**Series Road Map**

**Series Overview:** In order to see the power of what Jesus said, sometimes, we need to look at what Jesus didn’t say. Jesus said a lot of things, but Jesus also clearly didn’t say a lot of things. We’re looking at 4 things Jesus didn’t say and discovering the Truth about these commonly misunderstood topics.

**Week Overview:** Forgiveness is difficult, especially if people really messed up. But, Jesus didn’t give us permission to not forgive other people. In fact, He said that we need to forgive everyone as He forgave us. And, in doing this, we find freedom.

***Outline:***

**Grab the Room (Intro): Intro to series. Annoying things people do on Instagram.**

**Tension (what’s the struggle):** You can’t pick and choose what you believe.

**Text: Matthew 6:9-13; Matthew 5:23-24; Col 3:13**

**THP**: Forgive Freely

**Supporting Points:**

Forgive Your Debtors as God has forgiven your debts

Hurl away the offense

Forgiveness isn’t optional…but your freedom is your choice.

You may not have started process of hurt, but you can start the process of healing.

Forgiveness empowers you to set the prisoner free, and the prisoner is you

**Application (call to action):**

Gospel presentation (optional)

Forgive others who you haven’t forgiven

Message Series: Things Jesus Said

Message Title: Forgiveness

Key: [Media] Scripture Slides

**Intro**

Here at Northview Students, we are intensely devoted to figuring out what Jesus said. I mean, if we’re going to live our lives entirely for God, I want to make sure I’m following the plan. And there are a lot of rules out there…some that you may have been believing your entire life about what Jesus said, and it has given you a really bad taste about Christianity.

Some of you have grown up in church, and you’ve gotten used to hearing a lot of what Jesus has said that what he has said has lost some of its power, and it may seem weak or watered down…

No matter where you are, I want you to lean in. Because Jesus didn’t die on the cross and give everything He could offer so that we could kinda live for him or believe things that He didn’t say…I don’t know about you, but if I’m going to live my life for Christ, I’m gonna try to get this right. And I’m not going to waste my time believing lies or living in ways that people have taught me to live if it doesn’t line up with what Jesus said.

Jesus said a lot of things. And there are a lot of things Jesus didn’t say.

Sometimes, we need to look at what Jesus Didn’t say to see what he did say. To realize the power of what Jesus said, we need to look at what he didn’t say.

Today, we’re going to talk about what Jesus didn’t say about the topic of forgiveness.

But first, let me ask how many of you know someone really annoying on Instagram? [examples of how they are annoying] Pick 3-5...

-heavily edited pictures

-makeup filters

-people who post ten videos of you talking and you have to scroll through them all

-mirror selfies

-food pics

-pet pictures

-25 insta stories for people on their b-day

-people who post every time they work out

**Social media is the easiest place to make snapshot judgements, get easily angered, and hold a grudge against people. It seems like people just say whatever they want, comment some pretty ugly stuff, and don’t think about how much they can really cause some hurt to other people. But Jesus didn’t say, it’s just social media...you don’t need to forgive them. He said, “Father, Forgive them, for they know not what they do” which includes posting...**

In regards to forgiveness, Jesus also didn’t say: Sorry, you’ve sinned too much for me to forgive you. I can forgive everyone else…but you really get on my nerves. He didn’t say, you need to forgive them once they say they are sorry and they really mean it...

**Tension:** I might have said these things if I had his power, but not Jesus…

But, Jesus didn’t say: You don’t need to forgive them. God forgives freely.

And in this culture, we have a tendency to filter our beliefs based off of what we like to hear or believe…it’s as if we’re at this giant buffet (and I can slam some food at a buffet), but we load up our plates with what we want, and we leave all the rest of the stuff because we don’t have room on the plate…

Jesus’s Words always have room on the plate. And maybe to make room for Jesus’s words, we’re going to have to put down something…something we may even really like to make room for what Jesus actually did say. There is no picking and choosing, but he says I want everything I say to be a part of you because it’s going to help you live a better life!

So, this topic may mess with you a little, and that’s a good thing. It means God wants to talk to you. And if that’s you, if you find yourself pushing back and resisting, I’d encourage you, stay open. Don’t close yourself off from and shut off the most powerful God that wants to be near you. Maybe God didn’t feel close to you when you got hurt, but your hurt is not the end of the story…God wants to talk to you tonight. Will you listen?

Listen to this. Jesus wanted to be super clear about things that mattered. He shows us this in Matthew 6 with the Sermon on the Mount, instructions to his followers on a couple of things that really mattered to how Jesus did things. In these instructions, he’s teaching His disciples, his closest followers how to pray. Maybe you’re new to church, and you don’t know how to pray…that’s okay. These are people who were closest to Jesus and they were still learning.

