

The Story of Jesus

Part 4: Why can't I forgive myself?

Mark 1:40-2:17 - [watch online](#)

Summary

We have things in our past that we'd rather forget. Some we can look back on and laugh about. Others bring such guilt and shame we wish we could forget and never think about it again. What do we do with that guilt? Is there a way to move past our past and into something better? There is. We find it in the Story of Jesus.

Main points

[00:45] We all have moments we wish we could undo or redo.

[02:12] The only cure for unrelenting guilt is relentless forgiveness.

[04:49] Jesus' "cleanness" is more than enough for any of our "uncleanness."

[09:14] Jesus prioritizes people over everything else.

[10:08] The only requirement to receive Jesus' forgiveness is to go to Jesus.

[13:14] Jesus proved he has the authority to forgive sin.

[15:27] Love and forgiveness does what guilt never can: transform a life.

[17:08] God doesn't see us for what we have done but for who we are... his adored children created in his image.

[19:00] Accepting Jesus' love and forgiveness frees us to love and forgive each other.

[21:20] The Story of Jesus is the story of God's love and forgiveness.

Invitation: [20:02]

Read 1 John 3:19-21

Ask: Where do I need to accept Jesus' forgiveness? Who do I need to offer Jesus' forgiveness to?

Discussion questions

1. What stood out, bothered, confused, or inspired you in this week's message?
2. Do you have any embarrassing stories that you can look back on and laugh about now?
3. Read Luke 6:37 and 1 John 3:20-21. What seems easier for you... to accept or offer forgiveness? Why?
4. What are some steps you can take this week to accept Jesus' forgiveness and offer it to others?
5. How can your group pray with you this week?

Transcript:

INTRO: We all have those moments we'd like to forget.

- That time you messed up in front of the class
- Telling the waiter who told you, "Enjoy your meal"... you too.
- Things we can laugh about

But we also have those things we desperately want to forget...

- Things we don't ever want to think about and things we hope no one ever finds out about.

And these memories relentlessly cling to us... sometimes for the rest of our lives.

But, there is a way to leave them behind and walk away into something better... we find it in the Story of Jesus...

So, let's talk about it... together.

WE: We all have moments we wish we could undo or redo.

Engagement story

Someone who knew something about embarrassing pasts was the Apostle Peter.

- Once he tried to reprimand Jesus and Jesus called called him Satan
- When Jesus was arrested Peter tried to fight his way out of it and cut off a guy's ear only to have Jesus reprimand him again and heal the ear
- And during Jesus' trial right before Jesus is executed Peter denies even knowing Jesus three times.

But Peter experienced something that allowed him to not just move on from those moments but have an entirely new life...

And as he was getting older he had his friend John Mark write down the story of his experiences w/ Jesus... book of Mark.

At the beginning of this book John Mark lays out Jesus' main message...

- The KoG is near (God reigning in the hearts and lives of his people)...
- Repent and believe the good news- heaven has come to earth... you are known/seen/loved by God himself.

And in this new KoG it is possible to leave our past behind us and move into a new life... the next 3 stories show us how...

Discover: The only cure for unrelenting guilt is relentless forgiveness.

GOD: At this point in the story...

After casting out demons and healing a bunch of sick people (Demons- last episode), Jesus has become the most famous man in the area.

Stories about what he can do and who he might be have spread everywhere...

V. 1:40 Leprosy... was a catch all term for a bunch of skin diseases including... Hansen's disease (leprosy).

It was believed to be highly contagious

Jewish religious law said if some type of skin disease was discovered.

- People had to go to a priest to be examined and the priest would declare them clean or unclean
- If unclean.. Then they had to tear their clothes, keep their hair uncombed, live in isolation from others and call out unclean, unclean if they were ever around others.
- Anyone who touched them would also be considered unclean and have to go through a purification process.

Imagine the isolation, loneliness, shame, rejection, loss of your family, belongings, everything... no cure.

