

## EMILY WATLING VIDEO

### INTRODUCE

Well, if you have your Bibles, and I hope you do,

- please grab them and turn to 1 Samuel chapter 26.
- You can open a phone or a tablet to 1 Samuel 26,
- or you can use one of the hard-backed black bibles
  - under every single chair.
  - You'll find 1 Samuel 26 on page **249**.

### INTRODUCTION

You know, in church

- we often talk about our sins
  - and what we need to do about our sin...
- but today we're going to talk about the other side of the coin.

What do you do when someone sins against you?

Today we're going to talk about **SLIDE FORGIVENESS**

- It's the thing WE need most.
- It's what we GET from God.

But at the same time...

- it's something that God asks every one of his followers
  - not only to receive,
- but to give as well.

### DISCLAIMER

Now, just by way of disclaimer:

it's gonna be really easy to think to yourself today:

- “Oh, yeah...forgiveness...that’s good.”
- I wish my mother-in-law were here to hear this!”
  - Or your husband.
  - Or your friend.

But listen to me, I am not talking today about the person sitting to your left or your right.

- Today, I am talking to you!
- This message is ONLY for people who have been hurt.
  - So, if you’ve never been hurt...
    - well, good on you...
    - Enjoy your denial.
  - You’re just gonna have to sit there.

But for the rest of us we’re gonna ask:

How do you forgive what seems unforgivable?

**BLANK SLIDE**

## **CONTEXT: DAVID**

If anyone had an excuse NOT TO forgive, it would be David of Saul. For years...and years...and years...Saul has been doing wrong by David.

Let’s just run through the list.

- In chapter 16 David comes into Saul’s service,
  - plays soothing music for him,
  - and helps with the evil spirit that was tormenting him.
- In chapter 17 David kills the giant Philistine warrior, Goliath,
  - winning the favor of Saul and all of Israel.

So, he starts by serving Saul!

- But in chapter 18, Saul gets envious of David's fame,
  - and tries to kill David by hurling his spear at him...twice.
  - Then he tries to get him killed in battle,
  - but instead David wins the hand of Saul's daughter.

So, now Saul is David's father-in-law...

- Saul then tries to murder David again with his spear.
  - And every father-in-law said, "Yes and amen!" Right?
  - Any of your boys come sniffing around my daughter...
    - we've got a problem.
- But in chapter 20 Saul's son, Jonathan, David's best friend.
  - Well, Saul tries to kill his own son with that same spear!
    - Because he's friends with David!
  - So, David runs from Saul.

And then it's a cat and mouse chase.

- In chapters 21 and 22 David runs to the priests at Nob.
  - Then he runs to the Philistines in Gath.
  - Then he runs to the Moabites.
- In 23 Saul hunts David in the wilderness of Ziph.
- In 24 Saul hunts David in the wilderness of Engedi.
- In 25 Saul gives David's wife to another man.
  - Not sure that's legal...

But today, we come to the final chapter of this hunt.

So, that's where we pick up.

1 Samuel chapter 26 starting in verse 1:

## 1 SAMUEL 26:1-5

[1] Then the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah, saying, "Is not David hiding himself on the hill of Hachilah, which is on the east of Jeshimon?" [2] So Saul arose and went down to the wilderness of Ziph with three thousand chosen men of Israel to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph. [3] And Saul encamped on the hill of Hachilah, which is beside the road on the east of Jeshimon. But David remained in the wilderness. When he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness, [4] David sent out spies and learned that Saul had indeed come. [5] Then David rose and came to the place where Saul had encamped. And David saw the place where Saul lay, with Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army. Saul was lying within the encampment, while the army was encamped around him.

### EXPLAIN

So, Saul is on the hunt again.

- And he brings 3,000 soldiers with him.
  - This is up against the 600 who are with David.

So, David sends out spies,

- finds Saul,
- and the place where his army camped.

And this was how they would set up camp.

- The king was in the center,
- and then his 3,000 were sleeping all around him,
  - including Abner,
  - the commander of his army,
- forming something of a perimeter around their king.

Verse 6:

## 1 SAMUEL 26:6

[6] Then David said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Joab's brother Abishai the son of Zeruiah, "Who will go down with me into the camp to Saul?" And Abishai said, "I will go down with you."

