

Pastor Jason

I started therapy about four awesome years ago. And, you know, like, there were a very couple of reasons why I had jumped into therapy. And and this was kind of the initial kind of one of the first one or two or three meetings or something like that. And we're like start kind of instill in inventory but we're getting into some of the depth.

And I had heard about this question about like resentment and therapists. You know, they do two things. They ask you about resentment and then talk about your childhood, you know, like, is there any better way? But, you know, mean, you know, it's like the third session or whatever. And my therapist, like, he's like, go on there. And he's like, so do you have any resentment in your life?

And I'm like, I'm like, this is not the right question for me because like, I'm a pastor. Like, I'm awesome. Of course I don't have resentment in my life. Like like. Like, I teach anti resentment, you know, like, you know, but whatever I get why you ask it, everyone, you know. And then, like, kind of like like someone snuck up behind me with a opinion sticking a bulletin board and just, like, I felt this, like, thing in the back of my neck, and then suddenly I like, I have this image of someone in my life, you know, and, and, like, and then all sudden, like, I like, sense that that emotion of resentment, and I had that person's, like, face, and don't worry, it's none of you. Yeah, I promise. Actually, that's not even a cover, you know? But I got something. Had that. And then I just, like, had, like, journey through this, like, this resentment and kind of lost, like, sense of awareness and all that and location. And then, like, and then I realized, just like, I, I did have this resentment and I could feel his emotions.

And then as I was realizing what was going on, I looked up at my therapist, and I just lost it, like, and I don't cry a lot. So I realize and in, like, just started to feel these bigger things, like starting to come to the stage that I could work through. And and I was just it was a really powerful experience.

So, first of all, yes. Therapy. And I want you to know that if I, you know, if I was the kind of person that, like, put flags up in front of my house, like I would have right below, you know, like the American flag, I'd have maybe the Christian flag. And then like the therapy flag because I want you to know that that is one of the proudest of like one of the best decisions I've ever made in my mind in the way I'm approaching it.

The way I see it. For anyone else who would ever choose to go to a therapist, it is maturity. And for me, it's it's both like I'm working through a lot of stuff, but it's also proactivity because I'm wanting to make sure that that I'm always taking care of myself. And in this a way that I say that I love myself enough to actually, like, put that first.

Another thing about it is it becomes for me and I think it becomes for us, it becomes a really powerful tool for navigating our world. And even in a spiritual realm, it becomes one of our greatest arsenal in this spiritual battle. So so like I said, if I waved flags, it would be on

there. If you are if you have long time refused therapy, I want to encourage you on a pray for you to consider it.

We make referrals all the time. If you're there now, I want to celebrate you and just lift that up. Second of all, what I want you to see this morning is we get into the sermon series this morning is that in that moment, something really happened. First of all, my therapist helped me name something and God like, you know, the back of my neck with a pin and that was awesome.

But I begin to name it and realize, oh, I do have this. And then I was able with him after that to really start investigating it and figuring out, like, why that was going on, why my heart was kind of in that state, and then like to get to the bottom of it to really, like, be able to to understand it as I was investigating, understanding what was going on and, and, and how that all came together.

And it was in that process that I really experienced a profound sense of freedom through that. And thank goodness, like, God didn't let me off the hook and try to just act like I don't, you know, deal like deal with all those things that everyone deals with. But we are in our third Sunday of this sermon series called Good Soil, and we are continuing this with this notion of relationship, knowing that God created relationship as an essential foundation for our faith, for our faith.

We have to understand and excel at relationships in order to have a faith relationship with our Lord and Savior, God and Creator and His Spirit, moving and working through us. And additionally, the Kingdom of God is built on relationship, is built on a relational bond between the people of God, because otherwise, if the body didn't have those ligaments and joints holding it together and muscles and all of those soft tissue kind of things, the body would fall apart and so would the Kingdom of God.

If we do not have the relational bonding and grounding within us and deeply about us. So that's what we've been talking about. Jesus even talks about the parable of the sower, of the seeds and the good soil. Right. You know, and he throws the seed here on the path and, you know, gets trampled over and some get swallowed up by thorns.

The worries of life and all that and some get snatched up by the birds. And that's like the enemy. Birds are real, I think. So if you have no idea what I'm talking about, just Google it but so like, you know, and then there's like the good soil and the were the seeds, the word of God. But what what we understand is like the produce, the fruit of God's word in good soil, manifests itself powerfully in relationships, manifests itself powerfully in relationships.