Who knows how long this man had suffered... But he had heard of Jesus and was desperate enough to break the law and kneel in front of Jesus.

B/c he believed... "If you are willing you can heal me and make me clean."

And then Jesus does something unthinkable...

V. 41a (...touched him.) Jesus TOUCHES the leper... in everyone's mind Jesus has just been infected w/ the man's uncleanness...

V. 41-42 The man is immediately healed... whatever was on his skin disappeared before their eyes.

Instead of Jesus being made unclean by the man's disease... Jesus infected the man w/ his own cleanness.

Jesus' "cleanness" is more than enough for any of our "uncleanness."

V. 43-44 Don't tell anyone...why? One reason... according to Jewish law, he is technically still unclean until he is examined by a priest...

Jesus tells the man to go to the priest to get checked out... So the man would have proof that he could be restored to society.

But the guy does what we all would do...

V. 45 Jesus can barely move around w/ all the people wanting to be around him... same thing when he goes back to his homebase...

2:1-2a (...outside the door.)

Excavations of Capernaum show the rooms were only about 16.5 feet across. Could only fit a few people.

And the place gets mobbed by people all trying to hear Jesus. No one had ever said the things Jesus was saying...

- God himself explaining what his kingdom on earth will be like

If there was ever a teaching that needed to be heard it would be this... this is God's TRUTH...

- Would think it should take priority over every and anything else...
- But there's something even more important and needed...

V. 2b-4 Houses were single story w/ flat roofs made of wooden beams, w/ branches and dried mud.

- Accessible by outside stairs.
- People could work up there... even sleep if it was too hot inside or they were fighting w/ their spouse.

They break the roof apart and lower their friend down in front of Jesus... completely disrupting what was going on.

What you do if you were... The owner of the house?

- My insurance doesn't cover crazies digging through my roof!

The other people?

- Hey! Wait in line... not your turn... we've had to wait.
- You're interrupting the teacher... Can't you wait until he's done. This is important truth.

Jesus?

- He only has so long to teach people about the KoG.
- He's probably on a good roll and people are listening and engaged... not on their phones/nodding off/getting up to go to the bathroom.

How does he react? Same as always... not how anyone would expect.

V. 5 My child... See the care/compassion? Not annoyed... bothered... frustrated.

- He stops teaching the truths of the KoG... the most important truths/facts in the universe... to focus on the most precious thing in the universe... an individual person.

Jesus prioritizes people over everything else

He looks at the man and says, "Your sins are forgiven." Man- "Ummm ok cool... Thank you. So about these legs?"

But Jesus knew what this man really needed.

Maybe man had a guilt that was more crippling than his disability.

Maybe he was ostracized and judged b/c there was a belief (like Karma) people get what they deserved... either he or his parents sinned so he's now paralyzed.

- Maybe he believed this about himself. "I'm in this mess b/c it's my fault."

Probably combination of all of it...

And Jesus looks him in the eye and says, "Your sins are forgiven."

- What did the man do to earn this forgiveness?
- Allowed himself to be lowered to Jesus... That's it.

The only requirement to receive Jesus' forgiveness is to go to Jesus.

But there's a problem...

V. 6-7 Jesus wasn't just stating a fact... he was claiming to actually be the one doing the forgiving.

And the religious teachers think to themselves... "Wait a second this was interesting but now he's crossed a line... This sounds a lot like blasphemy"

- Assuming authority only God had... an offense that was punishable by death.

We give the religion teachers a bad rap... I mean yes, eventually they do kill Jesus charging him w/ blasphemy... but at this point in the story... I don't think there's anything sinister here.

They aren't wrong. According to the Jewish Scriptures it is God who has the authority to forgive sin.

- **Isaiah 1:18; 43:25**

But why can only God forgive sin?

Sin... Breaking God's Law of Love. Rebelling against the God of love... Ultimately only the King has the right to forgive rebellion.

So in the mind of these religious leaders... no matter how good the teaching is and how much healing he does... Jesus has no right to forgive what only God can forgive...

