



SPIRIT-FILLED MEN FORGIVE FREELY

Pastor Mark Driscoll

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Well, howdy, howdy, howdy, guys. It's the best time of the week. It's real men time. So make sure you park your monster truck, put away your machine guns. It's time for church. And, uh, a bunch of dudes all over the world are gathering together tonight, uh, to worship, to pray, to learn more about how to be a better man. Um, and actually, surprisingly, a lot of women tune into this because they're hoping they're men. Their husbands become better men. So thank you. Thank you for tuning into Real Men this week. And if you're a senior pastor watching this right now and you want to figure out how to start this at your church, uh, email hello@realfaith.com. We'd love to get you connected here in Scottsdale. And if you're a man watching, eating some nachos across the country and you want to eat those nachos at Trinity Church, come check us out. Come, uh, visit us at Real Men in Scottsdale, Arizona. Alright, guys, get ready for an epic sermon. Here you go. Well, boys, this is what revival looks like. We got more guys than seats. Best night of the week. Welcome to Real Men. We're honored and glad to have you. And I have good news for every guy in the room. There's a thousand guys online watching all over the world. God's doing something. Amen. In a woke weak world, God's raising up some true sons. It's good to see you, man. My name is Pastor Mark. I'll be yelling at you for about 40 or 50 minutes, and then you'll spend some time in prayer together. Uh, before we get started, I want to give you a gift. If you're watching online, you can scan the QR code, and if you're here, you can either scan the QR code and we'll send you the PDF or you can grab the book, spirit Filled Jesus on your way out. This sermon series is largely based on that book. It's my free gift to you. All right, so here's what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna pray. 'cause I think this is one of the most important days in your life for many of you men. I truly believe that. So Father, as we come today, we ask your presence to be thick among us. Lord, as we talk about being spirit-filled men, we invite you, holy Spirit, right now, to be our sacred guest, to take those men who don't know you and to save them, to take those men who do know you and to strengthen them, to take those men who are struggling and to heal them. And God, to take those men who are succeeding and to multiply their efforts. God, we pray against the enemy of servants, their works and facts. We say that we're here to build men up to bless women and children. And we pray for generations of men and women to follow these good men. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Uh, I'm gonna talk about some today. I had a, I had a talk prepped, and then I just prayed a lot and I fell burden for you. And I'm gonna, I'm gonna pivot. And today's talk is gonna be spirit-filled, men forgive freely. And let me just short sort of share the heart of this with you. So, um, I grew up kind of going to church, not really caring about God, and I was in college and I became a Christian. And if you know my story, it was while sleeping with a pastor's daughter. So if you've ruined your life, you could still be the senior pastor at Trinity Church. So hope for assault. So then, uh, I was at my first men's retreat, uh, for my church. And I didn't know it was the guy, it was the guy's gathering like this. And they said, go for a walk and just talk to the Lord and see what he said. I was like, I don't know what I'm doing. So I'm out in the woods in Idaho and I'm like, Hey, Lord, it's me, mark, you probably knew that. But anyways, I don't know what I'm doing. If you have anything to say to me, please say to me. I didn't know God spoke. He spoke to me audibly. And, uh, I didn't know he still did that. And he said, uh, Mary Grace, preach the Bible. Train men and plant churches. I was like, okay. Uh, I was glad it was a girl. I was like, oh, I'll marry a girl. And, uh, and so I was like, so I married my wife, grace. We've been faithfully married for over 30 years now. We've got five kids and at least one of my sons is here now. And we've got, uh, we've got sons and daughters and grandsons. Mary Grace preached the Bible. So I've been doing that since I was 19, pretty much every week, uh, train men. And at the time I was like, train men. Lord, I'm 19. Like, somebody needs to train this guy to become a man. I didn't know what that meant. And plant churches. And then, uh, God said something at that time that I've not shared many times publicly, but he said, uh, I have called you out from among many to lead men. And I told that to grace at the time. I said, I got the weirdest word from the Lord. I've called you out for many of the lead men. I'm 19. I'm not a man. I don't know what I'm doing. I just got saved. Um, and, and so I brought that to my pastor and he's like, that's God's word for you. That's God's will for you. That's God's way for you. This is what you need to do for the rest of your life, is those four things. So that's what I've been doing. And I will just tell you, man, I'm, I'm 53 today. And, uh, seeing you here, it literally means the world to me. And it's the fulfillment of a word that God spoke to me as a 19-year-old kid, uh, by way of just percentage. We have more men in men's ministry at Trinity Church than I think any church in America

