

Radical Faith:  
The Hard Sayings of Jesus  
Part 1: Radical Forgiveness

# TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



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**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. —*Psalm 145:11*  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —*Joshua 22:5*

## Questions for Reflection & Action

- When **you** encounter a "hard saying"—such as "*if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out!*"—is your reaction **more like**: [1] "*It can't mean that!*" or like [2] "*Oh my! What should I do?*"?

What does your reaction suggest about your view of God, of yourself, and of the purpose of life?

- There is a difference between **difficulty in** forgiving and a **refusal to** forgive. What would you say to **each** sort of person—and **why**? Support your answers **biblically**.
- Scripture teaches us to pray for those who have hurt us. **For whom** should **you** pray? Make a list. If you were that person, what would you want others to pray for you? Make a list of ten requests. Are **you** willing to pray for that **for them**? Why or why not?
- Read Romans 12:17-21. Pastor Doug told how Phil Robertson (of Duck Dynasty fame) blessed a thief by **freely** giving him what he'd been stealing. What is something somebody has stolen from you? Could you just go ahead and **give** that to your enemy? Should you? Why or why not?
- Pastor Doug's final instruction was to "let go". Read Matthew 18:23-35. What **rational** does v. 32-33 give for why **we** should let others go from their debts to us?

What **motivation** does v. 34 give?

## Application-Challenge

Who has hurt you? Over the next thirty days:

- pray for them
- seek ways to bless them
- let go—forgive them

**Need help learning to forgive?**  
For free hope and help, write to:  
[counseling@tcc.org](mailto:counseling@tcc.org)

**Take One Step:** What is one small, concrete step of obedience you will put into practice this week?



# Sermon Summary

Today, we begin a new series of messages examining the hard sayings of Jesus, starting with Jesus' teachings on forgiveness. In Matthew 6, the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, "If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins." Here, Jesus is not saying that your salvation depends upon your forgiving someone. Salvation is a gift. There is nothing you can do to earn it. Instead, Jesus is saying that someone who truly understands how much they have been forgiven by God will be quick to forgive others. In other words, forgiving others is a fruit of a genuinely changed life.

The Bible speaks of two kinds of forgiveness: a "get into heaven" kind of forgiveness, and a "walk in fellowship with God" kind of forgiveness. The moment a person places his trust in Christ, he receives the "get into heaven" kind of forgiveness. But just as sin can disrupt your fellowship with your spouse, children, or best friend, sin disrupts your fellowship with God.

Let's apply this to Jesus' hard saying about forgiveness. When we sin by failing to freely forgive others the way we have been freely forgiven by God, it breaks our fellowship with God. It grieves him when we refuse to forgive others. And if we selfishly persist in unforgiveness, it will hinder God's blessing in our lives. He may even discipline us, out of love. Forgiveness is hard. But let me give you three words that will help you get some traction to forgiveness.

**Pray.** The first thing you need to do when someone hurts you is to pray for him. Have you noticed that the Old Testament saints struggled with unforgiveness just as we do? For example, King David offered prayers such as this: "Arise, O Lord! Rescue me, my God! Slap all my enemies in the face! Shatter the teeth of the wicked!" This prayer shows how people in the Bible are just like us, and we all feel this way at times. But our example is not David; our example is Jesus.

Jesus didn't just tell us to forgive, he showed us how to do it. "Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing'" (Luke 23:34). The context of this prayer is that just 24 hours earlier, Jesus was betrayed by one of his 12 closest friends. And then the 11 other friends who said, "We're always going to be there for you" abandoned him. Jesus had ample reason to react emotionally to those who had hurt him. But he chose forgiveness. In Luke 6:28, Jesus commands, "Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you." And then he does it as he hangs from the cross. He told us what to do, and then he showed us how to do it.

**Bless.** Jesus wants us to ask God to bless our enemies. If you pray for them and ask God to bless them, God is going to show them where they have been wrong. Because God can't bless someone until he opens his heart to God. Then, he can get on the right path to where God wants him to go. Throughout the scriptures, we find this very challenging truth. In Romans chapter 12:14 we read these words: "Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them." And: "Never take your own revenge...But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (vv. 19-21).

**Let go.** Letting go of past hurts is not a one-time decision, but an ongoing choice. This is clear from the immediate context in which this hard saying is found. Jesus prays, "Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matthew 6:11-12). In other words, just as we are to ask God daily to provide for our physical needs, we are to ask him daily to forgive us as we forgive others. Forgiveness is a lifestyle. My challenge to you is this: Choose a lifestyle of forgiveness.

For the next 30 days, when someone hurts you, choose forgiveness rather than react with emotions. Will you take on this 30-day challenge? You will be amazed what God will do your life, as well as in the lives of those who hurt you.

## Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

***“You choose a victim, work out an exacting revenge, and then go to sleep. There’s nothing sweeter in all the world.” —Joseph Stalin***  
***“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil.” —God (Isaiah 5:20)***  
***Aren’t you glad we serve King Jesus rather than Stalin!***  
***Let’s learn about genuine, biblical forgiveness...***

### Monday

- Read Matthew 20:30-34 and Luke 7:7-11. What is one prominent characteristic of Jesus.
- Read Matthew 14:13-18. How does Jesus view the multitude before him?  
What prior event makes Jesus’ compassion in this situation even more remarkable (v. 6-12)?
- Read Deuteronomy 30:1-3. How is compassion essential to genuine godliness?
- Read Psalm 51:1. What is the essential connection between compassion and forgiveness?

### Tuesday

- Read 2 Corinthians 1:1-6 and James 5:10-11. According to these verses, what is God like?  
Why do you think compassion is essential to love?
- Read 2 Samuel 12:1-6. Why is lack of compassion so ugly?
- Read Psalm 103. List everything you learn about God’s compassion toward us.

### Wednesday

- Read Matthew 18:21-35. ***Why*** do you think Peter asks the question in v. 21? What was Jesus’ reply?  
How does Peter’s question reveal his ***heart***?  
In what ways is Jesus’ reply shocking to you? Why is continuing to forgive scary?  
From v. 27, write a short description of forgiveness.  
What is so shocking about the behavior of the servant (v. 28-30)?  
Google to find out the value of 10,000 talents and of 100 denarii. How do these amounts relate to you?  
In what ways are you similar to the servant in this parable?

### Thursday

- Craft a ***biblical*** response to the following excuse for unforgiveness:  
*“If I forgive, this person will then take advantage of me, abuse me, or control me.”*

### Friday

- Craft a ***biblical*** response to the following excuse for unforgiveness:  
*“If I forgive, I am excusing the sin and ignoring the evil committed against me.”*

### Saturday

- Craft a ***biblical*** response to the following excuse for unforgiveness:  
*“If I forgive, this person will become more deeply entrenched in their sin.”*