And so so there's no way around it. We've got to work on this stuff. And good soil is all about the relationship internally. Like the, the how good our climate is, how good our soil is for relationships to grow. So first week, Derrick came up and gave an incredible sermon. You first have to be in good with the gardener to have good soil.

That's that's step one. And then last week, Pastor John talked about you've got to be like you have to be good with yourself. Like a soil has to be able to call itself soil and be OK. With being dirt, you know? So we have to like to love ourselves and we have to have a good foundation with ourself.

And today then we're going to kind of transition the series and now start talking about the condition of the soil itself. And I've never had this done, but I think I probably should because like my backyard super green in my front yard looks like it's still like in the dead winter. So I'm not sure what's going on there.

But like if you if you ever have one of those people come out or maybe you are one of those people and you're awesome, but they like take a probe and, you know, test the soil and see what what the levels are and just like, you know, your yard or crops, you know, you have to know what's in the soil and what's missing from the soil in order to grow good things.

So we're going to we're going to be testing some soil levels. And today we're going to test the first level of forgiveness. And and in this this sort of this reconciliation quality of your internal heart, your soil. And this is all going off the basis today of this one point.

Your capacity to have a good relationship with God in others is determined by your forgiveness levels. That's the bottom line. That's one of the levels that needs to be really healthy in your soil in order for you to have good relationships. All right. So one thing I want you to know, you know, like being Mothers Day, like I almost was like, ooh, maybe I shouldn't let anyone know I'm talking about forgiveness on Mother's Day.

Like, it's kind of seems contradictory, like, woo hoo. And also, like, that's the topic we're most afraid of. And but but what you need to know is that we didn't, we didn't say, oh, it's Mother's Day, let's talk about forgiveness. But we also know that that this is a really important topic and may actually be really relevant to some of our relationships that we can focus in on.

And there may be forgiveness that needs to happen between you and your mother or you and your offspring or another relationship. And they may need to be smart. And so this is really a pretty important topic to cover. So so when it kind of comes to all of this, you know, talking about resentment and and things like that, one of the things that really came clear to me, so I thought like, again, like I'm a pastor, like, of course, I'm good at forgiving.

Like, I got that down pat, right? You know, I'm like I'm professional. And and of course, I don't like walk around with any sort of like ill feelings towards anyone or or like I'm not like in that state where I don't talk to people because they, they done me wrong or something like that, you know, like, so you know, I've always kind of thought of myself as super uber healthy in that area.

But what I've kind of realized is that that's actually something that I probably need to work on the most because in my like super Uber, like, positive thinking kind of world and life and heart, what I was figuring is, well, if I just don't think about it or if I never have to deal with it, then then it doesn't exist.

So I wouldn't necessarily calling it shoving it down because I don't really repress things. I just, you know, for my own sake, I just say like I just set it aside and also it sounds very much better but you know, like so, you know, there's a difficult conversation or a difficult thing that happened or in my mind, I just decide that someone is just like I'm not jiving with that person.

Then my strategy has just been like, oh, you know, well, I won't like I won't go to their Facebook page. You know, if we're in the restaurant then I'll just, like, say, really nice and, you know, and not stay long. And, and so like, I just figured like, I must not have any problems with relationships or forgiveness because because I don't have any of those other things.

But the truth came out the to myself that I may not be as good at that as I thought I was and that I may actually need to take some things that were sitting on the side and bring them to the forefront and work on them more intently and work through them and really process through that. Because ultimately, unless unless we're working through them and like holding them and really like letting them be, we really are just like sending a message or just letting them build up and and, you know, so we're on this good soil theme.

What's one of the most, you know, reliable things you can count on in eastern Nebraska? Soil somebody noses someone in construction. What are we going to find three feet down? Yeah. There you go. And we are all shoving that aside how you're going to make us talk about clay. So so Nebraska has a huge amount of clay in its soil.

And part of that's because like we're downstream from a lot of mountains and part of it's because we used to be like this big inland ocean. And so clay is essentially like the tiniest particles of dirt beyond salt, even tinier than that. And they have been settled and then compacted over a long, long, long, long, long, long time.

