

Forgiveness

By Dr. Gordon Kirk

[Worship band plays a few songs]

[Audience applauds and cheers]

Speaker 1:

Pray with me. God, this morning, we have sung Your greatness. God, we have said that we would rather dwell just one day in Your presence than anywhere else. God, for surely we do have breath and we praise You. For You are totally worth it. God, touch us this morning, let Your Spirit fall heavy on this place for it is already here. Be with us, refresh us, renew us. God we thank you for worship and the chance to place You at the forefront of our mind. We love You, and it's in Your Son's name, amen. Good morning!

Audience:

Good morning!

Speaker 1:

We've got a few announcements for you, if you'll listen up. This week, there's so much going on. Tomorrow, Bab starts.

[Audience cheers]

Speaker 1:

It is the week of funk.

[Audience laughs]

Speaker 1:

And uh, the Bab view will be shown today after chapel, um, you're free to leave, but feel free to stay around. But that kind of brings up a question, many people come and say is Bab like, biblical? Are girls supposed to pursue guys? Right?

[Audience laughs]

Speaker 1:

So I did a little studying.

[Audience laughs]

Speaker 1:

Isaiah 4:1, "In that day, seven willm-women will take hold of one man."

[Audience laughs]

Speaker 1:

Take it for what it's worth.

[Audience laughs]

Speaker 1:

The yearbook wants to remind you that they are doing mug shots all this week in this sub, and they are there from 10:30 till 6 p.m. today, tomorrow, and Friday. Please, it is free, the alumni

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association has paid for your picture. Please feel free to stop by and get your picture taken. Uh, the men's soccer team. I'll say it again, the men's soccer team--

[Audience cheers]

Speaker 1:

They let me down. They have a game today against Point Loma, three o'clock. Please come out and support them. Uh, there also is a men's conference next week, a week from today, October 13th, from seven to nine here on campus at Calvary Chapel. Um, it's going to be uh, discussing current issues from men. Uh, speaking will be uh Dr. Miller, the provost, uh Dr. Murray Decker, who is in the ICS department, and Rob Loan, who is a former Emerson R-R.D. and uh, and adjunct professor. This is all sponsored by the Alpha Omega Service. And so that is next Wednesday, you'll hear more about that. Uh, Frank Pastori, who's a teacher professor in the Biblical studies department, and uh, then some other stuff is on-going to be on Politically Incorrect with Bill Marr, and that is tomorrow, Thursday, October 7th. You can check that out on chan-on Channel seven, ABC. Also, if you'd like to be there, if you want to be there in the audience supporting him, need-t-time-contact m-uh, excuse me, Mary Russell at uh 5429 for more information, they're giving us as many seats as we want. So if you'd like to be there and support him, there's that.

And uh, this Friday, if there wasn't enough going on, we got alumni weekend, parents weekend coming up, Bab, we're starting a new tradition here. Stewart has initiated what they're going to call the low land games. What this, it's an all campus wide event, they want to get all the different vorm-dorms involved and it's going to be a bunch of different things. They're having a

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torch rally at 2:30, that starts three o'clock on Friday. If you get nothing else going on, it's way before everything else starts. Go ahead and join that. Some of the things that are going to do is a greased watermelon toss--

[Audience laughs]

Speaker 1:

Uh, relay races, I can't even say this one, Kab-Jobi Can Can?

[Audience cheers]

Speaker 1:

Kajabi? Thank you. Uh, they're doing pie eating contests, tug of war should be a bunch of fun, should be done in an hour, uh, so there's that. This morning, we have Dr. Gordon Kirk with us from Lake Avenue Presbyterian up in uh Pasadena. And uh, my first experience with Dr. Kirk was at a Torrey conference last year. And uh, he spoke, uh, he did electives on uh, Proverbs. And uh, it really impacted me. He uh really challenged us to get into the Proverbs and start making references of uh what the Proverbs revealed. He also said something when he was in his main sessions about how we, when we pray, we should not ask the Spirit of God to be with us, because it already is-it is already here. And that has done remarkable things from my prayer life, just making sure that I realize that God is always with me, it's just if I acknowledge him or not. So I am very excited to have Dr. Gordon Kirk speak. He is uh a Biola Talbot grad, got his doctorate at DTS. He is a friend of Biola. I couldn't believe the number of people that said hi to him as he uh, as you were sitting here during worship. So I wish-please welcome with me Dr. Gordon Kirk.