and possibly any church, I would say, maybe even in the history of the world. Um, And so I could have never foreseen at age 19 that you guys would be here. But you need to know I love you with my whole heart. And now that I'm older, I love you like a dad, and that is my heart for you. Men is like a father for you. Older men like me, what I'm gonna share today, it's not too late for you. And it's not too late for men our age. For you men who are younger, this could save you a lot of pain problem in peril for a very long time. And the big idea I want to talk about is forgiveness. And the reason I've chosen this, I think that the spirit of God, the anointing of God wants to flow on the sons of God. But the greatest inhibitor and prohibitor of the flow of the Holy Spirit is bitterness. And I've been doing this a long time. I've spoken to stadiums of men all over the country and world. I've spoken up to 10,000 men in a single event. And, and, and in my experience, the number one thing that causes most men not to experience the fullness of God's blessing and grace on their life is bitterness or unforgiveness. And so, uh, I wanted to start with a story Limiters studio guy. Uh, his name is Marvin. If you wanna learn more about him, you can grab the, uh, Netflix, uh, documentary, uh, called Tread. And so Marvin, I mean, he's a seasoned man there. He's been around for a while. And like most men in his life, some people did him wrong. And he, rather than forgiving them, he kind of just stacked up one bitterness after another. So he was bitter against some businesses in his town, and he sought justice, uh, through the town hall, didn't feel like he got it, took his story to the local news agency and felt like they didn't do him justice. So he got more bitter. And he felt like there was one particular woman who did him wrong, and he was bitter against her. So he created this thing called the Killdozer. Um, and he literally put, uh, bulletproof glass around it. He surrounded it with cameras, and he put a 50 caliber rifle on it, and he decided to go get vengeance on everybody that he was bitter against. Before he was done. He had done \$7 million in damage. He destroyed city hall, he destroyed the news outlet, and he destroyed that elderly woman's home. He tore them all down. Now, before you, uh, cheer, um, and, and let's be honest, if, if the Killdozer was on Craigslist, how many of you would bid on it? 'cause you, would you say, I've got a list of people I could use that for? Um, the point is that at the end, he literally killed himself. He, he blew his brains out. And he, he decided that the last act of his life and the the great legacy for his life would be bitterness. That, that he was going to finish at the line of bitterness. And they created a Netflix documentary on him called Tread. And the point is this, um, before we talk about you, just think about men that you know, uh, fathers, grandfathers, older men. How many of you know a man who's just bitter? He's just jaded, kind of broken, kind of sour, kind of surly. If you're bitter, you start to get crazy, you start to get crazy, you start to really, in your mind, go to very dark places. And eventually in your life, you go to dark places. And so what I wanna talk about is when all is said and done, I say this all the time. When all of history comes to its conclusion, there's only two cultures. There's heaven and hell. And you and I men, we live in the middle between heaven and hell. And every day the decisions we make either invite heaven down or pull hell up. If we choose bitterness and unforgiveness, we're literally pulling the culture of hell up into our life. And hell is where all the Unforgiven people go. And so if you're pulling unforgiveness or bitterness up into your life, you're literally pulling up the culture of hell and Satan and demons and chaos and darkness and self-destruction. If when you're wronged as a man, you choose to forgive, you're inviting the culture of heaven down. Heaven is where all the forgiven people are. And so the essential culture of heaven is one of forgiveness. And the reason I think this is so hard for men is as we live our life, true or false, we get taken advantage of, we get used and abused, we get cheated on, we get, we literally get taken advantage of. We get screwed. I mean, some of you, your life has been a series of iJust deeds against you. Some of you had started with your parents and they weren't good to you, or dad was violent and abusive or absent. You've had girlfriends cheat on you or betray you. Maybe you married a woman and that ended up in divorce. Or right now it's in a very painful place. You've worked for employers. Who did you wrong? Didn't compensate, you, didn't promote you, didn't honor you or respect you. Uh, some of you have served in ministries and churches and you feel like the way you got treated was really not healthy and helpful. Some of you in your friendships, you realize they were just using you and taking advantage of you. They didn't really care about you. And some of you, your own children, they've gutted you, they've betrayed you, they've abandoned you, they've ignored you. And the only time they call you is when they want money from you. And as a man, there is this sense of justice that rises up in us. And I know we're not