And so, you know, so you what happens is if you're not dealing with these things, you get clay and what do we know about Clay, man? It's a deal breaker in a lot of ways. It's really, really hard to dig in first of all, but it's really hard. So ruts have a very hard time, like thriving or actually growing in clay because it's just really impenetrable.

The other thing that we know about claim is that it is it's really dense in the way that um, then that it actually like absorbs a lot of moisture, a lot of nutrients. So, you know, it actually like Rex Foundations, right? You know, like so our house was built in 1940 in an area where the houses were built, you know, early 1900s and as we were purchasing our house it wasn't a question of whether there was some foundation troubles, the question was how bad were they because the, the, what happens to clay

is it swells when moisture hits it and then it lets it go over its moisture.

So then it contracts a lot, it shrinks and and so then foundations, you know, they're either getting pushed in on or suddenly don't have that pressure and then they fall out causes a lot of troubles. The same thing with resentment. So clay to soil is resentment to the soil because resentment makes our souls, our hearts really hardened. It makes it difficult for things to get in.

It won't release the nutrients. They're all packed up in there and it's unyielding. It just won't release anything. And then in different times of crises, resentment either swells and gets really big and and crowds out other things kind of like a cancer or it shrivels up and then depletes us of other things. So the bottom line is resentment in our hearts.

If you if you did this, if you like, put your hands up here and you can do this if if this helps you actually put down your phone and get into the message here, you know, if you like, if you clenched your fist until you get that little white knuckle kind of thing going on. And then someone said, here, take this or here, give this like it.

Resentment was too tightly closed. Fists means you can't receive or give anything unless you're awkwardly trying to like grab it with your elbows.

So we have to get rid of resentment. Resentment has to go. That's the bottom line. I love this. Paul really provides this notion in his letter to the Ephesians, and Paul really is talking about the unity of the body of Christ. All the way through Ephesians, and he talks about the power of grace and how it brings us together and humility being at the core of our of our seeking God and then fulfilling our purpose.

And and I love this. I kind of straddled two chapters here, but Paul wasn't really writing in chapters, so I figured it was probably OK. We're the one who made the chapters, but I want you to hear Paul's words. So the church in Ephesus and in see if you hear a note about resentment or forgiveness in their past, starts out in this portion and says, so get rid of all bitterness, resentment, rage and anger, resentment, brawling and slander and what quit doing that along with every form of malice.

Well, I, Paul's like not tip toe and he's like, get rid of it, get it out, be kind and compassionate. To one another. And I would say instead, be kind of compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ through his sacrifice and his love for you before you loved him or even asked for forgiveness, forgave you.

Moving on to chapter five, verse one, and follow in God's example. Therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and a sacrifice to God just as God loved us has a pretty powerful words to realize that this whole thing about forgiveness is not just like a supplemental thing or like a like an optional up.

Like, you know, you're planning a cruise. And while you can do the day trip called forgiveness if you want, it's a little extra money like no, this is the cruise. Forgiveness is that the very heart is the very heart of the message of Jesus Christ. Is that the very heart and the foundation of God's love and pursuit of you.

It's the core of the message to us in Christian living, in living and becoming more and more like Christ so ultimately, if resentment has no place and is really something that we're being told to get rid of and let go of, then there has to be something, a tool or a mechanism that does that. And it is ultimately the surprises here.

Forgiveness forgiveness is what loosens the soil of resentment. Now, I want to take a pause here. Sometimes when we think of resentment or when we think of forgiveness, we often get the idea that resentment always comes out of an event of being hurt. And so sometimes it's a little bit easy to skim over resentment because we can't trace anything back to a specific event or we don't feel like we have the right to be upset because there was no event.

And it's just this weird thing going on. But what we know about resentment is it is directly tied still to forgiveness, because forgiveness is something more than just saying, I forgive you. And it is ultimately like clay. It is the overtime, slow compiling and compression of these tiny particles of things. So even in my own resentment, the person I was the of like that person has actually been kind to me all my life.

Like they didn't do anything wrong. They didn't hurt me in any way. It actually spun way back to something else that happened in my life, in my childhood. And, and ultimately then I projected that onto this thing. And I was mad even though there was no event and yet the only thing powerful enough, the only like crowbar strong enough, the only breaker deep enough and wide enough to really get at that clay was forgiving was forgiveness.