[Audience applauds]

Gordon Kirk:

Well, thanks, it's an honor to be said that I'm a friend of Biola, but I want you to know I love Biola. It was 32 years ago, and I had hair, big, thick, wavy, black hair.

[Gordon Kirk and audience laughs]

Gordon Kirk:

Well, it wasn't really thick, but I did have some hair. I came as a student in 1967, sat in the same bleachers, same floor. And I want you to know that my life was dramatically changed through the incredible integration of faith and learning that God allows through Biola. And a number of profs that shaped my life are still teaching at Talbot, and some here at Biola. And so it's always a very special honor to be back. I taught at Biola from 1973 to 83 in the biblical studies area, and so I deeply, deeply love Biola, Talbot, all that means. But this morning, as we think about our theme, your overall area as I drove in, I love seeing the banners along the road, and talking about laying aside the old self and being renewed in the Spirit of your mind. God has prompted me through that theme to remind us that part of a Jesus attitude, part of a-of a God centered focus, is that we are people of forgiveness. And yet I believe it fits so important with our theme because we've got to lay aside the culture, the sort of the imprinting that we've had all of our lives.

We live in a world filled with revenge. From gang shootings, to terrorism. We live in a world filled with retaliation from the litigious society we're in, and you've been hurt and you want to hurt back. You've been caused pain, you're going to sue. We live in a world that is filled with unforgiveness. And I believe if I understand scripture correctly, because of our struggle with the flesh, that wars against the Spirit. There's a very unique, pressing part of us that-that doesn't want

to forgive. I mean, we read all about it and sometimes we laugh about it with the trash talk, but it isn't funny. We live with road rage. We live with a society in which there's all of a sudden racial supremacy, and there's a desire to wipe out certain races and move, in a sense, and all of a sudden there's that-that depreciation of what it means to be-to be made in the image of God. I mean, you've seen the bumper sticker. You know, "I don't get mad," you know, "I just get even!" Saw a t shirt down at Balboa a few weeks ago, and on the back of the t shirt, walking along the sidewalk, it says, you know, "I don't just get mad, I get mad and I get even." It's compounded in those ways.

And so we need to begin to think for a moment in that renewing of our mind, what does it mean for us as it relates to forgiveness? Because I believe forgiveness is not natural to us. Forgiveness is not innate within us. And therefore, forgiveness is really hard. And we've got to have God's Spirit within us, God's attitude, and a sense of [unintelligible] understand what that means. And yet it's so important for us to realize that, you know, we have all hurt other people. I've hurt people. And you've hurt people. I've intentionally wronged people, you've intentionally wronged people. No, I'm not talking about the bloopers, okay, I'm not talking about the little mistakes. I'm talking about areas where there's deep, deep hurt. And so often I hear in people's conversations, we chat and say, "Well but you know, Gordon, if you knew what my dad did to me, you wouldn't be so quick to talk about forgiveness. If you had to live with a-with a daughter who, because of medical malpractice, now is in a wheelchair for the rest of her life, you wouldn't be so quick to say I should forgive that doctor."

"If you knew what was like with my son, who had a promising career and now he's confined to a bed on a respirator because of a drunk driver, maybe you'd sense a little bit of what it means when I say I could never forgive that person!" See, that's the theme within our culture and somehow, that sort of wells up within us as almost a natural part of us. And that's the renewing issue. That's the new creature in Christ that needs to combat that and shift those issues. I want you to listen to a parable that Jesus taught, and then we're going to turn to just one passage in a moment. But don't open your Bibles, just-just listen for a moment. Matthew 18, listen to the words of Jesus, "Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister when he or she sins against me? How about seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven.'" Now listen to the Parable.

"Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents," and that's like sort of millions of dollars, hang on to this for once, it's like a-it's a debt that you and I could never repay. Even winning the lottery we couldn't rep-it's beyond. It's an incalculable, it's an unpayable debt. Anyway, that man was brought to the king, and since he wasn't able to pay, the master ordered that he, and his wife, and his children, and all that he had be sold. "The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'And I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him and canceled the debt and let him go. But when that servant went out, he found one of-one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii," maybe one hundred dollars, compared to millions. "He grabbed him and began to choke him, 'Pay back the one hundred dollars you owe me!' He demanded. His servant fell to his knees and begged him, be patient with me and I'll pay you back.'" Sound familiar?

