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**Pray Like Jesus**  
**Part 4 – Forgive us**  
Shay Robbins

We are excited to be cruising along in our prayer series, *Pray Like Jesus*. I'm excited to be up here with Part 4. Before we get to that, how many of you guys are just loving summer in the Ozarks in February? It's amazing, right?

Yesterday, we took the whole Robbins crew out on a canoe trip. Low and behold, as we were canoeing along, Belle Robbins spotted a bottle floating in the waters. We canoed over to this bottle and pulled it out of the water. There was a note, a message in this bottle, if you can believe it. We cracked that baby open and, sure enough; it was a pirate's treasure map. It was from none other than Black Beard McGillicuddy, the fiercest pirate of the seven seas. Somehow, he managed to hide his treasure before the Royal Navy managed to apprehend their ship off the Isle of Monte Cristo in 1434.

So, the Robbins family set out on a little adventure yesterday and, would you believe it, our map led us to a volleyball court, where we uncovered a buried treasure. The Robbins family is rich. If you've ever wondered what that feels like, it feels great. We had a great time yesterday and my life has changed quite a bit. We don't really know what to spend it on yet, but one of the things we encourage you to spend your gold bullion on is our offering. I'll just have you know that we accept cash, check, and gold bullion.

The message today is titled *Forgive Us*. We are marching through the Lord's model prayer found in the Book of Matthew. We're going to go ahead and open up by reading this passage together.

When Jesus was asked by the disciples how we should pray, he gave them this instruction. ***9 "This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.***

If you would, church, would you mind bowing your head? I'm going to pray before we start. Lord Jesus, we thank you for today. Thank you for the opportunity to learn from you about prayer. I just ask, God, that the Holy Spirit would guide our conversation this morning. I pray that you would speak with clarity directly to our hearts and that you would speak the words that we need to hear. I just ask, God, that I might get out of the way of your message this morning. It's in Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

We are looking at forgiveness this morning and specifically how we seek forgiveness within our daily prayer life. I want to go ahead and define a couple important pieces of this passage. "And forgive us our debts." I got this definition for forgiveness from Matt Chandler. I really like it and I think it's accurate and well said. His definition is this.

*"Releasing someone from their wrongs freely, fully, and forever."*

We are going to cover three topics of forgiveness this morning from this passage, and we're going to look at forgiveness that leads to salvation. The second thing we're going to look at is forgiveness that leads to intimacy with God. And then the third thing is we are going to look at how unforgiveness separates us from salvation and intimacy in different situations.

### **Forgiveness that leads to salvation.**

We have our definition of forgiveness and now I want to define what God means by debts. This is a really important concept for all of us to believe and understand. When we begin to share the gospel with anybody, the first thing that we need to start with is the need for a savior. If you are ever given the opportunity to share the good news of Jesus Christ, you can share the good news, but if somebody doesn't realize they are in trouble, they have no need for a savior. What we do is help them understand and help ourselves understand on a daily basis that you and I were born into this world broken and sinful and that there is a cost for the sin in our lives.

In this passage, the cost for that sin is specifically referred to as debt. Debt is obviously... I'm sure that most of us here are very familiar with debt from a monetary standpoint. In God's economy, debt is the cost for sin. When Jesus was hanging on the cross, before he died, he had one last legal issue that he needed to deal with. Scripture calls it our certificate of debt. Our certificate of Debt is essentially every creepy, crawly thing you've ever committed against the holy God. For me, I would have volumes. If any one entry is undealt with, it will cost me eternal separation from God. That is the cost for the debt or the sin in my life.

A certificate of debt is basically apposed against us; it is working against us and we are born into it. The day you are born, you are essentially handed a certificate of debt. Romans 6: 23 says for the wages of sin is death. It's an eternal separation from God.

One of the things I find myself wrestling with, and especially working with a lot of college students around the country, is there is really an aversion from God having anything against me. When somebody tells us that we are wrong, our initial reaction is to go on the defensive and defend ourselves. We do that out of pride. A lot of times, it really gets sticky when we associate sin or things with which God does not agree with who we are. So, it becomes personalized. It's not just "Okay I'm doing this thing over here and I know it's wrong," but rather "This thing that I'm doing is a part of who I am; this is my identity. This is where I fit in; this is where I get my value from amongst my friends." When it becomes personalized, we put up our dukes and we push back against anyone who would say that we're wrong.