So just like with Clay, I mean, I did a lot of Googling, um, huh. Like, you want to break up your clay in your yard and make it better to grow things. They say, you know, put a whole bunch of other organic material on it. Like bark and, and grass and, you know, things like that. Most things like that can actually loosen up your clay, give it more chances for water.

To surround the clay and kind of loosen it up and even erode it and dissolve it a little bit. There is incredible, incredible nutrients rich, whatever things in clay, it's just it won't give it away because it's so bound up so that is the same thing for our resentments. Soil like forgiveness is what kind of runs through there and really loosens it up.

So now the question is how do we forgive? Right? Like if I sent you out of here right now without at least broaching that conversation, there's not going to be a lot going on. In fact, you might even stay further away. But what we know about forgiveness, one, I want to clear something up really quickly. So there's been this like age old debate and it

sometimes gets politicized, of course, but like it's like, do you forgive and then forget or do you forgive?

And yet you know that it's important to have permission to never forget, you know, and it splits churches and denominations is great. But here's the thing. I don't know the answer. To that. I don't know the answer to that. In my own life, I think the closer I can get to forgetting means I have gone that far in not letting it be a thing that I have really released it.

But I also have heard that remembering continues to hold something and embrace it. So that way it never just gets shoved back under that. We're still holding it and we're actually learning how to bear something rather than just cast it out of our minds and out of our lives. So. So I'm not going to give you the answer to that.

But what I do know is that forgiveness is releasing. It's like those clenched fists it's releasing, and forgiveness is not however, it is not suddenly in forgiveness and approval of what someone has done or how someone has behaved. And it's it's not any in any sort of way, like a like a letting someone, you know, just like telling them, oh, you didn't do anything wrong.

Actually, it's none of that. It's just releasing because ultimately unforgiveness is you've heard this before. I did not coin this. No credit to me for unforgiveness is like drinking poison and hoping the other person dies or at least gets really sick from it because we're in a church. Yeah. So so that's what we need to know about forgiveness.

And we'll kind of enter into this. And I fast forwarded it in my therapy sessions, what happened to me. But the first thing that we do in forgiveness is we have to name it we have to name it because there are so many times in our lives where we have set it aside or we have shoved it so far down the road or in a role that we think that there's just no room for that, or there could be no way.

And so we have to actually be willing to see those areas and let them be there and acknowledge the name this, like this is where I'm hurt or this is who I'm really hurt by, or this is who I have not forgiven in my lives, or this is who I resent The second thing that happens then is we investigated this.

You know, I needed a professional to help me weed through this, but investigating it is actually figuring out why this hurt so bad or why this made me so resentful. And I'm going to give you the real quick fly by here whenever you're entering into this investigation. It is not it's not investigating what they did and what was so terrible about it.

It's investigating why you felt hurt and what's going on in your world that made you angry or resentful and getting to the bottom of that because you can't get to step three until you sufficiently go through this second step of investigation. Because the third step then is what we're going to call countering it, countering it. You see the reason why these things hurt so much when we build up resentment is because through

someone's hurt or through something that triggers an emotion, a lie that is not true.

Has become a truth in your narrative about who you are, about how you have failed or about how others are superior to you. There's three right there. So when we investigate it, we get to understand why and then we counter it and we go to God's word and word, and we remember the truth about who God sees as who Jesus says we are and we hold on to those truths.

So that way we can take that lie and say, Well, I know things really true, but it is not because this over here is who God says I am. This is what God says He wants to do with my with my feelings and this is who God has made me to be that is perfect in His image. So we cannot and as we continue to go through that now, I've been I've been it's been said that I like to make up words around here.

And so maybe with a new pastor, you'll finally be past that. But until then, step four is then we compassion. Is it compassion? Is it you know, but here's the thing. As we're working through these steps and by the way, they're hard don't don't expect to do this in an afternoon or before you know Mother's Day dinner like it takes work.

But in step four, we can patronize it. And we realize the old axiom is true that broken people break people that hurt people hurt people and that messy people make messes. By the way, you're messy. Sorry about that. But once we can realize that that if there was an event and someone did hurt us, we have to realize that they may look perfect and they may have everything right that you have wrong in your life.

Or they may have succeeded in ways you only dream about succeeding. But no matter what you see on the outside, breaking of others comes from a deep brokenness within another and when you can realize that and realize that you don't want to be another broken person breaking others, then there's room for compassion then there's room for this place to say, Lord, I don't.