supposed to say this in our culture, in our culture, everybody's a victim except for the men. Um, but men are oftentimes the greatest victims of all because it is women and children and employees that depend on us, and they take advantage of us. And as men, if we have a sense of justice in us, there's this frustration like, that's not right, that's not fair. And something in a man, tell me if I'm right, doesn't like to lose. We just don't like to lose. I've never met a man who's like, man, I really hope I can really get better at losing. I've never seen a man without his, his aspirational goal. But when people take advantage of you or the girl cheats on you, or the marriage crumbles, or the children walk away or the employer takes advantage or the client doesn't pay their debt, and now you've got cashflow problems, there's something in us that just has this boiling sense of rage and injustice. And so Christianity is about two things. It's about what we do when we sin and what we do when we're sinned against. And the problem is, too much Christian teaching only focuses on what you do when they sin. It doesn't focus on what you do when you sin. When they sin against you, you, uh, forgive them. And when you sin against them, you repent. We tend to know a lot more about repenting of our sin than forgiving their sin. So that's what I want to talk about. I want to talk about what happens to those people that do you wrong and how you respond as a man. And I wanna start with this. Number one, who owes you? Jesus says this interesting thing. He says, uh, in the Lord's Prayer, two different ways. Matthew six 12, forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors. Luke 11, four, same prayer. Forgive us our sins as those who sin against us. What Jesus is saying here is that sin is a debt. So you think of all of our debts to God, Jesus died to pay our debt to God. Okay? And let me ask you this, what is Jesus forgiven you for? And ultimately, uh, the debt is, uh, sins of commission and sins of omission. And so let me say this, as Jesus has forgiven us, we accrue a debt to God and Jesus had to pay a price to pay that debt. Now, let me ask you this. Who owes you? Who owes you? What debt do they have? And men will even say, when we've been sinned against or offended, you owe me. Right? You, you've got a price to pay. You're gonna pay me back. You owe me one. That's this language of debt and sin and debt that people accrue to us. It happens in one of two ways, commission and omission. So for some of you, think about, and I'm asking the Holy Spirit right now to highlight someone for you, okay? Use this for yourself before you share this with anyone else, commission, what did they say or do? Some of you, somebody's lied about you, somebody's taken advantage of you. Some chick has committed adultery on you, someone has stolen from you, someone has taken advantage of you. Someone has worked a business agreement in such a way to cut you out of the waterfall, right? Someone has done you wrong. That's commission. Omission is where people failed to do what they were supposed to do. This is the dad who wasn't there. This is the mom who, um, just kept bringing loser boyfriends into the house as you were growing up. These are the Christian parents who really weren't active in your life. They pretended to be God lovers at church, but they were basically agnostic at home. Uh, this would include the wife who's supposed to love you and encourage you and support you, and she doesn't, or the wife who is supposed to, you know, be a friend to you and make love to you and look out for you. And she doesn't. These are the kids that are supposed to say, Hey, thank you, dad, but they never do. These would be the friends that you were always there for them when they were down, but when you're down, they're gone. It's commission. And so people accrue a debt to us as men when they do us wrong or they don't do us right? Does that make sense? Okay. In addition, let me say this about accruing a debt. The way that people accrue a big debt is by not doing a big thing, but by that relationship being a big deal. So the hardest people to forgive are not the people that have done the worst things, but the people that we count on the most. Give you an example. Uh, somebody can break into your home and steal all your stuff, and five years later, you don't wake up at three o'clock in the morning having a nightmare about what you want to do to them or how frustrated you are. But someone you love, if they fail you, or when they fail you, that can cause a great dad. So this is the dad who wasn't there. This is the wife who cheated on you and obliterated the marriage. This is the wife who, um, she was supposed to be your advocate and your friend. And, uh, she sided with your family or she turned your children against you. It's not just how big the offense is, but how much you care about and are depending upon the person, the person who committed the offense. Does that make sense? So what that means is this, lemme just ask you this. If it's not how big the offense is, but how important the relationship is, who are the most likely people to accrue a significant debt to you? Who? Your family, your mom, your dad, your siblings, your wife. She is

