial?

#### Matthew 6:14-15 (ESV)

*For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

This is a little bit scary, but it is true. There is no textual difficulties with this particular part. That means if you forgive others the father will forgive you. So actually there is a condition there and it seems as if an unforgiving heart leads to eternal punishment. I thought we were saved by grace, not by works. So if we are saved by grace and not by works, then isn't forgiving somebody is salvation by works. So it seems to be like that. The other issue is sheep and the goats. Jesus describes the judgement, on Judgement Day there are two types of people, the sheep and the goats and sheep are the good guys and the goats are the bad guys and the sheep are the ones who actually help the poor, feed the poor, visit the prisoners in prison, because each one represents Christ. So is this issue saved by grace or are you saved by works.

#### Matthew 25:45-46 (ESV)

*Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."*

Then you have got James

#### James 2:18-20 (ESV)

*But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19 You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! 20 Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?*

Here again are you saved by works or are you saved by faith. You are actually saved by faith but your works is actually evidence of the faith. So therefore if you look at all these things I don't think Jesus is trying to tell you, you get saved because of what you do. It is basically evidence of transformation.

### **1 John 2:4-5 (ESV)**

*Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected*

We are commanded to forgive

### **1 John 2:9-10 (ESV)**

*Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. 10 Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling*

So if there is true love of God, it will be translated into generosity, into forgiveness, into helping the poor. It is like evidence of transformation. If you look at the apple, the apple is actually the fruit reveals that the tree has life. The fruit doesn't give life to the tree, it is evidence that the tree has life. So therefore the good works that you do, the forgiveness that you have doesn't give you salvation, it is just evidence that you actually have salvation. So what is forgiveness, a useful definition here is by Chris Braun

*“A commitment from the offended to pardon graciously the repentant from moral liability and to be reconciled to that person, although all consequences are not necessarily eliminated”*

*Chris Braun Unpacking Biblical Forgiveness*

So therefore we always take forgiveness from the pattern of the gospel.

### **Colossians 3:13 (ESV)**

*bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*

So our forgiveness is actually a pattern on God's forgiveness because just as God forgave we forgive, that's the basis and the gospel pattern is firstly God's forgiveness is gracious but not free.

### **Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV)**

*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

1. So forgiveness by God is gracious but it is not free.
2. God's forgiveness is conditional as only those who repent are saved

### **Acts 20:20-21 (ESV)**

*how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, 21 testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

God always forgives but in response to repentance, that's got to be there.

3. God's forgiveness is actually a commitment

4. God's forgiveness lays the groundwork for and begins the process of reconciliation

#### **Romans 5:10 (ESV)**

*For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life*

5. God's forgiveness does not mean the elimination of all consequences

#### **Hebrews 12:10 (ESV)**

*For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.*

So these are some of the biblical characteristics of how God forgives, and so therefore when we talk about forgiving each other of our sins we actually have to patterned after the gospel pattern.

*God's forgiveness: A commitment by the one true God to pardon graciously those who repent and believe so that they are reconciled to him, although this commitment does not eliminate all consequences.*

*Chris Brauns Unpacking Forgiveness (p. 51). Crossway. Kindle Edition.*

So our definition will be

*"A commitment from the offended to pardon graciously the repentant from moral liability and to be reconciled to that person, although all consequences are not necessarily eliminated"*

*Chris Braun Unpacking Biblical Forgiveness*

If you really forgive someone or it is actually a commitment and there are four promises involved in the commitment.

1. "I promise not to dwell on this incident."
2. "I will not bring up this incident again and use it against you."
3. "I will not talk to others about this incident."
4. "I will not let this incident stand between us or hinder our personal relationship."

The biggest test is between husband and wives. You bring up something that you fought over 20 years ago, it means you have never forgiven because you bring it up. If you keep on bringing it up again and use it as ammunition against the spouse because that's the only way you can win an argument, you bring something from the past and so therefore one got no points and you got all the points and one is finished.

So that means you haven't really forgiven. So I will not dwell on incident, I will not bring it up again, I will not talk to others about this and I will not let this incident stand between us and hinder our

relationship. So the more forgetful of the couple in the relationship, the better your marriage is going to be because you are supposed to not hold onto it.

Thomas Watson describes what forgiveness looks like,

1. It is resisting revenge,
2. Not returning evil for evil,
3. Wishing them well,
4. Grieving at their calamities,
5. Praying for their welfare,
6. Seeking reconciliation so far as it depends on you,
7. Coming to their aid in distress.