David's like, "*Alright, who's coming with me?*"

- And one dude...Abishai, says,
  - "Two of us up against 3,000? I like those odds!"
- Listen, Abishai is my type of crazy!
  - Abishai could work here.
  - He's just wild! "Let's go!"

Verse 7:

## 1 SAMUEL 26:7-8

[7] So David and Abishai went to the army by night. And there lay Saul sleeping within the encampment, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head, and Abner and the army lay around him. [8] Then Abishai said to David, "God has given your enemy into your hand this day. Now please let me pin him to the earth with one stroke of the spear, and I will not strike him twice."

## EXPLAIN: ABISHAI

There's that spear...that same spear...

- it's been thrown at David three times
- and at Jonathan one time.

And Abishai's like,

- *"Listen, I'm a professional.*
- *It'll only take one stroke.*
- *I'll use his spear.*
- *I'll pin him to the earth.*
- *He won't make a peep.*
- *He won't wake up the rest of the army.*
- *We'll get out of here safely.*
- *It won't take two strikes...just one."*
  - How many time with a spear would it take you?
  - Man I'd just be mashing that thing!

And I wonder if David was tempted here?

I wonder if David was tempted to take his revenge on Saul?

But remember what we said a few weeks ago in a similar situation.

- **If David kills Saul...David becomes Saul.**

Saul has been hunting David for years...

- **but if David takes revenge on Saul...**
- **he becomes the very person who is trying to destroy him!**

And then last week,

- in a foolish moment,
- David almost hastily kills Nabal
- after being disrespected.

And remember, Abigail, Nabal's discerning wife?

- She stops David from killing the fool, Nabal,
- and becoming the fool, himself.

And I just wonder:

- if David had foolishly killed Nabal...
- would he have been more trigger happy now with Saul?

Well, let's read what happens. Verse 9.

## 1 SAMUEL 26:9-12

[9] But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him, for who can put out his hand against the LORD's anointed and be guiltless?" [10] And David said, "As the LORD lives, the LORD will strike him, or his day will come to die, or he will go down into battle and perish. [11] The LORD forbid that I should put out my hand against the LORD's anointed. But take now the spear that is at his head and the jar of water, and let us go." [12] So David took the spear and the jar of water from Saul's head, and they went away. No man saw it or knew it, nor did any awake, for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the LORD had fallen upon them.

## EXPLAIN

So, it seems that David has learned.

- In chapter 24 he was wise.
- In chapter 25 he almost becomes the fool.
- And now, in chapter 26,
  - David makes the wise decision,
  - and he doesn't kill Saul.

And he says something really interesting. In verse 10 he said,

- "The Lord will strike him,
- or his day will come to die,
- or he will go down into battle and perish."

Essentially he's saying:

- Vengeance isn't mine to enact.
- Vengeance is the Lords.
- God's gonna deal with Saul.

So, David lets Saul go.

And I think all of this was actually a test from God for David.

- I think that's why in verse 12
- we find out that a deep sleep from the Lord
- had caused the men to all sleep through this encounter.

I think God put them into a deep sleep...

- to test David to see if he would be a fool or be wise...
- if he would choose revenge or choose forgiveness.

And David chose to forgive.

## **TRANSITION**

Now, in verses 13 through 16 David calls out Abner, the commander of the army, for not protecting his king.

Now, Abner will play more of a role in David's life, but we won't really get to that until 2 Samuel.

And then Saul pipes up. Verse 17:

## **1 SAMUEL 26:17-18**

[17] Saul recognized David's voice and said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And David said, "It is my voice, my lord, O king." [18] And he said, "Why does my lord pursue after his servant? For what have I done? What evil is on my hands?"



So David, once again, pleads with Saul to see reason.

- He will not raise his hand against Saul,
- and he continually tries to win Saul back.

Verse 21:

### **1 SAMUEL 26:21**

[21] Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Return, my son David, for I will no more do you harm, because my life was precious in your eyes this day. Behold, I have acted foolishly, and have made a great mistake."

### **EXPLAIN**

So, Saul says the right words...

- Saul admits his sin.
- He says he will do no more harm.
- And he even calls himself a fool,
  - again, harkening back to last chapter's pivotal moment.

But David is wise enough NOT to return to Saul.

- He knows Saul's words...
- haven't been accompanied by any actions.

So, David goes his way...and Saul goes home.

And this is the last time David and Saul will ever speak to one-another.

Now, chapter 27, verse 1.

