

Sermon Title: Why We Forgive

Sermon Text: Matthew 6:12, 14-15

Date: May 24, 2026

SERMON NOTES:

QUESTIONS:

1. What stood out to you from the sermon or your time with God this week?
2. Do you think it's harder to forgive someone or to receive forgiveness from them? Why?

3. This week Joe introduced the idea that sin is a kind of debt—a debt of love. When Peter asked Jesus how many times he had to forgive, Jesus answered with a parable about debt, showing us how God forgives. When we withhold love, or neglect to give it, we leave a void in someone's life—a place where they were owed love and didn't receive it. So when we forgive, it's costly: we accept that we've been wounded, no longer insisting that people make up for the ways we've been hurt, and we trust God to love us in all the places we've been unloved. And this is the costly love we see in Jesus as He takes in Himself all the unpayable debt of sin, all the unlove of humanity for God, on the cross.
 - a. Read Isaiah 53. How does this view of forgiveness impact the way you see the Gospel?
 - b. How does this change the way you think about forgiving people in your own life?
 - c. How does this change the way you feel about the times you've been forgiven?

CASE STUDY:

Dave and Linda's daughter, Emma (28), has had a hard couple of years — bad experiences with different jobs, a painful breakup, and this past year a celiac diagnosis she's still adjusting to. Dave and Linda supported and encouraged her the way parents do: advice, rides to the doctor, constant calls to check in, help with money when she needed it. To Emma it started to feel like she couldn't manage her own life without being micromanaged. The more she pulled back, the more they pursued, until she was avoiding them altogether — and when she skipped Thanksgiving, her mom called and said she was being selfish. Emma went no-contact. It's been almost a year of silence now, and they don't know how she's doing.

At small group, Linda says: "I don't know how I'm supposed to forgive her. It's been a year — a whole year, and not one word. Everyone keeps telling me to let it go, she's my daughter after all. But how do you forgive someone who won't even admit they did anything wrong?" Dave adds, "I know we're commanded to forgive. But I think people misunderstand what that means. Forgiveness is something you give when someone repents — that's how it works with God. 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us' (1 John 1:9). It's a transaction of love. I want so badly to forgive Emma, but she needs to be willing to receive it."

How would you respond to Linda and Dave? How could you use Matthew 6:12-15 in that conversation?