



Part 1

Big Idea

This week, Pastor Chris began a new series about how to live through a bad day. We all know what it's like to have a bad day—even Jesus. In fact, His worst day ultimately led to His death on the cross. In the hours leading up to His death, Jesus endured incredible pain in many forms, some of which we too have experienced – like betrayal, false accusation, rejection, abuse, and humiliation. Despite the intensity of His pain, Jesus set the example for how we can triumph over hardship. The first step Jesus took to endure His difficulty was to forgive. Jesus showed us that forgiveness is not about fairness or giving someone what they deserve, but it is about giving the person what they need. When we forgive, it also frees us from the bitterness and anger that can keep us from experiencing all that God has for us. To forgive others as Jesus forgave us, we must do the unexpected: First, we need to pray for those who hurt us. When we do so, our hearts will begin to change towards them. Next, we need to bless them by speaking well of them. Finally, we need to do what is good and right to them. Remember, we will never have to forgive anyone more than God has forgiven us. The forgiven forgive!

“Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’” – Luke 23:34

Discussion Questions

- In this message, we learned that forgiveness is neither saying an offense is ok, nor is it reconciliation with the person who hurt us. Forgiveness is also not a question of fairness, because none of us want what we truly deserve. Which of these truths about forgiveness spoke to you the most and why? Share how this will help you forgive more readily.
- Identify someone in your life—a boss, a classmate, a friend—who repeatedly offends you or does things to hurt you. What are some practical steps you can take to move past what they've done and offer them the same forgiveness God offered you?
- Discuss an experience you've had where you found peace and freedom after forgiving someone who wronged you. As you walked through the process of forgiveness, which of the three steps (pray, bless, do good) did you find most challenging? How did you see God move as you overcame that challenge and let go of your offense?

Prayer Focus

Thank Jesus for giving Himself as the ultimate sacrifice for your sin. Ask God to forgive you for the times you have hurt others, and pray for the power to release and forgive those who have hurt you. Ask God to replace the hurt you feel with His peace and love.

Next Steps

Use Jesus' example of forgiveness to help you truly forgive those who have hurt you and be set free from bitterness and the pain of the past. Pray sincerely for the people who hurt you and look for ways to bless them

Leader Tip

Encourage your group members to pray for and forgive others. Encourage anyone who has recently surrendered their life to God to take their next step by attending Step One of the Growth Track and being water baptized. Information about water baptism is available at www.churchofthehighlands.com/baptism.