### **1 SAMUEL 27:1**

[1] Then David said in his heart, "Now I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should escape to

the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will despair of seeking me any longer within the borders of Israel, and I shall escape out of his hand.”

So, David sees that his bids to be reconciled to Saul are at an impasse.

- And decides to go to the Philistines, Israel’s enemies,
- because that is the one place where he knows
- Saul cannot and will not chase him.

Verse 4

### **1 SAMUEL 27:4**

[4] And when it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath, he no longer sought him.

Verse 7:

### **1 SAMUEL 27:7**

[7] And the number of the days that David lived in the country of the Philistines was a year and four months.

So, for 16 months David lives with the Philistines,

- fighting with them...
  - not against Israel,
- but against other forces in the area.

Verse 12:

## 1 SAMUEL 27:12

[12] And Achish trusted David, thinking, “He has made himself an utter stench to his people Israel; therefore he shall always be my servant.”

So, Achish, the Philistine king, thinks he’s got David.

- But it’ll only be a matter of time.
- And we’ll get to that next week.

## FORGIVENESS

So, for the rest of our time, let’s talk about **SLIDE FORGIVENESS**  
David forgives Saul of a seemingly unforgivable thing.

- Forgiveness is one of the most important principles
- the follower of Christ **MUST** understand.

And I’m not gonna say everything on the topic, but I’ll give us a primer.

- You see, forgiveness is incredibly important,
  - but it’s also incredibly nuanced.
- And because of that, there are a lot of goofy ideas
- floating around out there that keep us from forgiving.

So, we’re going to look at:

- what forgiveness is **NOT**,
- what forgiveness **IS**,
- and then **HOW** to forgive.

## FORGIVENESS ISN’T...

So, let’s go...first, forgiveness is not **SLIDE FORGETTING**

- Forgiving is not forgetting what happened...

So, when someone sins against you...

- not just does something that offends you, ok?
  - You know the difference, right?
- Is the thing that was done against you a sin?
  - Or did it just offend you?
- Just because you are offended...
- it does not mean that you have been sinned against.

Hey, people are getting offended by everything these days!

- and listen, if it's sin,
  - then you can be offended.
- But if they aren't sins...
  - then here's what your pastor is saying to you...
  - GET OVER IT!

And some of you are offended by that...

and that's what I'm talking about.

- What I just said was not a sin against you...
  - you're just being sensitive...
- and thus, it's not needing forgiveness.
  - So, save your emails!

BUT, on the other end of the spectrum...

- one of the reasons why we have a hard time with forgiveness
  - is we try to just forget about it...
  - we try to pretend it didn't happen.

**We try to pretend it isn't a big deal, but hear me: ALL SIN IS A BIG DEAL.**

- To downplay sin
- is to downplay what Christ did on the cross.

## EXAMPLE: DAVID

So, please note that David doesn't just forget about what Saul has done.

- Sometimes people mistakenly think...
- that forgiveness means you just let people off the hook.
  - *"You're telling me you just let him get away with it?"*

No!

- David grabs that spear,
- gets to a safe place,
- and confronts him on it.

So, the saying "forgive and forget" is dumb.

That's not forgiveness. It's not FORGETTING.

## FORGIVENESS ISN'T...

Second, forgiveness is not **SLIDE RESTORATION**

It can lead there...but it doesn't always.

- You see, sometimes the person who is forgiven
- wants things to go back to how they used to be.

But here's the truth:

- forgiveness can let you start over,
- but it doesn't put you back to where you were.

You actually can't go back to before the offense. That's impossible!

- Forgiveness can let you start over,
  - and redevelop trust over time,
- but it is not an immediate restoration of trust.

Please note that David does not go back with Saul.

- In fact, he flees to a place where Saul cannot and will not go.

**You can forgive someone AND STILL have very protective boundaries.**

## TRANSITION

Now, with those two caveats:

- forgiveness isn't FORGETTING...
- and forgiveness isn't RESTORATION.

Now let's take a moment and look at what forgiveness actually is.

## FORGIVENESS IS...

I have two things that forgiveness is.

First, forgiveness is an ongoing **SLIDE COMMITMENT**

That is...it's not a one-time-thing!