A lot of times, what we do with that perception is look at God as this cosmic killjoy. How can he point to this thing in my life that I identify with as who I am... How can he say that it's wrong? Wasn't I made that way? Wasn't I born into this? So, we get into this bickering match with God. This morning, as we get started, I want to express to that that, number one, God hates sin so much because he loves you so much.

The moment that I became a husband and a father, I became exponentially more protective and more dangerous. Literally, whenever I walk into a scenario, I'm looking for weapons. That's because God has given me these precious little ones to protect.

Frankly, we live in a broken and dangerous world. Just in the last year, there are things that have happened in Branson that are absolutely atrocious. They are kinds of things that you can't even fathom happening in your back yard. As a daddy, I walk around and I am in protection mode against anything that would come against my family, anything that would be brought against them that could hurt them, harm them, or destroy them, you had better believe that this daddy is ready to fight.

So, when I'm standing in the supermarket and I'm holding a can of corn and you come around the corner... Just because you go to this church doesn't mean I haven't flipped the switch. If you are looking threatening, you had better beware. There could be corn flying. I've thought through every scenario. At the gas station, if an assailant comes up to me, I'm going to pump about five dollars' worth of gas right in their eyes, a round house kick to the face, and then I'm going to remove their heart. Then I'm going to surveil for other assailants. Step number five is not appropriate to share with women and children in the audience. But, at Fearless, on March 12, we're going to talk about this thing. If you knew about it, you'd say there's only an 8% chance of that actually happening.

A father's aggression is out of love, right? Everything that comes up against my family... My aggression, my protection, my heart to stand between them and danger is out of this tremendous heart of love and compassion and mercy for my wife and my children. My first instinct is to say that it's no different with God, but the reality is that it is different with God. His heart to protect us is so much greater than my heart to protect my children. His love for you... We walked through Psalm 139 two weeks ago. When you think about how much God loves you... As we said, he wrote every stroke of DNA into existence for you. He cares about you so deeply. He is ready to go up against sin in a violent, aggressive manner. That's what's known as God's justice and his wrath. Those aren't bad things. Those are good things because they are made to protect those he loves.

Let's look at Colossians 2: 12 -14. ***12 ...having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.***

The picture of baptism is this. When we are baptized, we are making a public proclamation that "I am now dead to sin" and so when we take that plunge, when we go under the water, it's a symbol of Jesus who died and went to the grave. Then we are raised again in Christ, a new creation being born again. So, the sin I have left behind me is dead, it is no longer a part of me; I've been made alive in Christ. In that new birth, something amazing happens. God is creator of all, but he's only the Father of some. God is the Father of those who died to sin and are raised alive in Christ to new life in Christ.

***13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14 having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.***

This is the picture of forgiveness that leads to salvation, which is given freely, fully, and forever. The scripture tells us that all it took was one drop of blood to pay for the penalty of our sins. That certificate of debt... When we go to God and seek him in forgiveness, we are essentially agreeing with him that we are broken, sinful, and separated from him and deserve death. I admit it. I deserve it. I admit that apart from him, there is nothing I can do to enter into his goodness. I need his help.

So, what Jesus did on that cross is he died the death that we all should have died and one drop, when it hit that certificate of debt... The way that happens is the moment that our knees hit the ground and we seek forgiveness once and for all. God, I am wrong. Lord Jesus, will you forgive me? Just a single drop of blood is all it takes to get that certificate of debt and shred it apart. Or in this imagery, he takes it and he nails it to the cross. Do you know what he said right before he died? "Tetelestai" – it is finished.

Forgiveness that leads to salvation is given freely. We see that in Ephesian 2: 8-9. Let's read it together. ***8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.*** There is nothing that you can do to earn your salvation. There's nothing that you can do to earn God's forgiveness. It is a gift.

When Jesus died on the cross, he is essentially holding out a gift to every single one of us. That gift is being extended to every human who has ever lived since that day. I want to ask you when that gift becomes yours. It's the moment that you take it, that you accept it, that you receive that forgiveness once and for all.

