

# Renewing...

*Experience the Healing Power of Jesus Christ in Our Lives*



## WEEK #3

### FORGIVENESS: KEY TO HEAL

#### An Unnatural Reaction

What is our natural reaction to injury? When our older brother clocks us in the face with a slush ball, how do we react? Anger, resentment, gossip—the list goes on!

But there is another reaction, one that is very unnatural, one that comes “second nature” to us. And for us, this reaction is a crucial, necessary one for our healing journey.

#### Jesus Forgives

When Jesus gives us a command, he doesn’t command us to do what he is not willing to do (or does) himself.

Even in the moment you would least expect, but also the culminating moment of his earthly life, Jesus is found doing one simple yet profound thing: forgiving.



#### What does it mean to “forgive”?

First things first, don’t confuse “forgiveness” with “reconciliation.”

But once we’re past that, we can dig into the true meaning of forgiveness. The word Jesus uses is “aphiemi” (in Greek) which in its most basic meaning is “to release, to let go, to drop.” Money is the metaphor. *To forgive* means to release someone’s debt to you, to “let go” of what they owe you.

But how does that make us feel? What is our reaction to that? And are we willing to follow the same path of Jesus on the cross?

## **Forgiveness: Key to Healing**

All of us have a long list of ways that we have been hurt, wounds that we carry. Some of them we are very conscious of, some we aren't. Some are from early in life, some very recent. Some are from others, some are self-inflicted. What if you could set it down? Forgiveness—to forgive is a choice, a decision to let go of the debt we think others owe us and to hand it to Jesus. To take it to him, unite it with him on the cross.

## QUOTES

“For outside of forgiveness there is no hope; outside of forgiveness there is no peace. Forgiveness is the oxygen that purifies the air of hatred. Forgiveness is the antidote to the poisons of resentment, it is the way to defuse anger and heal so many maladies of the heart.” ~Pope Francis, *Angelus* - September 17, 2023

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. How have you seen unforgiveness at play in your own life? Can you think of instances of your “natural” reaction? Can you think of how the times you forgave felt a little unnatural or uncomfortable?
2. How has your understanding of forgiveness changed or been clarified? What is the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation? How does it feel when you think of forgiving someone who “owes” you?
3. Who or what have been some of the most difficult people and events in your life to forgive? Have you forgiven them? Is it still a work in progress? What was your experience when we did the forgiveness exercise?

## NOTES

**HUNGRY FOR MORE?**

- Read and pray with our readings today:
  - Luke 6:27-38
  - Matthew 18:21-35
  - Psalm 86
- Read: Get a copy of *Be Healed* by Bob Schuchts from the parish or on Amazon and work through it during the ten weeks of “Renewing...”
- Read: “Essay On Forgiveness” by C.S. Lewis