

SESSION 4

FORGIVENESS

A HEALER FOR TRAUMA AND ANXIETY

Understanding why forgiveness must never be forced and what genuine healing actually looks like

Reading

- Chapter 5: Forgiveness as a Healer Acquainted with Trauma

Watch the Video



Opening Question

Have you ever felt pressure to forgive before you were ready? What did that feel like?

Key Idea

Forgiveness must never be forced, especially in situations of deep pain or trauma. Trauma is not only about what happened, but how it is carried within us, often in ways that affect both mind and body. When forgiveness is rushed or used to silence pain, it can cause further harm. Anger, in many cases, is a valid and necessary response to injustice.

True forgiveness is something that must be freely chosen and may take time. Healing often begins with being seen and understood, not with being told to move on. The Christian story offers this through Jesus, who enters into human suffering and does not stand at a distance from it.

Reflection & Discussion

- Have you ever experienced forgiveness being rushed or demanded? What impact did that have?
- What is the difference between healthy and unhealthy forgiveness?
- Why is it important that forgiveness is freely chosen?
- What does it mean to you that Jesus understands human suffering?

Going Deeper (optional)

Chapter 6 explores how forgiveness relates to justice, and what it means to take wrongdoing seriously without becoming defined by it.

Chapter 7 turns to self-forgiveness, raising the question of where we carry shame or self-blame, and what it might mean to begin letting that go.

Prayer

Lord, we bring you the pain we have been carrying. The things that happened that should not have happened. The things that were done to us and the things we have done. We ask you to be our empathetic witness - to see, to know, and to hold what we cannot hold alone. We do not ask for quick healing or easy answers. We ask for your presence. And we trust that in your presence, healing becomes possible. Amen.