candidate number one, because you didn't pick your family, but you picked your wife in some ways. You kind of got stuck for better or for worse with your family. But when you picked your girl, you're saying, if everyone on planet Earth, I'm choosing to trust you. And if she fails, that's deep betrayal as well as your children and grandchildren. So what you need to know is, um, we have a debt to God and people also have a debt to us. And the way that we treat those people should be based upon how our God treats us. So Jesus forgives our debt. Here's what Jesus says on the cross. Um, father forgive them for they do not know what they're doing. This is what the theologians, the Bible teachers will call the seven final words or seven words from the cross. And the word here is forgive. Um, what's really interesting, I've shared this before, but in case you haven't heard it, they then took a sponge and they shoved it in Jesus' mouth. That sponge was part of the military deployment kit for a field soldier in the Roman army. A sponge was part of their kit for being out in the field. And what they would do, they would sop it in wine vinegar as an antiseptic, and then they would put it on the end of a stick and they would use it to clean themselves after they went to the bathroom. This is the equivalent of ancient toilet paper. It has the taste of a soldier's bowel movement on it. So here is Jesus hanging on the cross. Everyone is casting lots in their gambling to see how long it will endure until he dies. And in that moment, Jesus could have called an angelic army. Jesus could have called a bitter vengeful airstrike from heaven and obliterated everyone. Jesus with the breath of his mouth, could have slain all of his enemies. But instead he prayed, forgive them. He chose forgiveness instead of bitterness. And then to shut him up, they literally, the soldiers did shove their sponge in his mouth so that the remaining words that Jesus speaks are with the taste of the bowel movement of a soldier on his lips. How many of us at this point, even if we were choosing forgiveness, this is where we would pivot to bitterness, be like, I love you, and they stick their toilet paper in your mouth. You're like, okay, being nice is over. I'm, I can't turn the other cheek like I'm out of cheeks. You know, there's no more cheeks to turn here and, uh, it's gonna be a Liam Neeson type. You know, there's gonna be a little vengeance here. Instead, Jesus then continues to intercede and he says, it is finished. And I want you to know that in that moment, Jesus accomplished, uh, the consequence and penalty for sin. He died in our place for our sins. And a couple things about this. Number one, I need you to know that if you belong to Jesus Christ, you are totally and completely and eternally forgiven. When Jesus died, he died for all of your sins, past, present, and future. Don't let the enemy condemn you or shame you, right? That you are forgiven. And I need you to know that in addition, here's the good news, God isn't bitter toward you. And that means when you are suffering, God isn't punishing you. He already punished Jesus. And I need you to know this. There is no relationship unless there's forgiveness. You couldn't have a relationship with God unless he forgave you. And the truth is, you can't have a relationship with anyone unless you forgive them. So as men, we've gotta decide, do I want to be lonely and broken with bitterness? Or do I wanna be healed and reconciled with forgiveness? And let me talk about what happens to men. Because men, what happens is this, we reach a point where we have to decide there's that proverbial fork in the road. They did something. And then we need to respond. Here's what I, I just sense I'm supposed to tell you. Don't respond to them. Do respond to him in that moment when it's your wife, in that moment, when it's your friend who betrays you, like Judas, in that moment when it is your employer who guts you to benefit themselves, okay? In that moment, when it's your own children that have abandoned you or betrayed you in that moment, don't react to them. Respond to him. Don't treat them the way they treat you. Treat them the way Jesus treats you. That's the big idea. And, and, and in this moment, you're gonna need to just stop and just pray for an anointing in the Holy Spirit. Like, God, you gotta help me. 'cause everything in me is a man. How many of you guys are like me? You're a counterpuncher by nature. I am a counterpuncher by nature. We had a guy recently attend the church, big guy. And he said, you know, I picked this church. I said, why? He said, he's a big dude. He said, he said, I knew if I punched you, you'd hit me back. I was like, well, that's a, that's a weird way to choose your church. You know, like, but thank you. Uh, you don't need to field test that idea. Just trust me. I will return fire. I'm just, I'm a counter puncher by nature. But sometimes meekness is, you can win the fight and you choose to lose the fight, and you let God enter into the fight. And that's faith. Here's what happens to men who in that moment choose vengeance and bitterness to go on the offense and counter punch rather than to forgive, to respond to Jesus and to invite God. Number one, bitter men become

