

PREPARING OUR HEARTS

20 **Lent** 26

WEEK THREE:  
FORGIVENESS

*And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34*

Nails pierced through His hands and feet.  
Hanging from a cross. Bleeding out.  
Whipped, spat upon, and mocked. Yet, Jesus  
says, "Father, forgive them."

The reality is that most of us have a hard  
time extending forgiveness for matters far  
less excruciating than this. Hurtful words.  
Betrayal. Broken trust. Pain that lingers  
longer than we expected. Even so, Jesus  
petitioned the Father in his most vulnerable,  
agonizing moment and asked for him to  
forgive the very people who put him there.

In our sin, we put him there. We turned our backs on God, and still he sent his Son to take our place. To pay for and forgive our sin.

This forgiveness comes from an incomprehensible love. A love so deep and steadfast that Jesus willingly went to the cross and experienced the full weight of sin and wrath of God on our behalf. A love that didn't wait for us to take the first step but chose to pursue us in the middle of suffering and unresolved hurt.

Can you imagine such love?

Do you truly believe that Jesus did that for *you*?

Lent provides us with space to slow down, sit with the cost of the cross, and be transformed by it.

Jesus' prayer from the cross reminds us that forgiveness is not powered by our own strength. It flows from remembering what has already been extended to us. When we remember the grace and mercy we've received from God, it can begin to loosen our grip on the offenses we're holding onto.

Do you dare to extend that same forgiveness to others who have wronged you?

Maybe today, that feels impossible. Maybe the hurt feels too fresh, the wound too deep. The good news is that the same love that Jesus held onto on the cross is here now for the taking. His forgiveness empowers us to believe that there is always hope for restoration.

Spend some time today examining your heart for any unforgiveness, casting your cares on the Lord, and asking Him to soften your heart towards those who have hurt you.