Forgiveness that leads to salvation is given fully. 1 John 1: 7. ***But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*** Not part of it, not a good percentage, but every bit of your sin. That's past sin, present sin, and future sin. It's sin of commission that I have purposefully done. It's sin of omission that I've done in ignorance. All of it is forgiven.

Forgiveness that leads to salvation is given forever. This is where you can rest in the hope of the cross. In him you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed you were sealed in him with the Holy Spirit of promise who was given as a pledge of our inheritance with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, the praise of his glory... That word *pledge* is a promise. Once and for all, when you have a genuine conversion, when you ask for forgiveness and you repent, you turn and run from your sin. On that day, you are sealed with the Holy Spirit that cannot be taken away from you. Your salvation cannot be ripped out of your hands. It is done, once and for all, and it is given to you forever.

Before we move on, I want to make one side note. Years ago, when I was doing real estate in town, I worked for quite a while with a local entertainer. I happened to invite him to church at Woodland Hills

one time. His response was this. He kind of did this nervous chuckle and responded, "If I walked in the doors of that church, you'd have to burn it down."

There may be some of you sitting in here or watching online who feel like "What I have done is too bad. I'm too far gone. With the things that I've done, I don't even dare speak; they could put me in jail." There is no amount of sin that puts you out of the reach of Christ. He died for every last one of us. He even died for the people that we look at and shake our head in shame and disgust. The reality in a holy God's eyes is he sees all sin the same way whether it's a lie, rape, or murder. It separates us from God and he came to pay the penalty for all of it. So if you're sitting in here today and this lie in your head that you are too far gone has prevented you from seeking the forgiveness and grace that Jesus offers you, I urge you today that you are not too far gone. In fact, Jesus died happily for your sin.

### **Forgiveness that leads to intimacy.**

God is Father to some and the creator of all. When we are walking through the Lord's Prayer, Jesus is speaking to his disciples, his followers. As he is describing the model prayer, he says this is how you enter in to conversation with God. This is what your prayer life should be like. As we walk through this progression over and over again, what we see is that he calls us to seek forgiveness on a regular basis. Each time we pray, we are to seek forgiveness. Don't forget that when we are forgiven, we are forgiven once and for all, forever. If Jesus is saying this, there must be some value to seeking him repetitively, on a daily basis, asking forgiveness for sins that have been committed. We all know that when you accept Christ and you become a new creation, it doesn't mean that you will be without sin. It means that God will give you a spirit to fight back and find victory against sin. We are still going to make mistakes along the way.

So, in regards to our relationship as believers, it's important to understand that sin can still create a separation between God and us, but it's not an eternal separation. Let me give you some scripture to back that up. Isaiah 59: 1-2... This is one of my favorite passages. It says ***1 Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save...*** Whenever you see the phrase "the Lord's hand" or "the Lord's arm," it's a reference to God's strength. He's rolling up his sleeves. Isaiah is saying that God is not too weak to reach down and save you. He's fully capable. ***...nor his ear too dull to hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.***

I want to take you to a New Testament passage that helps flush this out a little more. In 1 Peter, Peter is writing specifically to husbands, giving them instruction on how to love their wives well. ***7 Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.***

What that is telling me is as a husband, when I wake up and there is strife between my wife and me, when we are wrestling or when I have messed up and stuck my foot in my mouth, if I go to God in prayer before I make things right with her, my prayer life is hindered. He turns his ear from me. Before he honors the request and the things that I'm asking for the day... He's like "Shay, you've got business to take care of. You've got to go to your bride and you've got to make that right so that your heart can be

pure when you come before me and you pray.” When there is sin in our life, it still can create this unhealthy tension between God and us. It thwarts that access to our Father.

I want to show you a diagram that kind of helps explain this. For the unbeliever, when there is sin that is unforgiven, it creates a wall, a separation, and that separation is eternal. It is an eternal separation between the unbeliever and God and the result, ultimately, is eternal death. That is the cost for our sin.