And Jesus knows exactly what he's doing and what it means... **V. 8-9**

Anyone can say, "Your sins are forgiven" There's not any outward proof... Can say anything... but can they back it up?"

"I can back it up"

V. 10-12 (Eye-witness details- Jumped up, grabbed matt, walked through stunned crowd)

Jesus proved he has the authority to forgive sin.

And the crowd goes wild!

Once he has a chance to get away, Jesus takes a stroll by the lake... and in this third story we see him applying his authority to forgive sins and what it does for people who experience it...

V. 13-14 Tax collectors hated. Traitors

Again, what did Levi do to deserve this call... to actually be one of the main people to follow Jesus?

- Do we see Jesus preaching any sermon at him?
- Any confessions of sin? Gestures of remorse?

Nope Jesus invited and Levi accepted and it changed Levi... it is that simple.

V. 15 "Many kinds." People who were nothing like Jesus loved being around Jesus... b/c he loved them.

- He identified w/ them (sharing a table means identifying with them).

Would they have wanted to be around him if he was always preaching at them...? telling them the truth in love...? making sure they knew he didn't condone their lifestyle?

Of course not... Love and forgiveness does what guilt never can... transform a life.

And if that makes you uncomfortable and you want to ask "yeah, but what about..." you're not alone.

V. 16 Such scum? Wow that's harsh right... who would say that? WE WOULD and do more than we're willing to admit.

We are often more quick to accept forgiveness than offer it. How does Jesus respond to this harshness?

V. 17 And Jesus shines a spotlight on the difference between his agenda and the religious leaders' agenda.

The leaders' agenda was to keep their religion pure... to keep their nation pure. To decide who was in and who was out... and make sure those who were out knew it and either left them alone or were so burdened w/ guilt that they eventually just gave in.

Jesus came to save people. To free them from the burdens that had been put on them. To show them no matter who they are, what they have done they are worthy to be loved and accepted.

God doesn't see us for what we have done but for who we are... his adored children created in his image.

YOU: If we are honest and truly look at ourselves... we are both the sinners and the religious leaders in this story.

We are so good at deciding who should be *in* and who should be *out*...

- Vote / Parent / Work / Live / Love / Follow Jesus differently than us

While at the same time we can't shake the inner voice telling us we are just as guilty.

We can be overwhelmed w/ guilt and filled w/ judgment at the same time.

The truth is we all need forgiveness... none of us is clean.. All of us are just as dirty as the other.

And nothing we do can change it. There's no way we can undo/redo our past.

We need a new life, a new start... to be *born again* as Jesus called it.

And that is what the KoG is all about... Jesus came to show us who God is, to show what love truly is, and then he died on the cross as humanity's representative to put to death our sin/rebellion and rose again to give us new life that can begin today and last forever.

It's not something we deserve/can earn. Forgiveness is a gift Jesus gives to anyone who will accept it.

And once we accept it... the HS begins to transform us and our hearts and we are now able to offer the same forgiveness and love to other images of God around us.

- We love b/c he loved us first.
- Forgive just as God in Christ forgave you.

Accepting Jesus' love and forgiveness frees us to love and forgive each other

Forgiveness releases us from any thought that we have the right to hold anything against God's children.

But I still FEEL GUILTY... **1 John 3:19-21**... God knows the truth about who we are.

- As we learn to accept that truth, we can focus on loving others and see that love as proof of who we truly are.

Invitation: Read 1 John 3:19-21 five times

Ask: Where do I need to accept Jesus' forgiveness? Who do I need to offer Jesus' forgiveness to?

WE: What would a guilt free life look like? What would a life of true peace and freedom in our souls free us to experience?

We don't need to be told how guilty we are... we already know it... what we need is what only Jesus can give us... full and complete forgiveness.

He's offering it to everyone... and once we find it we have the privilege of offering it to everyone else.

This is life in the KoG... The Story of Jesus is the story of God's love and forgiveness.

1 Peter 2:22-25