So this is what true forgiveness looks like, not easy at all. I actually have a quotation from C.S. Lewis and said, one time I finally woke up and I found out I have really started to forgive my friend after 30 years. So forgiveness is a commitment. The actual fact whether you actually forgive or not will actually your feelings and your actions will betray the fact. A lot of us say, forgive and forgive but actually it is not there, because the feelings will betray whether you forgive or not and that is a process that will take time for you to be really honest about the whole thing.

Chris Carrier was 8 years old when he was actually kidnapped by a disgruntle employee of his father who was fired. He dragged him to everglades and used an ice-pick and stabbed in this poor 8 year old boy many-many times and then took a gun and shot him in the temple. Amazingly the bullet knocked off his optic nerve, so he lost sight to one eye and he was left to bleed to die. By some miracle they found him by the side of the road and they actually resuscitated him and he grew up in a very turbulent adolescent life where he actually feared because he was taken away, he was captured, he was assaulted and he nearly died and he was always afraid of it, there is no security, until one day he met Jesus Christ at the age of 13 and he became a Christian and found the security in Christ and after that he said he never feared anymore and one day police actually told him that they actually found the person who had committed this horrible unspeakable crime and that person's name was David McAllister. David McAllister was near death at that time. Chris Carrier was a youth pastor at that time and he actually rushed all the way to the nursing home and spent time with David McAllister. He actually forgave McAllister, shared with him the gospel and McAllister actually came to know Christ and before he died David McAllister told the reporter, this chap is the best friend I ever had. The gospel can do that. That's how amazing it is.

That's why forgiveness is so special. So each one of us is a special miracle and if we don't show that miracle and we betray that God that's how important forgiveness is. Leonard Pitts is a reporter and he wrote these words

*The man is serious about God. I don't say that because he has a master's degree in divinity and until recently was the director of youth ministries at his church. Nor because by the time you read this, he will have moved to Texas, where he and his wife and two daughters plan to open a Christian bookstore. I say it because he bowed alongside a man who tried to kill him. I know I couldn't do it. . . . [Yet Chris] tried against all logic to redeem one weak and dirty little scrap of man.*

Non-Christians cannot understand it and it is the most powerful testimony of the power of the cross.

I want to talk about therapeutic forgiveness by Lewis Smede in 1984. He advocates forgiveness as ceasing to feel resentment or anger over an offense or a perceived offense and I actually subscribed to that for a long time in my life. Therapeutic forgiveness is, you make a decision to let go of angry and resentful thoughts and feelings and then you also decide to replace the negative emotions with positive feelings like compassion, sympathy and empathy. It is a psychological technique by which you can deal with hurts and people who have done you injustice. So you got the conflict of being wronged, you got stress, rumination, bitterness, anger and this leads to psychological effects; obsessive compulsive disorder, anxiety, depression, physical health problems; suppressed immune system, increased risk for cardiovascular issues.

So Smede says, for your own sake, let it go then you don't have depression and you will have a better health and a lot of people will tell you that. You forgive so that you live a better life. But there is a difference between therapeutic forgiveness and biblical forgiveness.

<b>Therapeutic Forgiveness</b>	<b>Biblical forgiveness</b>
Feeling. It is ceasing to feel resentment or bitterness.	Commitment to pardon the offender.
Private affair in persons heart	Between two parties
Unconditional	Conditional on repentance
Motivated by self interest	Motivated by love for God and neighbor for His glory
Not fast adherence to justice its according to how one feels.	Justice is basis of forgiveness.
Not linked to reconciliation.	Linked to reconciliation.

So biblical forgiveness is actually quite different from therapeutic forgiveness. So if you automatically forgive, everyone regardless to avoid bitterness, this one is you automatically offer to forgive. Forgiveness is like a present, I buy an expensive present, it cost me a lot, I wrap it in a wrapping paper and I give it to you, whether you open or not its your will, you have to open it, at least I am offering it to you, I am committing to forgive. The problem with therapeutic forgiveness is that:

1. Therapeutic forgiveness distorts people's understanding of true forgiveness.  
We gloss over what happens in true forgiveness or the repentant. The problem when you gloss it over, the person who does wrong will be unrepentant, continue to do the same thing and you are not actually loving that person.
2. Therapeutic forgiveness attempts to redefine how people understand God's forgiveness.  
They will misunderstand that when God forgives the relationship is not necessarily restored. People can still go to hell. So there is a confusion there.
3. Therapeutic forgiveness suggests that some people may even need to forgive God.  
It means I got bad feelings against God, may be God is wrong then I forgive God. Do you a situation where you have something against God and that actually is a travesty because how can God have done you an injustice. You may feel like that and if therapeutic forgiveness is just

based on feelings and not on reality then you are allowed to have those feelings and then God will have to have your forgiveness. God will have to come as a famous pastor said, God apologised to me.

