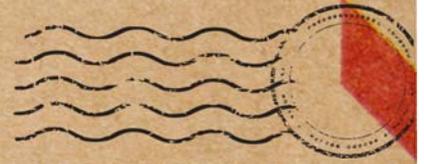


Wish you were
HERE

April 30 & May 1

Moving Past the Past

John Fuller, Senior Pastor



Introduction

This week, Pastor John Fuller kicks off a series on human relationships. Throughout scripture, and especially in the book of 1 John, we are reminded that how we relate to others affects our walk with God. Pastor John focuses on the issue of an unforgiving spirit, which can be a great hindrance in our walk with others and with God.

Discussion

1. Define the words "unforgiveness" and "forgiveness."
2. **Read Matthew 6:12** and **Romans 5:10**. What was Jesus teaching? Where did His forgiveness for each of us begin?
3. Often we're reluctant to forgive because we're confused as to what true forgiveness is. Review how you defined forgiveness, and discuss the following.
 - a. Is forgiveness ignoring or excusing another's sin?
 - b. Am I being unforgiving if I choose to move away from a relationship?
 - c. If I forgive, am I required to trust the person again?
 - d. Will revenge come to a person I have forgiven [**Romans 12:17-21**]? Discuss how God deals with our enemies and how we are to treat an enemy.
 - e. Why is acting as if nothing has happened wrong? Can we truly forgive if we deny or excuse the injury we have suffered? Why?

Think About It

If you struggle with forgiveness, consider the following practical truths as you work through this area in your life:

1. Forgiveness is a process which takes time [read the story of Joseph in **Genesis 37-46**].
2. Never deny your anger, but openly confess it to God or a trusted friend who can pray with and for you.
3. Forgiving others often takes place when you gain a deeper understanding of God's forgiveness of you.
4. Trust and forgiveness are two separate issues.
5. Your forgiveness of others is never contingent upon their actions, but it needs to be freely given [**Philemon 8-14**].
6. If God forgives you and you fail to forgive yourself, in essence you're playing God.
7. Trust God knows all and will bring true justice [**Romans 12:19**].
8. Praying and doing good toward an enemy will weaken a spirit of unforgiveness.
9. If you're angry, be sure you're not blaming the wrong person; misdirected anger will never solve an issue.
10. Sometimes, you must battle unforgiveness repeatedly until it loses its grip.
11. Ask God to show you why the person treated you the way they did [understanding another's pain often explains why they act as they do, and offenses become less personal].
12. Ask for God's help forgiving those who have deeply wounded you.

Do Something

1. Are you are possessing an unforgiving spirit toward God? Are you blaming Him for something you have suffered, believing He could or should have kept you from suffering? Discuss your anger with God, and listen to His reply.
2. Check to see if you have an unforgiving spirit toward yourself. If God says He forgives you, why do you honor your own judgment above His?
3. Are you struggling with unforgiveness toward someone? If so, can any of the above suggestions help in your battle with unforgiveness?

