

# Jesus on Forgiveness: Why You Must Let It Go

By System Import | Sermon | March 13, 2026

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Did you know there is a heavy, invisible chain—stronger than any iron shackle—that is currently imprisoning millions of people every single day? It isn't a legal shackle; it is the chain of painful memories, of betrayal, and of wounds that have never been allowed to heal. When someone wounds us deeply, the most natural human instinct is to build a fortress. We gather the shattered pieces of our betrayed trust to erect massive walls of emotional distance, believing that if we keep people far enough away, we will never be hurt again. We retreat into silent struggles within our relationships and ourselves, nursing our grievances in the dark and meticulously recording every single wrong committed against us.

But listen closely: that self-preservation is a deadly illusion. The very walls you build to keep the pain out are the exact same walls that lock the profound, suffocating loneliness in. You cannot selectively numb your heart; when you shut down your capacity to forgive, you simultaneously annihilate your own capacity for love and true intimacy. You become a prisoner in a cell of your own making, holding the key in your hand but refusing to turn it, simply because you believe "justice"—or the illusion of it—is more important than the freedom of your own soul.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ confronted this devastating human condition head-on. He didn't offer a gentle psychological therapy or a polite social tip for conflict resolution. He delivered a mandate that shatters the human ego and demands the absolute surrender of our so-called "personal rights." He told us to let it go. To forgive. Not just when it's easy, not just when the offender has apologized, but as a total, unconditional lifestyle. If you truly want to follow Him, you cannot take a detour to avoid the altar of forgiveness. It is the only gateway to the Kingdom of Heaven, and it is the only bridge that leads you out of the aching isolation of your heart.

### Number 1: The Illusion of Debt Collection (You Are Drinking the Poison)

The primary reason we refuse to forgive is that unforgiveness feels like power. When someone wrongs us, they incur an emotional debt. By holding a grudge, we feel like we are the debt collectors, holding them accountable for their actions. We think that our icy silence, our passive-aggressive remarks, or our simmering rage is somehow punishing them. But the reality is a tragic psychological illusion. Unforgiveness does not punish the offender; it tortures the victim. As the old saying goes, "Bitterness is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die."

When you refuse to forgive, you forge a powerful, invisible cord between you and the person who hurt you. You remain emotionally tethered to them. They wake up with you, they go to work with you, and they keep you awake at night. You have given them rent-free space in your mind, allowing them to dictate your mood and steal your joy long after the actual offense has passed.

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Jesus commands us to forgive because He wants to cut that cord. He wants to set you free from the tyranny of your abuser.

## Number 2: The Erased Ledger of Your Own Sin

In Matthew 18, Jesus tells the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant to illustrate why we must let it go. He describes a king who cancels an unpayable debt of ten thousand talents—billions of dollars today—for a servant who begs for mercy. This is the picture of our salvation. Our treason against a holy God was unpayable, yet He wiped the ledger clean through the blood of Jesus Christ.

But that same servant goes out, finds a fellow servant who owes him a hundred denarii (about three months' wages), and begins to choke him, demanding payment. When the king hears of this, he is furious. This parable is a mirror held up to every believer. When you truly grasp the magnitude of what you have been forgiven, it becomes spiritually impossible to withhold forgiveness from others. We forgive because we have been forgiven. The grace we extend to others is the most accurate thermometer of how deeply we understand the grace God has extended to us.

## Number 3: Forgiveness is an Act of the Will, Not an Emotion

One of the greatest traps believers fall into is waiting to "feel" like forgiving. We think that if we still feel a sting of anger, we haven't truly forgiven them. But Jesus did not say, "Wait until you feel warm and fuzzy about your enemies." He commanded us to forgive as an act of the will. If you wait for your emotions to align with obedience, you will wait forever.

Forgiveness is a legal transaction in the courtroom of your spirit. It is a decision you make, sometimes through gritted teeth and flowing tears, to say, "Lord, I choose to release them. I choose not to seek revenge. I choose to surrender my right to be angry." The beautiful reality is that feelings eventually follow faith. If you consistently make the choice to forgive, the Holy Spirit will eventually perform surgery on your emotions. The healing only begins after the choice is made. You must step into the Jordan River before the waters will part.

