



Renewed Life Church

DETOURS • THE PARDON OF DETOURS •

GENESIS 50:15-21; MATTHEW 6:9-15; MARK 11:22-26 • 7/27/2020

MAIN POINT

We will never move forward from our detours if we refuse to forgive.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

How do you define “forgiveness”?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how hard is it for you to forgive someone who has wronged you? Do you have another scale of what offenses are more forgivable than others?

What are some negative effects of unforgiveness that you have experienced personally?

Our attitudes about forgiveness usually depend upon our experiences with forgiveness. But whether you’ve had to face tremendously hurtful behavior at the hand of another person or you’ve somehow made it through life so far largely unscathed in earthly relationships, one thing is for certain. Forgiveness is something we all need but struggle to give. As we continue our study of Joseph’s life and the detours God allowed to develop his character, we’ll see the necessity of forgiveness in the fulfillment of Joseph’s destiny.

| WATCH SESSION 4—THE PARDON OF DETOURS.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ GENESIS 50:15-21.

What do Joseph’s emotions reveal to us about his heart?

What are some dangers of unforgiveness with regard to a person’s heart (i.e., hardness, bitterness)?

From verse 20, what overarching truth enabled Joseph to forgive?

From verse 21, what can we say genuine forgiveness looks like?

Have you seen God turn something someone else meant for harm in your life into good? What did this experience teach you about forgiveness?

Joseph's response to his brothers lets us know he did not grow emotionally cold. He did not choose a life of cynicism in dealing with the pain he faced. He did not cut off his past; rather, he learned how to view it rightly. Even though the pain was still obviously there, he learned how to accept it in alignment with God's providence. Forgiveness means you no longer hold the situation or person hostage for the pain they caused you. Joseph didn't ignore his pain—he dealt with it. If we are going to allow God to lead us through life's detours, we must address the painful parts.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ MATTHEW 6:9-15.

In what way does refusing to forgive others impact God's relational forgiveness of you?

Why do you think Jesus spent so much attention to forgiveness when He taught His disciples how to pray?

How does Dr. Evans's description of the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation help you understand Jesus' words here?

Dr. Evans pointed out that forgiveness is a decision, not an emotion. It is an act of the will. Still, it is not enough to simply say we forgive; God knows our hearts. Like Christ forgave us on the cross, we must also make the decision to no longer hold the offense against the offender.

In the video session, we learned about unilateral forgiveness and transactional forgiveness. Unilateral forgiveness releases the offender even when they won't or can't ask for forgiveness. Transactional forgiveness takes place when both people want to heal the breach. Which type of forgiveness have you found to be most difficult? Why?

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ MARK 11:22-26.

According to verse 23, what do you need in order to move mountains that are in your way? What did Jesus say we are to do when we are praying (vv. 25-26)? What happens if we do not do it?

How does this passage relate to our study of detours, where God moves in your life to take you from where you are to where He wants you to be?

Would you compare the act of forgiveness to the moving of a mountain? Explain.

Moving mountains hinges on the purity of your relationship with God. The purity of your relationship with God hinges on forgiveness. If anything blocks the flow of God's power in your life more than anything else, it is unforgiveness. God will move in our lives to take us from where we are to where He wants us to be; yet for this to happen, we must forgive those who have wronged us.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Dr. Evans noted, "Forgiveness does not only release the offender, but forgiveness also releases you." Is there someone you need to forgive? In what way would forgiveness "release" you?

How has unforgiveness impacted your relationship with God and other people?

Dr. Evans said that forgiveness does not necessarily mean that reconciliation will occur. How does this statement encourage you?

PRAYER

Thank God for modeling to us what it means to forgive. Ask Him to open your eyes to see His hand, allowing all things to happen for an intended purpose of good. Invite Him to strengthen you to forgive more freely and to live with a pure love toward others.

COMMENTARY

GENESIS 50:15-21

50:15-21 With Jacob now dead, Joseph's older brothers feared for their lives and hoped the words spoken by Jacob before he died would protect them from Joseph's wrath. They were so afraid of Joseph that they did not dare at first to come to him personally; instead they only sent a message entreating him to forgive his brothers' "rebellion" (transgression) and sin, especially since they were "slaves" (servants) of the God of your father—that is, they worshiped the same God that Joseph did. Perhaps the reason the brothers came to Joseph was that they heard he had wept when he received their message. To maximize their chances of survival they bowed down before him (cp. 37:7,9) and offered themselves as his personal slaves.