But, for a believer, when there is unforgiveness in our life and there is sin that has gone unconfessed, it doesn't create an eternal separation because we've already been saved, once and for all. Rather, it creates a relational separation. So, if I'm walking with Jesus and I fall into a rut and there is a reoccurring sin in my life, it creates a relational separation. It's just like your relationship with your husband or wife or with your kids. You may love them intimately, but when there is sin separating that relationship, it gets messy, does it not?

The result is a temporal wasting away. Let me explain that. When I say a temporal wasting away... Again, it doesn't have an eternal ramification for you or me because we have a promise. We've been given a pledge of inheritance in heaven. Rather, in this life, in this flesh, it will cause me to waste away in my heart. Sin is like an infection. If it goes undealt with, it always grows. Cancer is a good example. If it's not treated, cancer will always multiply and it will take over the host. And so it is with the sin in our lives. Many times, God uses that wasting, that feeling... We are all familiar with it. He uses that feeling. That's the Holy Spirit calling us back to him to seek him and forgiveness and to turn and run from that sin.

There's this principle that I've been applying to my life for the last several years. It's kind of help me bring this to life in my prayer life. I call it the Vacate Principle. The idea is this. When I wake up each morning, I know that even as a believer, I wake up walking around in this crusty old body of flesh. There is sin in my bones. So, the first thing I want to do to start my day off right is I want to go to the Lord and seek forgiveness. I want to humble myself before him to make his will the priority in my life and to get that junk out of the way to rid myself of my flesh.

When you go on vacation, what happens to your home? It's left empty. All the flesh empties the premises. That's what I want to do when I approach the throne of grace each morning. I want to get my flesh out of the way. I want to remove it from my heart through seeking forgiveness and dealing with whatever the issues of the day are. There are a number of scriptures that will help us with that process.

In Psalm 139: 23-24, David is giving us a model of how this works. ***23 Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.***

Another one is Lamentations 3: 39 – 41. ***39 Why should the living complain when punished for their sins?*** This one is good for me because it puts me in my place. When I start comparing myself to other people or thinking critically or thinking about my wife and everything that she needs to change or my bosses and everything they need to change, I read this and immediately it puts me in my place.

***40 Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord. 41 Let us lift up our hearts and our hands to God in heaven...***

For those of us who choose to seek God in this way, to seek forgiveness on a daily basis, to wake up and to vacate our heart, to examine and probe our ways, it is sometimes a very painful process, at least temporarily. The reality is that's why many people don't go down this road and walk into forgiveness on a regular basis because the stuff we have to look at in our life is ugly, frankly. When we seek God and we ask him to search us and know us; try us and know our anxious thoughts, see if there by any hurtful way in us, you had better believe he is going to point some things out.

If you ever want to test the reality of God, ask him to show you your sin. Immediately, you will be reminded that God is real and he is particularly interested in how jacked up we are. Truly, that is a proof of God. He wants to help us in our afflictions. He wants to help us process through the junk in our life. As we vacate our heart, it is a process of coming to God and asking for forgiveness and seeking repentance on a daily basis. When we do that, that wall of relational separation comes down. And while it's painful in the moment, there is so much beautiful and wonderful fruit that comes from that.

There is a quote that I've heard. I think it's from A.W. Tozer, but I'm just not sure. The statement is this: *"One of the marks of a mature believer is a life lived in continual repentance."*

Certainly not that I have arrived, but I can look back and see that as I've matured in my faith, this has been a practice that has increased in my life. As I've grown in my relationship with Christ, I find myself in repentance and seeking forgiveness more often. Do you know what is so awesome about that? As we do that, we are just lavished with the grace of God. We get to camp out in it. And it's God's grace and love and mercy that transforms us from the inside out.

I want to show you a second diagram. This came to me this week when we were studying the Book of Ephesians. As we pursue Christ, as we seek him with relational growth and closeness with God, when we pursue him relationally through God's word, through prayer, through discipleship type relationships and community, as we seek him, a couple of things happen. Our posture changes. Our posture just simply represents our pride. As you spend more time with God, this is ultimately what happens. You go from standing upright to bent over to crawling on the ground to splayed before him. Your awareness of you sin and your reproach is brought into full view.