## Number 4: Releasing the Offender to the True Judge

We often resist forgiveness because we confuse it with the absence of justice. We think that if we forgive someone, they are getting away with it. We want to be the ones to balance the scales. But the Bible is clear that God is a God of absolute, terrifying justice. Romans 12:19 says, "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'"

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When you refuse to forgive, you are essentially telling God that you don't trust Him to handle the situation properly. You are climbing up onto the judge's bench, grabbing the gavel, and trying to execute a sentence you have no authority to execute. Jesus commands us to forgive so that we can step down from that exhausting, soul-crushing position. Forgiveness is saying, "Lord, I hand them over to You." When you transfer the case to the Supreme Court of Heaven, you are freed from the burden of carrying the prosecution files.

## Number 5: The Difference Between Forgiveness and Trust

A major reason people remain trapped in unforgiveness is that they falsely believe forgiving an abuser means they must allow the abuser back into their lives to hurt them again. Let us be absolutely clear: Jesus commands you to forgive everyone, but He does not command you to trust everyone. Forgiveness is a unilateral transaction; it only takes one person. Trust is a currency that must be earned over time.

If this message inspires you, don't forget to subscribe for more Bible insights every week. You can look at someone who has repeatedly betrayed you and say, "I forgive you in the name of Jesus. I release you from my bitterness." And in the very next breath, you can say, "But you are no longer allowed in my inner circle." You can forgive someone and still change the locks. You can forgive someone and still set an iron-clad biblical boundary. Forgiveness is mandatory; access is a privilege.

## Number 6: Healing the Emotional Distance in Your Life

When we harbor unforgiveness, it doesn't just affect our relationship with the offender; it infects every other relationship we have. The silent struggles of a bitter heart bleed out onto innocent people. When you are deeply hurt and refuse to process it through grace, you build walls. You maintain a safe, calculated emotional distance from your spouse, your children, and your friends because you are terrified of being betrayed again.

This is the breeding ground for the deepest kind of human loneliness. Jesus commands us to forgive because it is the only way to tear down those walls. Forgiveness sweeps the debris out of your soul so that you have the capacity to love deeply again. It trades the lonely, sterile environment of a fortress for the messy, beautiful, vibrant reality of a connected life.

## Number 7: The Freedom of an Unoffendable Heart

The ultimate goal of following the teachings of Jesus is not just to manage our grudges, but to develop an unoffendable heart. When Jesus hung on the cross, He was being mocked, tortured, and murdered by the very people He came to save. In the midst of the most profound injustice in

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the history of the universe, He looked down and said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Jesus was unoffendable. His ego was not bruised because His identity was entirely rooted in the Father. When you practice forgiving seventy times seven, you are slowly stripping away the power of the flesh to be offended. You realize that hurting people hurt people, and their sin is a reflection of their own spiritual sickness, not a reflection of your worth. To walk with an unoffendable heart is to walk in absolute invincibility. It means that no matter what the world throws at you, they cannot steal your peace.

## Conclusion

We have looked deep into the mechanics of the hardest command in the Kingdom. We have seen that the illusion of debt collection is poison, that our own ledger of sin has been wiped clean, and that forgiveness is a gritty act of the will, not a fleeting emotion. We have learned to release the offender to the True Judge, to distinguish between forgiveness and trust, to heal our emotional distance, and to strive for the freedom of an unoffendable heart.

If there is a name, a face, or a memory that has been haunting your mind while reading this, that is the Holy Spirit speaking to you. The stone you are carrying is too heavy. It is stunting your spiritual growth. It is causing the silent struggles in your home. Today is the day to drop it.

Do not wait for an apology that may never come. Take the radical step of faith today. Go to the Father in secret, speak the name of the one who broke your heart, and declare their debt canceled in the name of Jesus Christ. As you do, you will feel the chains shatter. You will step out of the shadows and into the brilliant, life-giving light of grace.

Before you go, make sure to follow and subscribe, like this video, and share it with someone who needs encouragement today. And join us next time as we uncover another powerful truth from God's Word.