But this man refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until the debt could be paid. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and they went back and told the master everything that had happened. Then the master called the servant in. He said, "You wicked servant, I canceled the debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?" In anger, his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured till he should pay back all he owed. Listen to Jesus. This is how my Heavenly Father will treat each of you, unless you forgive your brother, or your sister, from your heart. I'd like to touch on just two items today, and it's a huge topic, but I hope there's some things that will help us begin to work through what it means to forgive as Jesus would want us to forgive. To help us catch a, a new understanding of the importance and the critical nature of forgiveness, and maybe begin to shape, in a way, some inappropriate paradigms that we need to change. Let me be really vulnerable with you.

Every time I hear somebody say to me, "You know, Gordon, if you just knew what I went through, if you knew about the hurt that took place in my life, you'd know why I can't understand, why I can't forgive." Every time I hear, "Well, I can't forgive and if you just knew what I went through, you'd understand why I couldn't forgive," I believe that person has a misunderstanding of what scripture teaches, of what Jesus teaches, about forgiveness. So quickly, can we ask the first question? The most important question, why should I forgive? Now just think of the parable. I think one of the first reasons that we see within that parable of why, is because we are all imperfect. See, we need forgiveness. And so if we're unwilling to forgive other people, we won't be forgiven. You know so clearly how Romans says, "All have sinned

and fallen short of the glory of God." I love the passage in Ecclesiastes 7:20, would you listen to this? Ecclesiastes 7:20, "There is not a single person in all the earth who is always good and never sins."

Why should I forgive? I believe a basic understanding is, because I need forgiveness. I'm going to make mistakes. I'm going to hurt other people. I'm going to need forgiveness to keep that relational [unintelligible] at strength. George Herbert writes it this way, "The person who cannot forgive another breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass." You've been selfish. I've been selfish. I've hurt others. You've hurt others. Why should I forgive? Because I need forgiveness myself. I'm imperfect. But secondly, and most importantly, I believe even from this parable, why should I forgive? Because God has forgiven me. I love that passage in Ephesians 4 where it says, "Be kind and compassionate to one another. Forgiving each other," How? "Just as Christ, just as God has forgiven you in Christ." See, because of all of what God has done for us, we should be forgiving of other people. I find often within my own life when, you know, I'm just not feeling too good and things aren't going well, I begin to forget the love, the grace, the mercy, the care that God has in my life.

And when I begin to reflect on how God has forgiven me, how much God loves me with an unconditional love, how much God cares for me, that begins to set a whole different attitude. That's the renewing of my mind, what is that then a freedom of my heart to forgive others because I realized how much I've been forgiven by God. John MacArthur in his commentary on Matthew writes it this way, would you listen? "Forgiveness reflects the highest human virtue because it so clearly reflects the character of God." A person who forgives, is a person who

emulates the nature of God. Nothing so much demonstrates God's love toward us as His forgiveness. A person who is not willing to forgive is therefore a person lacking in Christlike love, no matter how orthodox theology, how outwardly impeccable the morals may be, a Christian who will not relinquish a hateful, resentful attitude towards someone who has wronged him, is a person who knows neither the true glory of His redeemed humanity, nor the true glory of God's gracious character.

An unforgiving Christian is a living contradiction of new nature in Christ. That's what we're all about this semester, the renewal of our mind, that putting on of Christ. An unforgiving Christian is a living contradiction of new nature in Christ. It is central to the heart of God to forgive, and only the Christian who radiates forgiveness radiates true godliness. First question, why should we forgive? First, because we are all imperfect. We need forgiveness. Secondly, because of how much God has forgiven us. But thirdly, can I be very practical for a moment? I believe we need to be people of forgiveness, because unforgiveness or resentment is self-destructive. Listen to Job 18:4, "You are only hurting yourself with your anger." Those of you in the mental health professions, and those of you in psych, and sociology, I so respect the integration of how God made us in the image of God, what it means psychologically, all the work that you do, and the journals I've read, because that's not my field, but they say over and over again, the single most destructive emotion is resentment. Unforgiveness.

Job 5 and verse 2 says it this way, "To worry yourself to death with resentment would be a foolish and senseless thing to do." See if I understand God's word correctly, resentment is not only unhealthy, but it's unhelpful. The resentment you carry, the unforgiveness you carry, against

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an ex-boyfriend or girlfriend, against the hurt from a mom or dad, a divorce that took place, a medical crisis, some kind of a loss, against an ex for--that kind of resentment that you're carrying, you realize, will not solve the problem! Job 21 says this, "Some people stay healthy until the day they die. Others have no happiness at all, they live and they die with bitter hearts." See, resentment is unhealthy. Resentment works against us. Hey, I grew up watching the Three Stooges, you know buddy? I love the one where Curly and Moe were working together, and-and Moe kept hitting Curly on the chest, and kind of punching him and pounding at him. And, you know, Curly said, "I'm going to get even hehehe and you know, I'm going to fix this up, you know?"