4. Therapeutic forgiveness results in “cheap grace” and a reluctance to identify and name evil. You remember there is a church dispute, some actual wrong being committed. You got two parties, one party will come, okay find out which is the right thing and wrong thing, lets make correction. The other one say, hey love everybody, don’t care who is right or wrong. That is a travesty of the gospel. You are betraying Christian truth. Christians are always about the truth. We are never afraid of truth. If I am wrong, I say I am wrong, lets move on and set things right. Where you cannot cover everything up in the name of Christian love, that is the distortion of what truth is. If that is the truth, then you don’t need the cross. So, I think that is cheap grace. In fact, Dietrich Bonhoeffer in Germany actually wrote,

*Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.*

It is not a proper representation of who God is.

5. Therapeutic forgiveness discourages healing in Christian community.  
Distance ourselves from the perpetrator
6. Therapeutic forgiveness may make individuals feel licensed to avoid dealing with their own sin.  
We avoid grappling with issues and fact we might have been in the wrong.

So that is the problem with therapeutic forgiveness.

In reconciliation, you have got grace to offer forgiveness but it always leads to reconciliation. The bible never separates the two. The whole point of forgiveness is actually reconciliation. If you look at Jesus,

#### **John 20:19-21 (ESV)**

*Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”*

So the whole issue is this, the cross, the scars, the sacrifice was in order to enact reconciliation and Paul famously says,

#### **Romans 5:1 (ESV)**

*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

So the aim of the forgiveness is always reconciliation of relationship. John Stott actually writes,

*“If we can restore to full and intimate fellowship with ourselves a sinning and unrepentant brother, we reveal not the depth of our love, but its shallowness, for we are doing what is not for his highest good. Forgiveness which bypasses the need for repentance issues not from love but from sentimentality.”*

This is a distortion of what the gospel is about.

### 1 John 1:9-10 (ESV)

9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

So forgiveness is actually a process where even though you are justified by faith, whenever we sin we are in a process of reconciling based on what Christ has done for us on the cross. It is like a deep well, we keep on drawing from that well because we are not perfect and we continue to sin. So it is a process, you have to restore trust. There is a healing of hurts and genuine repentance actually takes time.

*“A commitment from the offended to pardon graciously the repentant from moral liability and to be reconciled to that person, although all **consequences are not necessarily eliminated**”*

*Chris Braun Unpacking Biblical Forgiveness*

So let's talk about consequences. Consequences may not be eliminated. Consequences are because of justice. King David with Bathsheba, one fling in the night and the consequences were huge, baby dies, his sons rapes his daughter, family torn apart by rebellion, Psalm 51 days how he has repented in tears but the consequences of his sin are still there. So there are consequences on one hand, penalty, price required for the offense is actually eternal punishment in hell and the other one is discipline. It is a loving correction of a parent where we can understand the seriousness of sin and will be increasingly confirmed to the image of his Son. So the consequences that we actually have is therefore defined under the rubric of discipline. We are not talking about penalty anymore because Christ died for our sins.

### Why is forgiveness so hard?

There is a psychology of forgiveness:

1. We actually have to gain a more balanced view of the offender. So, if somebody does something bad against me, I am so upset about him, I will not be looking for more. When you are angry you don't want a more balanced view, you want to choose the worst view of the offender.
2. Decreasing negative feelings towards the offender and potentially increasing compassion. We want to decrease that.
3. Giving up the right to punish the offender further or to demand restitution

This is what is involved in forgiveness, but the problem is there is a real debt to pay. Os Guinness writes in book *Unspeakable* of all the atrocities. There was a Muslim woman who was raped repeatedly in front of her husband. They took her young baby child and when the baby was crying they chopped off his head and throw it on her lap and they walked off. There is a real debt, you have to deal with the debt, that's why it is very hard to forgive. How are you going to ask that woman to forgive.

