



**SPRINGCREEK
CHURCH**

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GOT BAGGAGE?

Letting It Go | Part 4

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Some wounds don't disappear simply because time passes.

The words were said. The betrayal happened. The damage was real. And even after you try to move forward, the anger, bitterness, and pain can still linger beneath the surface.

This Sunday in the final message of our "Got Baggage?" series — LETTING IT GO — we'll talk honestly about the emotional weight we carry, the difficulty of forgiveness, and the surprising way Jesus teaches us to heal from the hurts we never chose. If you've ever struggled to move beyond your past, this message is for you. Join us in person or online this Sunday at Springcreek Church.

"At nine years old, I became the victim of war. I didn't like that picture at all. I felt like, why he took my picture, when I was agony, naked, so ugly? I wished that picture wasn't taken. I went through 17 operations. I had to deal with the pain every single day. I used to compare my scars with buffalo skin. And because my skin wasn't have any pores, I cannot sweat, make me feel so tired, so headache." - Phan Thi Kim Phúc

"It built me up with hatred, bitterness, and anger. I just living with the question, 'Why me? Why that happened to me?'"

- Phan Thi Kim Phuc

1. DEALING WITH FEELINGS

(Jesus) won't walk over anyone's feelings, won't push you into a corner... the mere sound of his name will signal hope.

Matthew 12.20 (Message)

❑ Time heals all wounds

"Time by itself does not and cannot heal those memories which are so painful that the experiences are as alive and painful 10 to 20 years later as they were 10 to 20 minutes after they were pushed out of consciousness." —David Seamands

❑ Bury your feelings and replace your losses

❑ What's past is past. What's done is done.

Manager

Firefighter

Stuffer

They're not addressing hurts—they're repressing hurts



2. A BETTER WAY OF DEALING WITH NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

- ❑ Let go of the need to get even

"We want our enemy to suffer, yes, but we also want him to know that he is suffering only because of what he did to us. We want the satisfaction of watching him burn with hellish leisure on the rotisserie of his remorse." —Lewis Smedes

The pain you caused me always feels worse than the pain I cause you

- ❑ Revealing your feeling is the beginning of healing

"Repressed feelings, especially painful ones, have a high rate of resurrection. Be aware, however, that healing your hurts is a process of painful self-exploration."
— Doctors Les & Leslie Parrott

"There will be no healing until it is acknowledged, confronted and resolved." —David Seamands

There's a difference between rehearsing your hurt and releasing your hurt

- ❑ Rely on God's strength to accomplish it

"Jesus, I can't forgive him. But you can. Please give me Your forgiveness." —Corrie Ten Boom



"From my shoulder, along my arm and through my hand passed a current from me to him... and in that moment I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world's healing depends, the world's healing depends upon God. When our Lord tells us to love our enemies, he gives us, along with the command to do it, the love itself." —Corrie Ten Boom

3. FORGIVE LIKE JESUS

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.
Colossians 3.13

...forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Be imitators of God... Ephesians 4.32b-5.1

Friend, your sins are forgiven. Luke 5.20

Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." Luke 7.48

Father, forgive them; they don't know what they're doing.
Luke 23.34

"God is not the patriarch who stays home, doesn't move, and expects his children to come to him, apologize for their aberrant behavior, beg for forgiveness, and promise to do better. To the contrary, he leaves the house, ignoring his dignity by running toward them, pays no heed to apologies and promises of change, and brings them to the table richly prepared for them."

– Henri Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*

The definitive proof of God's extravagant and compassionate love for us is that in Christ He gave His very life for us while we still had our backs turned on Him. Romans 5.8

...freely you received, freely give... Matthew 10.8

"As you know, I am the little girl who was running to escape from the napalm fire. I have suffered a lot from both physical and emotional pain. Sometimes I thought I could not live, but God saved my life and gave me faith and hope."

- Phan Thi Kim Phúc

"It just knocked me to my knees. And that was when I knew I could never talk about this. I mean, how can I ever explain to people that I did everything I could to make sure there were no civilians?" - John Plummer

"She just opened her arms to me. I fell into her arms sobbing. All I could say was, 'I'm so sorry. I'm just so sorry.'"