The closer you get to God, his holiness, and his awe, his awesomeness and his love are so overwhelming that they just press your face into the carpet in humility. In that, something amazing happens. As our posture changes as we pursue Christ, our personal holiness increases. A lot of times we get it twisted, right? Especially Americans where we're always go, go, go and do, do, do. We get caught up in being works based believers. This is the answer to getting caught up in works. We want to do this on our own strength, but we can't. Rather, what we do is pursue Christ in relationship. As we fall more and more in love with God, our holiness increases because of what he is doing in our life.

1 John 5: 3 boils it down. ***In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.***

As we seek God and forgiveness and we experience that grace and how much we desperately need him, we going to find ourselves falling in love with God more and more. The more you fall in love with him, the more you'll find yourself walking in obedience and what formerly was a pain in the neck, is now becoming a joy because you understand God's grace and his love and his plan for you better and better. It's so exciting.

### **Unforgiveness that separates us from salvation and intimacy.**

As Jesus walks through Matthew 6 and he gives us the model prayer, he does something really interesting. He gives one more statement of clarification. If there is one statement of clarification, do you think it's something important that we need to pay attention to? You had better believe it.

Matthew 6 says this: **14 For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.** There's a catch here. I want to pull up that diagram again.

So, for the unbeliever, when there is unforgiveness in our heart... Unforgiveness is the legal stomping grounds for Satan. Of this wall that is built, separating the unbeliever from God, unforgiveness is one of the cornerstones or the primary building block. On top of that, piles of wounding, anger, resentment, addictions are used to cope from the unforgiveness. It is one of the places where Satan puts his hooks into our life. For the unbeliever, that unforgiveness is what separates us from God.

For the believer, unforgiveness can continue to separate us relationally. So, while I've been forgiven, if there is a relationship in my life that I'm unwilling to give forgiveness to, again, it's going to create a wall. That is a sin separating me from God. Essentially, when we hold unforgiveness, we are taking God off the throne and we are stepping up on it and saying I'll be the judge. Imagine your child coming to you and saying "Mom, Dad, you're no longer the mom and dad. Me and sis are running the show." Is that going to ride? It doesn't work. That's essentially what we are doing.

Martin Luther said this: *"If anyone insists on his own goodness and despises others, let him look into himself. And when his petition confronts him, he will find he is no better than the others and that in the presence of God, everyone must duck his head and come into the joy of forgiveness only through the low door of humility."*

When we harbor that unforgiveness, we are stiff-necked. We are standing up straight, our posture is prideful, and as a result, it creates a separation between our God and us. As hard as forgiveness can be when somebody has hurt us... And this includes horrific offenses, things that you were a victim of. Maybe it's something that you experienced as a child from a loved one. It even includes those heinous wrongs that have been committed against you. And as hard as it is, as we seek God, if we just press into this thing... As hard as it is and the closer we get to him, finally we will find ourselves at his feet. As we are face to face with our own sin, our own desperation, our own gratitude for what he has done for us, it allows us to freely extend that gift of grace and forgiveness to those who have wounded us. Ultimately, that sets you free. So long as you are holding someone prisoner, it's not they who are inside the prison; it's you. It's separating you from your God and it's causing that wasting away.



Last spring, I read two amazing books by Corrie ten Boom. If you have never read her story, I highly encourage you to do so. Corrie ten Boom, during World War II, was arrested along with the rest of her family for hiding Jewish people who were on the run from the Nazi regime. She and many of her family members – her father, her sister – were thrown in prison and then moved to concentration camps in Germany.

In fact, she spent several years in a concentration camp called Ravensbruck. There were 96,000 women who died in Ravensbruck. One of them was her sister, Betsy, who died of malnutrition right before her eyes. It was only by a miracle paperwork fluke that Corrie ten Boom was released at the time when the allied forces were pushing into Germany. Just a few short days later, everyone in that concentration camp was murdered and then the Nazis got out of there. She just barely escaped her death in this concentration camp. She is an amazing godly woman.