And this ongoing commitment is 3-fold:

- First, it's a COMMITMENT not to bring the offense up...
  - to punish that person.
- Second, it's a COMMITMENT not to bring the offense up...
  - to other people,
  - hoping to undermine their reputation
  - so that they'll punish them.
    - That's actually called gossip.
- And third, it's a COMMITMENT not to keep bringing it up...
  - to yourself...
    - Just hoping that one day they'll be punished.
    - *"Man, one day they're gonna get theirs!"*
      - That leads to resentment and bitterness...
      - and this is the hardest part.

So, it's an ongoing COMMITMENT.

- I'm not going to figure out how to get you back,
  - or punish you,
  - or equal things out.
- Nor am I going to mind debate you,
  - letting this thing consume my waking thoughts.
  - I'm not going to let you live rent-free in my mind.
  - Just running through scenarios in your head constantly.

Listen, I don't know how you've been hurt.

I don't know what's been done to you.

But I promise you,

- the longer you hold on to that bitterness...
- the longer you hold on to that anger...
- the longer you hold on to that revenge...
- the longer you do that, the less free you will be...
- and the less fruitful you will be.

### **EXAMPLE: DAVID**

You see, David does all this.

- He doesn't strike Saul himself.
- He doesn't even let Abishai strike Saul.
- And then when he addresses Saul
- he doesn't say,
  - *"You dirty old man!"*
  - *"Don't you know what you've done to me?!?"*
- That would be him trying to punish Saul...
  - and it would indicate that he hasn't forgiven Saul.

- No, in verse 17 he says,
  - *“My Lord, the king.”*
- He thinks respectfully of him.
- In his heart he has forgiven him.

Now, again, note...he’s not just letting Saul get away with it.

Notice I said, you commit not to bring it up to PUNISH that person.

- That doesn’t mean you don’t bring it up to them...
  - but your motives behind what you do...
  - determine if you’ve forgiven them or not.
- David’s confronting Saul,
  - but not to punish him...
  - he’s trying to reclaim him!

So he confronts him...lovingly...and hear me:

- If you confront someone out of love,
  - they might change.
- But if you confront someone out of vindictiveness,
  - they’ll never change.
  - They’ll see right through that.

### **NOT A FEELING...**

Forgiveness is an ongoing COMMITMENT.

And because it’s a COMMITMENT, that means it’s granted before it’s felt!

Ok?

- If you think that forgiving someone means that you like them...
- or it means you feel warm and fuzzies towards someone...
  - you will never be able to forgive.



You can't control how you feel.

- Feelings just are.
  - And, frankly, you can't really trust your feelings.
  - Because they are constantly in flux.

But you can control your actions.

- I can't control how what you did to me
  - deeply affects me to the core of my being.
- But I can always control what I do.

And it's amazing,

- but overtime, NOT OVERNIGHT, but overtime,
  - if you make the COMMITMENT to forgive,
- God will often, NOT ALWAYS, but God will often
  - change your feelings towards a person.

The feeling is a caboose. The engine is your commitment to forgive.

So, forgiveness is an ongoing COMMITMENT.

## FORGIVENESS IS...

Second, forgiveness is **SLIDE COSTLY**

Listen, when you commit to forgive...it's costly...it hurts.

- Every single time you forgive someone
- and commit not to keep bringing it up,
- it hurts.
  - You know why?
- It's because you're paying the debt...
- instead of making that other person pay it.

It costs you something. That's what forgiveness is.

## ILLUSTRATION: TRUCK

So, if I lend you my truck...

- which I will not, so don't ask...

But in a hypothetical scenario, if I lend you my truck...and you wreck it.

There are only two things that can happen:

- either you pay for it...
- or I say, "*I forgive you,*" and I pay for it.

But just forgiving you doesn't magically fix my truck.

Forgiveness is me saying, "*I'll take the debt on myself.*"

- And that means that every time you COMMIT to forgive,
- you are taking the debt on yourself...
  - and that's COSTLY...
  - and that hurts.

## EXAMPLE: DAVID

Think of what this cost David?

- To let Saul go...again!
  - That was crazy costly.
- Abishai must have thought David was nuts!

Saul wasn't just after David...

- he would've killed every one of his men, too.
  - "*David, you're putting us all at risk!*"

Yes. David was actually paying an incredibly high price.

- Making himself unbelievably vulnerable.
- In fact, it made him a refugee in the land of the Philistines.

But forgiveness is always costly. **You either make them pay, or you pay.**

## **RETALIATION...RETRIBUTION...OR FORGIVENESS**

There are really only three choices when someone wrongs you.