So Jesus was very specific in his teachings.

**Truth**

At the end of the teaching, he gave a couple of thoughts on the topic of forgiveness. It starts in Matthew 6:9. Read along.

“This, then, is how you should pray: “‘Our Father in heaven,hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come,your will be done,on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. [Have 10-12 on the screen, but instead of reading 12, read]

**Forgive us our debts even though we’re holding grudges against other people**

**I’ll forgive you, but you don’t have to forgive what someone else did. NO, He said…**

**Forgive us our debts as we have also forgiven our debtors**

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. 14 For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Very intense, very sobering words. He wanted to make sure that we knew these were not just suggestions…He meant it. On other words, God commands us to Forgive freely.

Story of unforgiveness…Either your own or from someone else’s life.

I remember in middle school, I was made fun of a ton for my weight. I was short and chubby. People look back on my pictures now and say I looked adorable, but I promise you, that is not what the ladies were saying back then…. And to top it off, I had incredibly bad acne. You may think you have bad acne. I had worse.

And instead of people looking at me and just letting it go because I had it bad enough, people made fun of me. Not just like in a playful way, but they said things that stung…so much so that I held onto this hurt for so many years.

Like for example, freshman year of high school, I was 5’9 or 5’10” and 140 pounds…and that’s the skinniest I had ever been in my entire life. But, because people made fun of me, I held onto the hurt, and I still saw myself as that chubby little kid. Or, anytime I had a zit, I knew people would notice, and I was afraid of what they were thinking..

It wasn’t until college that I realized I was holding onto the hurt and bitterness of so many words said against me. I had an entirely inaccurate view of myself because of the hurt others had caused me…and I wanted to be free from that. And I realized, I needed to forgive them to be free from that hurt and see myself differently.

Some of you are going to have an unsettling moment right now. You’re thinking of that person that let you down. They said they would come through for you, but they repeatedly flake. Someone close to you betrayed you…what once was a close friend is a hated enemy.

This topic creates a lot of emotion. You may be yelling in your heart: You don’t know what “somebody” did to me. You don’t know that my best friend lied to/about me. Someone broke a promise to me, and I can’t let it go. Maybe someone took advantage of you. Someone who should have loved you and protected you, but instead of protecting you, they hurt you. You may have experienced verbal, emotional, physical, sexual abuse… and you’re still feeling that pain.

There are so many wrongs that people may have done to you. And that hurts…and it’s real, and it matters. It breaks my heart that some of you have experienced things no one should ever go through, and everyone has some type of hurt that mattered…some of them matter way more than we let on.

So, how do you forgive something that seems so unforgiveable.

This is how you should pray… OUR father. God is not just my father, he is YOUR father. If God is OUR father, we are his children. Our relationship with our siblings under God truly matter. With siblings, this makes sense. It matters how we treat our siblings under God.

**Application**

Jesus says this matters in Matthew 5:23-24 “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. If you’re going to worship your father, don’t bring him an offering when you’re fighting with his kids. God doesn’t want you to just love him, we are called to love other people. It matters to God if you forgive them. It matters to other people that you forgive them. And it should matter to you if you forgive them.

Your hurt was real…maybe still currently is real. But unforgiveness also hurts others. Who does unforgiveness hurts? It hurts God’s heart when we don’t love others. We just saw that he doesn’t want us to only worship Him without loving our siblings. And It hurts the person who is holding onto the hurt.

If we live with bitterness, we continue to let the wounds stay infected and poison our own soul. You may have had a wound, and instead of letting it heal, the wound is open because it’s unresolved. And instead of letting in bacteria and other harmful things that can infect us, we let in resentment, anger, distrust, thoughts of revenge, and even more sadness that poisons our own soul.

You may be living in a prison of offense...Meaning someone hurt you, and that wasn’t your fault and it wasn’t up to you. But what you do with that hurt is entirely up to you. Many of us have chosen to let our unforgiveness own us, and we are locked up in our feelings of frustration, and it owns us. Forgiveness is the key that sets you free from the prison of offense. And that same ability to forgive is available to you. And You may also think: that’s a good thought...but, I’m not there yet.

What do I do if I’m overwhelmed with hurt, bitterness, and anger. You all have heard, love your neighbor and hate your enemy. If someone wrongs you, wrong them back. But Jesus says: “Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you.”

I don’t feel like praying….if I waited until I felt like praying every time I got hurt, I would still be waiting to pray. Your prayer for those that hurt you may or may not change them, but it always changes you.

It matters that you pray. **It matters that you start the process of healing even though you didn’t start the process of hurt.** It matters that you pray.