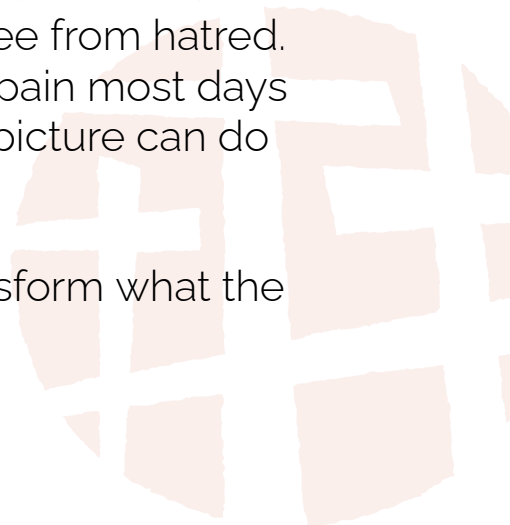
- John Plummer

"It's all right. I forgive. I forgive." - Phan Thi Kim Phuc

There is no limit to the restoring love of God

"Napalm is very powerful but faith, forgiveness and love are much more powerful. Forgiveness made me free from hatred. I still have many scars on my body and severe pain most days but my heart is cleansed. If that little girl in the picture can do it, ask yourself: Can you?" - Phan Thi Kim Phúc

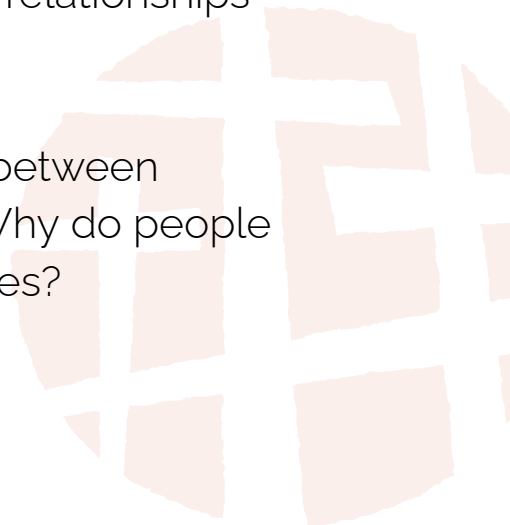
Forgiveness doesn't erase scars, but it can transform what the scars produce.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What part of this message impacted you the most personally and why?
2. Pastor Keith said, "Forgiveness does not erase scars, but it can transform what the scars produce." What do you think that means in real life?
3. Kim Phúc carried bitterness and anger for years after the trauma she experienced. Why do you think pain so easily turns into resentment if left unresolved?
4. The message described anger as a form of protection and control: "When you're hurt, you feel vulnerable. When you're angry, you feel invulnerable." How have you seen anger mask deeper hurts, fears, or disappointments in your own life?
5. Which unhealthy approach to pain do you most relate to?
 - Manager
 - Firefighter
 - Stuffer

How has that coping mechanism affected your relationships or emotional health?
6. Discuss this statement: "There's a difference between rehearsing your hurt and releasing your hurt." Why do people sometimes become attached to their pain stories?



7. Why is it difficult to bring emotional wounds honestly before God instead of merely talking about them with other people?

8. The sermon emphasized that Jesus often forgave people before they ever asked for forgiveness. How does that challenge or reshape your understanding of grace?

9. Read Luke 23:34: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." What stands out to you most about Jesus' response from the cross?

10. Pastor Keith said: "God's forgiveness ALWAYS precedes our repentance. His compassion ALWAYS outruns our contrition." How have you personally experienced God taking the first step toward you?

11. Is there someone in your life you still need to release to God? Without sharing unnecessary details, what makes forgiveness difficult in that situation?

12. Kim described bitterness like "black sludge" that had to be poured out "day by day and a bit at a time." Why is forgiveness often more of a process than a single moment? What practical step could you take this week toward healing, forgiveness, or emotional honesty with God?

13. Close your time together by praying specifically for: healing from unresolved wounds, courage to face buried pain, freedom from bitterness, and the ability to forgive as Christ has forgiven us.