- You can pursue RETALIATION...
- You can seek RETRIBUTION...
- Or you can extend FORGIVENESS.

And listen, retaliation is how it worked in those times. You made them pay!

- You talk bad about me...I kill you.
- You poke out my eye...I kill you.
- You kill my dog...I kill you.
- You kill my cat...appreciate it.

But that's called retaliation.

Then Moses comes along and says, no retaliation...just retribution.

It's gotta be equitable!

- It was eye for eye...
- tooth for tooth...
- life for life.
- You do to others as they have done to you.

But that's what makes David's forgiveness all the more incredible...

- he could have retaliated...
- or even sought retribution...
- but instead he forgave,
- and took the debt on himself.

## **HOW TO FORGIVE?**

So, let's land the plane with this:

How do I start to forgive?

Cause listen,

- it's actually not that hard to say nothing and boil inside...
- and it's not that hard to boil over and just let them have it.
- But it's really hard to forgive.

So, how do I even begin to forgive?

Well, I had 1 Corinthians 6 read over us, and I want to read it again...

### **SLIDE 1 CORINTHIANS 6:9–11**

Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, [10] nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. [11] And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

### **REMEMBER**

Listen,

- if you want to begin to forgive people...
- you must first **SLIDE REMEMBER** who you were...
  - Such were some of you!
  - BUT...you were washed.

Church, the first step towards forgiveness...

is to REMEMBER how much you have been forgiven of.

- Before you COMMIT to forgive...
- and before you pay the COST of giving forgiveness...
- you REMEMBER that you have been forgiven.

## CONCLUSION

And that's the main point for us this morning church.

Those who experience the freedom of forgiveness extend forgiveness.

Or, to put it more simply:

### **SLIDE W/PADS FORGIVEN PEOPLE FORGIVE PEOPLE**

So, here's the million-dollar question: who do you need to forgive?

- Is it your dad?
  - Cause he abandoned you?
  - Cause he abused you?
  - Cause he was supposed to show you that you are fearfully and wonderfully made...but he only criticized you?
- Is it your mom?
  - Cause she's so emotionally manipulative?
  - Cause she's so passive aggressive?
  - Or maybe you can't stand her because she knew what your dad was doing, and yet she said nothing.
- Is it your kids?
  - And I don't mean your 9-year-old...but if you've got grown kids.
  - I mean, you did everything you could to raise those babies right...
  - And you think, man, when I took you home from the hospital I thought I'd give my life for you!
  - And now they won't even call.
  - Do you need to forgive them?

- Is it a friend?
  - You were so tight?
  - And then you found out what they were saying about you.
  - And you were like, *“It’s over. We’ll never be friends again.”*
- Is it an ex-husband or ex-wife?
  - Because they promised: for better or for worse.
  - And then when something WORSE happened...
  - Or someone they thought was BETTER walked by...
  - And they were out!
  - Do you need to forgive them?

## ENDING

If you’re holding on to that unforgiveness...

- if you are unwilling to forgive...
- don’t you realize what it’s doing to you?
  - It’s rotting you from the inside out.

FORGIVEN PEOPLE FORGIVE PEOPLE

- And I’m not saying what was done to you wasn’t awful...
- it was so bad, in fact,
- that Jesus had to die on the cross for it!

But you get to decide what you do with it.

FORGIVEN PEOPLE FORGIVE PEOPLE

- If you've stood at the cross of Christ...
  - and experienced forgiveness,
  - freely given to you,
- then you WILL forgive others.

Because they deserve it?

- NO! Because I didn't deserve the forgiveness of Christ, either.

Well don't they have to ask for it?

- Did you come to God first asking for forgiveness?
- Or did God first love you by sending his Son?

If you are in Christ,

- remember...there was a day where you bowed before Jesus,
- begging his forgiveness.
- And he forgave you everything. EVERYTHING!

FORGIVEN PEOPLE FORGIVE PEOPLE

God help us.

Let's pray.

## RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – [fathomchurch.org/give](http://fathomchurch.org/give)
- PRAYER - [fathomchurch.org/prayer](http://fathomchurch.org/prayer)
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

### 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.



## RESOURCES CONSULTED:

- Davis, Dale Ralph. Focus on the Bible. 1 Samuel: Looking on the Heart.
- Keller, Tim. *David's Mercy*.
- Martin, Joby. *Forgiveness*.
- Tsumura, David Toshio. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. The First Book of Samuel.