Pray: I have been forgiven. I can find in myself the ability to forgive others…not because I want to. But because Jesus offers the power to forgive. Out of my deep gratitude for your sacrifice on the cross, I can find in myself the power and strength to forgive others. God, you have forgiven me of so much, and this offense (no matter how great and how hurtful it is) it comes nowhere near the amount of offense my sin has caused you.

It matters that you forgive others. What forgiveness means in the Greek language is not to sweep it under the rug, but it’s hurling it away. Rid it from yourself. To let it go.

How do you do this? Col 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

How do you do it when you have been betrayed…you forgive as the Lord forgave you. In the same way that our good God has given us what we don’t deserve. That’s the same way.

Andy Stanley says “ In the shadow of my hurt, forgiveness feels like a decision to reward my enemy. But in the shadow of the cross, forgiveness is merely a gift from one underserving soul to another.

We didn’t earn it, we don’t deserve it. There is nothing we have done that has given us the right to be forgiven…and there may be nothing that someone else does that moves you to want to forgive them. But it’s not about that. It’s about passing along forgiveness from one undeserving soul to another.

What if parents and students would hurl it away and let the let downs be gone and embrace the forgiveness? What if friends would hurl it away and not hold onto the grudge that tore them apart? What if you hurled it away and freed yourself from the pain of your abuser?

What if you didn’t see grievances and hurt as grounds for revenge, but also grounds for forgiveness. What if by the same power of the Holy Spirit within us, we could find the same power to forgive others.He did it to help us heal and be free.

Dave Willis says Holding a grudge doesn’t make you strong; it makes you bitter. Forgiving doesn’t make you weak; it sets you free.

Jesus didn’t say I will forgive you, but you don’t need to forgive them.

Jesus didn’t say, you can treat people however you want, and it’s okay.

He said…. For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Forgiveness empowers you to set the prisoner free…and the prisoner is you. And we cannot do this on our own power…some of us need a miracle because this is so far out of our human ability to understand. It is so far out of our strength and desire, that we need a supernatural move of God to do the impossible…to forgive when someone doesn’t deserve and we don’t feel like it.

And this is truly impossible to do if we have not yet received forgiveness. You may have never chosen to receive God as Lord and Savior of our life. We have been so focused on what others have done to us to look inward and realize that we have done so much to hurt other people, and we have also hurt God… We have all messed up, and we are in need of forgiveness.

And God is the expert on forgiveness. He sent his one and only son Jesus who is the sinless son of God. Jesus paid the price for our sins. And He wants to forgive you. Jesus didn’t say you’ve done too many things wrong to be forgiven. He didn’t say I’ll forgive your friends, but I can’t forgive you. Your friends can have a better life, but that’s not for you.

No, He said, I love you, and I forgive you! And in his final act of love, his sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins, He went to the cross blameless and holy. Died on the cross, dead 3 days, came back to life defeating death, sin, the power of hell…and he forgave your sins, he hurled it away the punishment from your sin! As far as from the east is to the west, that’s what He did for you.

And you can find in you, the power to forgive others...let’s check one story of forgiveness from connor, student ministry resident at Carmel.

**Connor’s Testimony Video [Optional Gospel Presentation/Invitation: Go for it if you feel like students are hooked. We’ll do a presentation week 3**

What an encouraging story...Connor shared some pretty deep struggles. And, while the hurt is deep, the freedom he got from freely forgiving is so powerful. Guys, forgiveness is not weak...it’s strong. There is power in letting go of the hurt and forgiving others. And I want you to experience that same freedom from some of the bitterness and pain you might be experiencing.

So, just as we have been forgiven, we all need to do something with this…So, I’ve set up these stations at the foot of the cross. And this is your chance to forgive this person in your heart. Maybe you want to write down what this person did, and then on the other side of the notecard, write “FORGIVEN.” And then leave it there…leave it at the foot of the cross, and be free from the prison of offense. Maybe you need to send that text to a friend to start the conversation, or you may just need to talk or pray with a leader… Wherever you are at, let God speak to you. Everyone will have a chance to respond. What will you do with God’s gift?

[Note: week 3 will also be a response moment, but they will pick up nails at the foot of the cross. If you don’t want to get repetitive, you can keep students at their seats or just pray with leaders...week 1 and 3 can also tie together if you keep the “forgiven” notecards and pin them to the cross when they pick up nails at the cross...it’s a reminder that they forgave other people, but really, it’s a reminder that they have also been forgiven. Just an idea to have some creative freedom]

Pray with me.

So, God, would you move in hearts! Would you do the impossible and give these students the strength to forgive because we cannot do this on our own! We need your help to hurl away the pain, the injustice, the abuse….because we want to hold onto it because we think it gives us power, but it only offers a prison. God, would you free these students of unforgiveness and show them what it looks like to live an abundant life. Amen.

**Response song for response moment. Either way, have students reflect and think of who they need to forgive in light of God forgiving them.**