I want them. I want them to to be able to heal as well. Whatever they're going through, whatever it is, Lord, I'm not letting them off the hook, but I want you I want you to be with them because nobody should have to deal with that hurt or that brokenness alone.

Great compassion, is it. And then finally, only after we go through those steps can we actually release it. Oh, by the way, I forgot this. Did you know that when you start thinking in compassionate terms or compassionately about someone, it actually starts changing your brain don't tell me God didn't create something incredible inside of you. When you start thinking in terms of compassion, it starts changing your neurological pathways that's good.

Then we then we move to step five here, and that's releasing it, and it's finally being able to say, Lord, I'm no longer going to hold this I don't want to. It's making me a broken person. I don't want this anymore. I



don't want to live under this weight. I don't want to be like, clay, hard unyielding and caused damage when I swell or shrink.

I want to do that. And I don't want this person to be held captive by my resentment and then finally, this is probably the hardest step and was the hardest for me. Step six is to cover it is to cover. And what I mean by that is praying for that person and what I mean praying for that person.

It's not like help them see the wrong. Are there ways and, you know, help them finally get better or help someone really convict them about what a terrible person, you know, like this? None of that. In fact, what my therapist led me through is he took a he said he said, I want you to list ten things that you really pray for, for yourself and desire, like in the depths of your heart, look for yourself.

So I you know, it took me 9 seconds to list ten things like I'm pretty in touch with those and then he said, OK, now I want you whenever you pray for this person, I want you to pray for 21 days straight every day. I want you to pray those ten things for that person and I was like, No, I don't think so.

Thanks for your help, Doctor.

And I did it and it was great because he's like, he's like, Look, you don't have to mean it at first. Don't be you don't have to worry about being genuine, you know, like, just pray, you know, like, dear Lord, I don't mean this, but I hope this person succeeds in their life. But it was really cool because as I went through the process of 21 days, it was like maybe day 20 and now like day 12 and I was like, actually like starting to really care for this person.

And I started to mean it. Then I quit because I didn't want it. Now I saw that transformation and I saw what God does learning to live in forgiveness with high quotients of forgiveness and reconciliation in our hearts. I don't care who you are, you can be the most macho, macho man in this place or in Lincoln, Nebraska, or whatever, Mr. Universe, or you can be, you know, like the most the most like goal oriented, like kick butt mom and executive, like.

But at the bottom of this resentment is for all of us. And it's a good thing and it's beautiful. And we actually become more human and we become better soil when we learn to forgive and live by forgiveness. So Matthew records this incredible line with Jesus. This is Jesus first teaching about the Lord's Prayer. And by the way, I don't know if you recall in the Lord's Prayer where he says How's it go?

So forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Do you realize that that's actually a conditional thing forgive us. Ours as as as as we forgive others, theirs so as to say, Jesus teaching us this foundational prayer for all of eternity as we forgive others, Lord grant us forgiveness in our own lives. And Jesus wraps up the prayer and says, for if you forgive other people when they sinned against you, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you.

But if you do not forgive others their sins, your father will not forgive your sins. It is not supplemental. It is key and core to the relationship that Jesus, who died on the cross and forgave your sins even though you are holding the hammer, said, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing it is core to the one who said They don't even know me and that I'm going to reach out and give them my all it is what makes us beautiful and that's what brings us back to him.

Was seeking redemption and full relationship with us. Was great gracious heavenly father, you have given us a message that perhaps caused a lot of sweaty palms and anxious hearts as we entered into this place and learned what we were seeking and listening.

To from you. It's morning the Lord.

Even when you take us to difficult places, you're doing it because you love us and you want us to flourish.

You want us to win the National Prize for Best Garden. You want us to flourish with fruit that feeds the world because we have been made right and set free from your love, your truth, your grace.

And your desire for us to.

Learn about you as we accept these big things in our lives. So, Lord, we lifted up well, thank you for teaching us, and we pray that you will continue to just help us walk in your way to become more like you to find those ways to feed the world, to let to let our brokenness bless others because it's wrapped in your grace.

We pray for the world. We pray for those who are hurting. We ask for your miracles and your healing. We ask you to wrap around those who have lost everything. It's yours and you are ours. We love you and we thank you for loving us. Even in.