Joseph refused their offer. They were slaves of God, not of him, and he would not put himself in the place of God to make them his slaves. He admitted that his older brothers planned evil against him, but with great spiritual insight he also confessed that God planned it for good to bring about...the survival of many people. God had transformed the soot of human sin into a diamond of divine blessing (Rm 8:28; 1Pe 2:24). Far from being embittered, Joseph was emboldened to take care of the very ones who had tried to kill him, along with their little ones. He spoke kindly to them (lit "spoke upon their heart"; cp. Isa 40:2) and comforted them.

MATTHEW 6:9-15

By commanding His disciples to pray like this rather than simply "pray this," Jesus demonstrated that this prayer was offered as a model rather than to be recited (v. 9). Your name be honored as holy suggests that Jesus expected His disciples to live righteous lives that honor rather than profane God's name (5:16; Lev. 22:31-32). This is an important precondition for successful prayer. God is the ideal Father—all-loving, all-knowing, all-wise, all-powerful, and always present with us. At the same time, He is in heaven, which tells us He is greater than we can comprehend; so we approach Him as our Father with due reverence. Our implies that Jesus intended this prayer to be a model for prayer for when disciples gather as a group.

Your kingdom come (v. 10) could be translated "Your reign come." The kingdom has come in the hearts of all who have submitted to Jesus as Lord. It also is coming as more people yield their hearts to His reign. The kingdom will not have come fully, though, until Jesus returns and establishes it absolutely and forever. To pray for the Father to see that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven frightens some people. Heaven is the only place free of sin and its painful effects. We should daily pray for the future coming of God's rule in which He will reign fully and completely over the world.

In verse 11, the prayer's focus shifts from God's eternal purposes to our temporal needs. We are to request what we need to sustain life, such as daily bread (Matthew 6:11). Daily may be understood as "for today" or "for tomorrow," in either case pointing to immediate need. This prayer reminds us that our Father is our Provider. As a wise father, God provides what we need, not necessarily what we want. We also are to ask for forgiveness (v. 12). Debts are sins viewed as obligations to the Father. The Greek grammar indicates that the

disciple prays for forgiveness from God only after having first expressed forgiveness to others. The final petition (v. 13) has puzzled many believers—Do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. We know God is good and does not tempt us to sin (James 1:13), so how are we to understand this? The overall meaning is obvious: the prayer is for the Father to keep us doing His will rather than being led astray by Satan.

Verses 14-15 further exhort the kingdom servant concerning the necessity of forgiveness in human relationships if we expect God's forgiveness. These verses, and 18:21-35, explain 6:12. Receiving God's forgiveness motivates forgiveness toward others. Jesus expects us to replace this specific petition with more personalized requests for forgiveness for the specific sins in our own lives.

MARK 11:22-26

11:22. The Bible translations have this verse as the beginning of a new paragraph and a new section on the teaching of prayer. But this verse is actually a response to Peter and should finish the scene of the withered fig tree. The disciples understood Jesus' metaphor and knew that the temple would be destroyed some day. Peter's fear would have been a natural reaction to the loss of a way of life, no matter how burdensome. This is reminiscent of Habakkuk 2:4. Habakkuk learned that God would punish Israel by using the invasion of the Babylonians. He was horrified but testifies, "The righteous will live by his faith."

11:23-24. This saying is not in Luke or Matthew, probably because Jesus taught on prayer more than once. Jesus was using hyperbole as He did in 10:25. He did not intend for Christians to try to move literal mountains. But He did expect us to believe that our prayers can overcome great difficulties. We must have faith when we pray. But our faith is not in the strength of our prayers, nor in the size of our faith.

11:25-26. This is not Jesus' only teaching on prayer. We know that Christians are to pray within God's will, as taught in the Lord's prayer (Matt. 6:10). John states this clearly. "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of Him" (1 John 5:14-15). God's will is a prerequisite of the prayer of faith. We know that God's will is for us to forgive as we have been forgiven. If we cannot forgive, then we are not praying in God's will.