In 1947, God called her to go back to Germany and minister to the very people who held her captive. As her story goes, she had a meeting in a small room full of people. As she explained those days in Germany, she would give a message of grace and forgiveness. When she would wrap up those messages, it was always quiet. There were no questions. People would just solemnly file out the back of the room because of the tremendous shame and scaring that had taken place in the hearts of the German people.

One particular night when she closed and the people were filing out of the room, there was one man who came walking up towards her. She immediately recognized him. In one moment, she saw a man wearing a brown overcoat and a brown hat and in the next moment, she saw a man in a blue uniform and a cap with a skull and cross bones on it. She realized it was one of her captors. In fact, it was one of the most cruel guards at Ravensbruck.

She relived the moment... He actually worked in this large warehouse. They would file the women in, strip them naked, throw their clothes and their shoes in the center of the room, examine their thin, frail, boney little bodies, and just ridicule these women. He was a wicked, evil man. As she realized who he was, this man approached her and she stood there frozen. She started fumbling around in her purse while this man walked up and held out his hand.

With a smile on his face, he says, "I heard that you mentioned Ravensbruck. I was a guard there."

Corrie froze. This man goes on to explain that after the war ended, he became a Christian. And while he had been forgiven by God, he wanted to come and seek forgiveness from one of his captives. As he's holding out his hand, this godly, wonderful woman stands there frozen. She's thinking to herself *There is no way that I can shake this man's hand. There is no way that I can possibly forgive him for what he did to me and to so many others.*

She sat there frozen and just prayed to God to give her the strength. With every ounce of energy she had, she just barely raised up her hand. The man took hold of her hand and then she explained what happened next. She said that warmth started up in her shoulder and moved down her arm and into her hand and into that man. A joy and a release of forgiveness rushed through her body and she was able to forgive that man with a full heart.

She referenced Romans 5 which says this. ***The Holy Spirit pours out the love of God into the heart of those who follow Jesus.*** She explains it as the premiere moment or experience she had ever had with God. The things that this woman had experienced were just through the roof, but that moment of forgiveness, where God did the miraculous through her to extend forgiveness to this man, was the premiere moment or experience she had ever had with God.

Isn't that amazing? While there are many of us sitting in here that have suffered horrific wounds, I don't pretend that this is going to be easy, but I do believe that God will give you the strength to do so.

Corrie said this as she speaks about forgiving her enemy. *"I knew it not only as a commandment of God, but as a daily experience. At the end of the war, I had a home in Holland for victims of Nazi brutality. Those who were able to forgive their former enemies were able also to return to the outside world and rebuild their lives no matter what the physical scars. Those who nursed their bitterness remained invalids. It was as simple and as horrible as that."*

Unforgiveness is the devil's stronghold. It is the cornerstone of a wall of bitterness, resentment, anger, and self-medication, built around the heart of those separated from God. In the unbeliever, the separation is eternal. In the believer, the separation is relational. It hinders our intimacy with God, our sensitivity to the spirit, our access to God's power, and it turns his ear from us. It gives the devil legal grounds to terrorize us.

To recap, God gives the forgiveness of salvation. For those in here who have not experienced that, I would urge you to run to him today. We have a prayer team and myself that will be waiting down here. If it is stirring on your heart to seek the forgiveness and the grace of God, I urge you today. We would love to help walk you through that process.

The forgiveness that leads to intimacy. As a church body, I'm just going to continue pushing the charge that I put on you two weeks ago that you would seek God on a daily basis in a secret prayer closet. To go to him and to pour your heart out to him as part of that practice to enter into forgiveness, to ask God vulnerably and humbly what it is that you need to deal with today. "What is it that is separating me from the power that you have given me access to?" And then, whatever the consequences are or whatever the instruction is that you receive from God and from his word, that you might follow through in bravery, knowing that obedience to God is a wonderful thing.

Finally, that we would be reminded that it is our responsibility as followers of Jesus to present grace on a daily basis, to be those who not only receive forgiveness freely, but also give forgiveness freely.

Lord God, we thank you for today and I just ask, God, that these words would be power packed, that they would be your words, and that on each one of us right now there would be some things that are resounding. We are all coming to you from different places in life and, Lord, we need help and we need guidance.

We thank you, God, for your grace. I pray that this church might experience your grace unfiltered. It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