Second thing is pride. Pride is putting one self in the centre of focus. Pride is looking at the world from my perspective and not God's perspective and nor the other person's perspective, which means you have got low self esteem, which means you are insecure, you are shy, you are overly sensitive, you worry a lot, these people can fight with you a lot because it is self. Because if you do something hurtful to me that means you are looking down on me somewhere, I get very upset. If you have got high self esteem then you presume upon others, you are impatient, you think you are very smart and then you do something

bad against me, you are actually impugning my dignity, I am such a good clever wonderful person. Either way pride comes in the way of forgiveness. Then we caricature each other. When we caricature someone, we create one dimensional images of them. We are never bother to find anything else about it because it is more convenient or us to take a brush and paint in one dimension, so that is easier for us to hate and find the excuse not to forgive. That is what we do. You heart wants to extenuate the difference between them and you.

There is a psychological way in which we paint the other person. Miroslav Volf a professor at Princeton describes it very clearly and it helps us understand ourselves. He says,

*Forgiveness flounders because I exclude the enemy from the community of humans, and I exclude myself from the from the community of sinners*

*You only stay mad at someone if you continue to feel superior to them. You exclude yourself from community of sinners at least not as bad as them...you need to identify*

So basically that is why we cannot forgive. We paint these differences, we extenuate at any opportunity these differences so we cannot forgive and Jesus says,

#### **Luke 17:3-4 (ESV)**

*Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, 4 and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."*

And I cannot just forgive because he does not deserve it or isn't really repentant, so we can't really forgive, you know why, there is this psychological concept of the injustice gap. It is a gap which is a mental gap, an ongoing mental computation in which we balance the amount of injustice done to us with subsequent events related to the transgression.

Some psychologist gives this advice, get mad then get even, it is justice plain and simple. Revenge is healthy, you are teaching people to behave better. You are getting poisonous feelings out of your system, what could be healthier.

Revenge is excellent self-therapy. It's far cheaper than a therapist

Buddha has a very good saying,

*"Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent to throw it at someone—you are the one getting burned."* Buddha

Frederick Beuchner writes,

*Of the seven deadly sins , anger is the most fun , to lick your wounds , to smack your lips over grievances long past ,to roll over your tongues the prospect of bitter confrontations that are still to come , to savour the last toothsome morsel of the pain you are giving back to them in many ways is a feast fit for a king. The chief drawback is what you are wolfing down at this feast is yourself. The skeleton at that feast is you.*

So, you enjoy giving the pain to other people but actually you are eating yourself up.

## So how do I find it in me to forgive?

There is a debt, some one has to pay. This injustice gap someone has to pay. Forgiveness is suffering. Everybody who forgives has to pay a price. Forgiveness is that suffering for going that injustice gap and if you actually follow Smede you actually forgive each other to avoid bitterness, you actually get more bitter because you actually detach from reality. So that's the problem with therapeutic forgiveness.

Look at Psalm 73

*When my soul was embittered, when I was pricked in heart, 22 I was brutish and ignorant; I was like a beast toward you.*

Here is an acknowledgement. When a person is upset after expressing reality of that something gone wrong and he is bringing it to God. So when you are actually upset you bring the bitterness and anger to God. There is a reason

**Psalms 73:1-5 (ESV)**

*Truly God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.*

*2 But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled, my steps had nearly slipped.*

*3 For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*

*4 For they have no pangs until death; their bodies are fat and sleek.*

*5 They are not in trouble as others are; they are not stricken like the rest of mankind.*

*6 Therefore pride is their necklace; violence covers them as a garment. 7 Their eyes swell out through fatness; their hearts overflow with follies.*

*8 They scoff and speak with malice; loftily they threaten oppression.*

*9 They set their mouths against the heavens, and their tongue struts through the earth.*

Here is the arrogance. They are doing so well and I am doing so badly. It is like injustice gap, huge injustice gap but the thing is that if you look at Psalm 73 it says,

**Psalms 73:16-19 (ESV)**

*But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task, 17 until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end. 18 Truly you set them in slippery places; you make them fall to ruin. 19 How they are destroyed in a moment, swept away utterly by terrors!*

Look at the offenders as how God will look at them. When you feel they are getting away with it, they are rich and they have cheated people, they have cheated you, they defrauded you, you look at them and how God will look at them, it is like the difference is so small, it is like you are at the bottom of Mount Everest and you are looking up. Actually the difference is minuscule. Look at Revelation 6

**Revelation 6:10-11 (ESV)**

*They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" 11 Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.*

So God will basically avenge the people who have been wronged. Then I look at myself as God will look at me

*When my soul was embittered, when I was pricked in heart, 22 I was brutish and ignorant; I was like a **beast toward you.***