[Audience laughs]

Gordon Kirk:

He says, "I'm going-I'm going to stop Moe from hitting me, and so I'm going to put some sticks of dynamite in his coat" or, "in my coat. The next time he hits me, he'll blow off his hand!" Well he'd blow himself up as well. I mean, that's the idea of resentment. The stuff you hold on to, the stuff you keep close to yourself by way of resentment and unforgiveness, doesn't just hurt the other person, but it hurts you as an individual. Resentment, unforgiveness, is self-destructive. But how-what is forgiveness? I believe there are a number of what I would consider to be inappropriate, inaccurate paradigms of forgiveness. I'd like you to turn with me, if you would, to the book of Second Timothy for a moment. I'd like you to look at one verse. Second Timothy, chapter 4 and verse 14. Because I believe here at second Timothy 4:14, we have a picture of Paul, who was hurt by someone else. Went through some kind of a difficult situation, it's not

given to us in detail. We can speculate, but he doesn't mention it specifically. So let's just leave it at some kind of a hurt.

I'd like you to think about your hurt for a moment. Something that you carry with--someone else has wounded you. Someone else has--has deeply offended, molested, robbed, stolen, lied about you, abandoned you. I want you to think about the hurt, and look with me if you would in verse 14. Paul says "Alexander, the metal worker, did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he's done. You too should be on your guard against him, because he's strongly opposed our message. Friends there's four thoughts I want you to think about that I believe are erroneous components to inadequate paradigm of forgiveness. And the first is, forgiveness is not minimizing the hurt. Forgiveness is not minimizing the seriousness of the offense. And if you'll look at that verse, he says, "Alexander, the metalworker, he did me a great deal of harm."

Sometimes I'm dealing with somebody, or we're chatting as friends, or in a counselling situation, and they say, "Well, you know, it really wasn't anything. It's no big deal." No, it was a big deal. It was something.

And Paul doesn't say, "Oh, well, don't worry about Alexander. He really didn't hurt me. You know, it's okay, it's no big deal. He said, "The guy did me a great deal of harm." I love the honesty of that! I love the reality of that. Friends, forgiveness doesn't mean that somehow you minimize the loss. And that person who raped you, that is a horrific sin. "Oh it's nothing. I'll get through it." It's something. The drunk driver that killed your brother. "Oh yeah, we'll get over it. And, you know, it's no big deal. The big plan of God." It's a big deal! Paul doesn't minimize the loss. I'll never forget as long as I live, January 3rd, 1997, January 3rd, is our son's birthday, and

we were home celebrating. And one of the pastors from our congregation called, working with the seasons of life and said, "I just want you to know," and he mentioned the name of the family, that the Birch family, Marsha Birch was leaving to go to her seven o'clock nursing shift. And she walked out at six o'clock in the morning into her driveway. And apparently there was some robbery going on across the street and those that were involved with the robbery saw her, figured she'd be a witness, and they shot her.

Here's a mom of three children, okay? A husband still upstairs getting dressed. She walked out at her own driveway, to get in her own car, just to go to work. Her husband heard the shots and wasn't sure what the popping noise was, what happened, but just sensed there was something wrong, and ran outside, and held his wife as the warm blood poured out of her head where she'd been shot, and she died in his arms. And three kids still in bed asleep, January 3rd, in the house. Friends, I've got to be really straight with you. God wants Doug Birch to forgive that murderer. But God never asked him to minimize the murder. It was a big deal, it was a crime, it was wrong! Friends, forgiveness doesn't mean, "Oh, that's nothing. You know, no big deal. And, you know, it's just a small thing." No. Paul is clear on that. And it's so important. Now, hey, there's times that we hurt somebody, it was just accidental. There's times we have the bloopers. You know, we could be walking out here together, and all of a sudden I stop and talk to somebody, you bump into me, don't say, "Oh, oh," you know, "Dr. Kirk, I please forgive me for bumping into you!" No, you just bumped into me, you don't need forgiveness.