So you recognise, I am not as good as I think I am, the opposite says when I look at myself I am kinder on myself, I look at other people they are all like cartoon. Now we look at myself and I look at others as God will look at them, I get a true picture of what they look like in God's eyes and I get a picture of myself and that is not pretty either. That helps you forgive. It is like children always fighting and the younger one always win. So what do you do with the older one? Most of us will then give the older one a bigger toy. That's how it works. So that's what bribery is about. The same thing is that, you look at God. God is the biggest prize and if you look here, it says,

### **Psalms 73:23-26 (ESV)**

*Nevertheless, I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. 24 You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory. 25 Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. 26 My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

It is when you start looking at them as how God will look at them, yourself as how God will look at you and you look at God. When you focus on how beautiful he is, it is like getting a better toy and you don't care about the smaller toy. That's the kind of thinking. So if you look at Isaiah 6

### **Isaiah 6:3-5 (ESV)**

*And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" 4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"*

So you meditate on the beauty of God and that allows you to forgive. I want to end with a final story. This is an amazing true story of two men Mitsuo Fuchida and Jacob DeShazer. Now WWII, 1941 the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour and when they bombed Pearl Harbour Jacob DeShazer was painter or somebody in Oregon state and he was very angry, filled with revenge and he wanted to strike back at the Japanese. Mitsuo Fuchida was the hero, he was the one who gave the order to attack Pearl Harbour on that day, December 7, 1941 and he was the one who transmitted that faithful message back to Japan. You won't see two people more committed against each other as in this war and then what happens later on, within six months, there was a group of B25 bombers headed by James Doolittle who actually made a very audacious trip from aircraft carrier to put bombs onto Tokyo. First time Japan was bombed by anybody in their history and although the bombing raid was inconsequential in terms of its military damage, it hit morale and so therefore they went on a suicide mission and all of them just flew over drop their bombs, did not much and they all crashed in the sea or landed in China and one of them was actually Jacob DeShazer and they landed there, actually James Doolittle was saved. There were eight Americans who were actually saved by the Chinese and the disaster that happened later on a lot of people don't know. In retaliation for helping the Americans the Japanese killed 250,000 Chinese. It is worse than the rape of Nanking but today nobody talks about that. In fact most of the soldiers who did that escaped punishment, only the commander got sentenced to life imprisonment and was on payroll in 1954. It was a terrible thing, just for helping these people.

Jacob DeShazer was one of the eight Americans who were caught, three were executed and they were put into prison and they suffered horrific punishment in prison under the Japanese, most died of starvation or tortured slowly to death and one day one of the guards gave him a bible for three weeks and he read

the Bible because one of his fellow American was also a Christian and told him about the love of Jesus Christ and he actually read the Bible for three weeks and he understood who Jesus was and based on Romans 9 he accepted Jesus as his Lord and Saviour and became a Christian. Shortly after that WWII ended, he went back to the United States, he went to Bible college and he came back to Japan as a missionary.

Can you imagine a person who have been tortured, Japanese have killed 250,000 Chinese because they saved his life, came back to Japan and shared the gospel with Japanese. In the first year when Americans came back, you know, 30,000 Japanese came to know Christ. In the 1950 he wrote one little pamphlet, how I found forgiveness or something and it was published and after 40 days of prayer and fasting. That pamphlet fell into the hands of Mitsuo Fuchida who was struggling in his life because all this patriotism, he killed so many people and he also felt the guilt and he was so astonished at how Jacob DeShazer could forgive. Do you know, some of the guards in that prison actually became Christians because they saw the forgiveness of Jacob DeShazer. And Mitsuo Fuchida, the hero of Japan became a Christian miraculously and he became missionary to Asia, ministering the to very people that the Japanese people had tortured and killed, he gave his life. They became very good friends. Why? Because of the miracle of the gospel.

You see forgiveness can penetrate the human heart because it shows you it is the best testimony of the reality of the love of God. If you can forgive it shows you are really transformed by the love of Jesus Christ. If you cannot forgive, I don't care who you are, you may not even be saved because you have not experienced the reality of the beauty of God, because when you forgive you see other people as God sees them, you see yourself as how God sees you and you see Him as who he is and that becomes the basis of your ability to forgive others and there is nothing more miraculous because when people see that it is nothing in this world can come to that and that's why it is so important for us in our daily live.

The world will know that we are disciples of Jesus Christ because of our love that allows us to forgive. So Jesus says as the father forgives you, you forgive others.