Forgiveness is for big stuff. You just made a mistake. But within the forgiveness piece, I want you to realize it isn't the minimizing of the seriousness of what took place. Secondly, from this

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passage, I'd like you to realize forgiveness is not an instant restoration of trust. It's really important, because a lot of people say, "Hey, look, you know, if you expect me to forgive that person, then that means we've got to be, you know, boyfriend girlfriend again." Or that means the husband comes back in the home again. Or that means all of a sudden, you know, I continue to work with that person, or they're my best friend for life. That's not what it means. Forgiveness is very different from rebuilding trust. See I believe forgiveness can be instantaneous, but trust always takes time to rebuild. A number of years ago, and probably not a lot of money to you, but it was to me at that time, I took about 4,000 dollars of my retirement fund and, out of a 5,000 dollar retirement fund--

[Gordon Kirk laughs]

Gordon Kirk:

--And shifted it over because somebody told me, you know what great returns this would be? And what happened? You know, two years later, the whole thing is gone. Yeah. You know, that's a lot of money to me. And it really made me mad. But God has asked me to forgive that individual, and I have. But you know what? I'm not investing with him anymore. I'm not giving him any more of my money! But that doesn't mean I haven't forgiven him. Look back at the text, would you, please? He says, "Alexander, the metal worker, did to me a great deal of harm." Look at the next verse, verse 50, "You too should be on your guard against him." See the fact that you had a boyfriend who had a [unintelligible], or you had a girlfriend, a major crisis. There's been a breakup, whatever it may be. Forgiveness doesn't mean that you've got to get back together again. And somehow, we have in our mind that we confuse forgiveness with that sense of reconciliation or restoration. See if someone has hurt you over and over and over again, Jesus

said you keep on forgiving. That's a tough standard. But see, I'm not obligated to immediately trust that person once again.

See something--well, if I forgive this abusive spouse or this abusive dad, then I've got to let him or her back into my life in that same realm, and that's not the case. I think forgiveness also does not mean that you resume the relationship without changes. Some of you struggle with some drug issues, and friends with some compulsive behavior struggles, different crises along those realms. And to forgive the person for what they've stolen from you, or how they hurt you, or they hit you, or they molested you, or they caused some kind of a problem. Doesn't mean all of a sudden they come back into your life in that same relation until the trust is rebuilt. Our son Jonathan is uh, just got his license, or his permit. And so, you know, we're working through different pieces to help him learn how to drive. And he was on his bike a few days ago, because he couldn't drive without somebody going with him. And we said, "Hey, be sure you're back at four o'clock as we've got this five o'clock meeting, and we've got to be there together as family." And, "Nah, no problem, I'll be there. What time are you leaving the house? Oh, I'll leave the other place at, you know, 20 to 4 and I'll be there, I'll-I'll be back on time."

Four o'clock came, no Jonathan. You know, 4:10 came, no Jonathan. I'm getting on the phone trying to figure, is he still at the neighbor's house, and finally found him. "Oh yeah yeah. I meant to be home and--" Well, you know, we grounded him for a couple of weeks. Now I've forgiven him for what he did, but you know what? He's going to have to rebuild trust again before I'm going to let him out with the sense that we've got an appointment back to back, and doesn't cause some other problems in those realms. See, forgiveness doesn't mean an instant rebuilding of

trust, it doesn't mean that you don't resume the relationship without some changes. And Paul made that so clear in that piece. But the most important area I'd like you to think about is the I think the inappropriate paradigm is this, forgiveness does not mean that you have an amnesia that erases the past. So many times we hear, "Well I'm supposed to forgive and forget!" And the fact that you still remember the incident, you still remember that moment, very clear in your mind of what happened, you think somehow you haven't forgiven.

Friends, forgiveness does not mean holy amnesia. But what forgiveness means is, God begins to take the sting and the pain. That feeling of retaliation against someone else. But it doesn't mean that you forget the event. I mean, as we read these verses in Second Timothy 4, Paul remembered exactly what Alexander did, a great deal of harm. You remember Joseph in the Old Testament? His brothers lied about him, and sold him into slavery, and went back home and pretended like he was dead. And then he met them again as they came down to get food. You remember the story? And he's checking out to see, hey, have they changed their patterns? And, you know, he gave them certain tests. And he wanted to see, even though there was forgiveness, he wanted to see if they're the kind of change where they can have a relationship in the future. At a certain point, he revealed himself to them. And then he said to them, "I know what you did you meant for evil." Prince Joseph never forgot that he was sold by his brothers. He never forgot that he-that they dumped him in a pit hoping he would die. He never forgot that.

But you see, forgiveness is taking out that sting of retaliation, so that he could say to his brothers, "I know you meant it for evil," just like Paul says of Alexander. He did me a great deal of harm. But look back at the verse, in verse 15-14. "The Lord will repay him for what he has done."

Joseph, the same theme. I know you meant it for evil, but God put me in this place for a bigger purpose, a sovereign design, that I'm going to trust Him. Friends, forgiveness does not mean you have amnesia from the event. David Ogsburn in his book *The Freedom of Forgiveness* says this, would you listen? "To say, well I can forgive, but I can't forget, is really saying I know how to overlook a wrong and not forgive it." Now, let's be clear. Forgetful forgiveness is not the case of holy amnesia, which erases the past, but no, it's the experience of healing that draws the poison from the wound. You may recall the hurt, but you won't relive it. No constant reviewing, no rehashing of the old, going back and sitting on the gravestone where past grievances lie buried. True, the hornet of memory may fly again, but forgiveness has drawn its sting.

The memory is powerless to arouse feelings of resentment, retaliation. The past has changed. The past is the past, nothing can alter the facts, but the meaning can be change. Forgiveness restores the present, heals the future, and releases us from the past. Friends. If I could boil down forgiveness in what I believed to be a appropriate biblical paradigm, I'd say this first and foremost, forgiveness is giving up my right to get back. Forgiveness is giving up my right to get even. You hurt me, I want to give you a little pain. I hurt you, you want to hurt me. Forgiveness doesn't mean I forgot how you hurt me or you forgot how I hurt you. But forgiveness means, I give up my right to retaliate. I give up my right to get even. And see, in verse 15 he says that, or actually in verse 14, he says, "The Lord will repay him for what he has done." Do you remember Paul's writing in Romans 12? He says, "Never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For God says He will repay those who deserve it." See, forgiveness is giving up my right to get even. Not minimizing the loss, not somehow forgetting what took place, but taking out of the ledger by way of forget-forgetting, so that I'm not weighed to get even and to get back at an individual.

But I also think forgiveness includes responding to the evil with good. In Luke 6, Jesus said, "Do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you." But that doesn't mean you get back in bed with them. It doesn't mean they come back in the house. Doesn't mean they become your roommate again. Doesn't mean all of a sudden your boyfriend girlfriend again. Doesn't mean all of a sudden you're a business associate with them again. But it's that giving up of that feeling of personal retaliation. And lastly, I believe forgiveness is refocusing on God's plan for my life. I love the passage in Job 11, would you listen from the living Bible? Job 11 verses 13 through 16, listen, "Put your heart right. Reach out to God. Then face the world again, firm and courageous. Then all your troubles will fade from your memory like floods that are past and remembered no more." If you've been through a flood, a hurricane, an earthquake, think of that natural disaster, a major fire. You never forget the flood, you'll never forget the fire, but you know what you forget? All that pain and difficulty.

Those of you who are married women, those of you who have had children, the pain of childbirth. There's a certain sense to where you forget that incredible pain of labor. You don't forget the event and experience, but there's that unique sense that got ta--and that's the idea of forgiveness. Doesn't mean you forget the event, doesn't mean you become their best friend again. Doesn't mean somehow you move back in the relationship without changes, or there's some kind of amnesia. But it's asking God, "Lord, I'm not going to take revenge. I'm not going to get even. I'm not going to retaliate. I'm not going to move into some kind of a road rage because of what somebody did to me in that lane in that free--because, you know, I'm in that lane and I've got my rights and I--" see forgiveness is giving up your right to get even. It's giving up that innate desire

to retaliate. That's the basis. Would you bow with me, please, as we close? For some of you here this morning who have really been hurt, and you've been so hurt, you don't want to trust anybody. I ask you this morning to put your heart right, to reach out to God, and ask Him to take away from you the desire to retaliate.

Confess your feelings of revenge, or going to get even, to hurt them back. But then would you ask God to help you to renew your mind in such a way, to whereas wrong things happen to you, you're willing to forgive others just as Christ has forgiven you. God, I pray for sons and daughters who have been hurt by their mom or their dad, and hurt in such a way as to where they're not even safe to be with them. But I ask that you would take away the desire to get even and get back. Lord fade the memory and the sense to where the event doesn't become something which continues to be like an abscess. Drain the poison, drain the retaliation. But I also ask that You would give us that sense, as Paul said, that we would give that final restoration and restitution to You. You've said You will repay. You are the final judge. Move us away from an unforgiveness of retaliation. And move us into a forgiveness in which we give up those feelings of getting even. Lord renew our minds that will change relationships and heal our souls, in the name of Jesus, amen.