immoral men. This is a terrifying and haunting verse for men. Hebrews 12, 15 and 16. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God. That no root of bitterness or any landscapers in the house, any guys that, uh, still do their own yard work. What happens if you don't pull the root of a weed up? It comes back and it multiplies. Bitterness is in your soul like a weed in your yard. If you don't pull up the root, it comes back. Some of you guys have gotten angry and bitter and frustrated and vengeful, and you ch you're like, okay, that's it. I'm cutting it off. But she didn't get the root. Six months later, 12 months later, six years later, 12 years later, here it comes back, it springs up and it causes trouble. And by it many become defiled and see to it that no one is sexually immoral or unholy. This is what's interesting. Where does sexual immorality come from? Bitterness. Let me say this. Men, men who struggle with sexual sin, the root is bitterness. Um, this is where I just verbal process. Some of you, your bitterness is against your wife. Like, you know what, God, she's not the woman that works for me. Um, she's not taking care of me. She's not respecting me. Um, she's not sleeping with me, therefore I'm bitter against her. If you're bitter against your wife, what happens eventually sexual immorality? Because then you can justify your behavior. In addition, I feel like I'm supposed to say this as I verbal process. Some of you are bitter against God, and that's why you struggle with sexual immorality. Now, you may not say this publicly, um, but you're bitter against God. You're like, God, this is not the life I wanted. This is not the marriage I signed up for. These are not the vows that we agreed to. Um, oh, can I be honest with you? I mean, we're on the internet, so it's a little scary. I feel like I'm just supposed to be honest with you. So Grace and I, my wife, she's wonderful. I love her with my whole heart. We've been faithfully married for more than 30 years. When I met her, we started sleeping together. I wasn't a Christian. She was a pastor's daughter, not walking with a Lord. Okay? So this is worst case scenario, just so you know. It's somebody like, well, mark did it. Like, I'm lucky I'm not on fire. Don't tempt fate, okay? Like, just, but so we're sleeping together and I'm thinking, well, this is great. Um, you know, 'cause I'm heterosexual. And so, um, and so I got saved and then I, I read the Bible. I was like, we gotta stop sleeping together. So we stopped sleeping together. 'cause that's what the Bible said. And I confirmed it with my pastor. Um, my, I'll be honest, I'll be totally honest with you, Frick. I wasn't planning on being this honest, but like, so the first, so if you're a Bible scholar, you do word studies. My first word study was fornication. Okay? Because I wanted to make sure that I had to stop, okay? That's how committed I was to this lifestyle. So I'll be honest with you, all my Bible studies started with a deep dive on the Greek word fornication. And I came to find out that the literal translation is Mark Driscoll. So, you know, uh, and so, so I stopped sleeping with Grace. And then I thought, uh, we would, it is like pause. Like we'll just hit pause, get married, and then boom, we'll hit play. And now that we're with the Lord, it'll be like, fast forward and I hit play. There's more pause. It wasn't what I was hoping. Does anybody know what I'm talking about? It wasn't quite, I was hoping for in my marriage, like I'm thinking we're gonna go to Cirque de Sole, get some ideas, you know, like, this is gonna be incredible. Probably shouldn't have said that, but that's what I'm thinking. Okay? So then we're married for a while and I'm like, Hey man, Jesus, I stopped and now we're married. Like, whoop, whoop, give a brother a break. You know, help me out here. And it wasn't what I wanted. I was bitter against my wife for about a decade. Now, I did love her and I was a Christian, um, and I was faithful to her, but in my heart, I was bitter. And I wasn't just bitter against her. I was bitter against God. 'cause it's like, God, I married this girl and I'm pretty sure there's the girl you wanted me to marry. And it's, I'm not getting the outcome that I want. Okay? Um, you and I can get bitter against our woman, and we can get bitter against our Lord thinking this isn't what I wanted. And for men, one of the hardest things is not to control the outcome, right? There are two kinds of men control freaks and dead men, okay? Those are the two kinds of men. How many of you men, if you're gonna put the effort in, you want to determine the outcome. Yeah. Well, sometimes you put the effort in, you're like, that's not the outcome I wanted. I was bitter against my wife for many, many years. Um, and then I found out that she was sexually assaulted before I met her. And she was a trauma victim. I didn't know that. Well, now I realize she's not rejecting me. And the reason God put us together was not for her to frustrate me, but for me to serve and heal her. 'cause it's his daughter before it's my wife. Okay? So what what I don't want to do for you guys is just show up and be like, here's what the Bible says. Do it. I wanna be honest with you. We wanna do real men, not just religious men are ridiculous men. Okay? And so I'll just say that for every

man, I think bitterness is a great struggle. And I would say for me as a man, it has been a profound struggle. But what happens is, if we allow bitterness, the Bible tells us here, it leads to sexual immorality. So if you're a guy here, you're like, I've got a work spouse, some chick I'm too emotionally attached to, I really got a pretty serious porn habit. Or I'm a guy who's not being faithful to his wife, then ultimately the issue is not just sexual with your hands, it's bitterness in your heart. And that's the root until that bitterness is dug out and you're forgiving, you're not gonna be a man who has self-control. In addition, bitter men become broken men. Uh, Matthew 18, there's the parable of the unforgiving servant. Jesus tells it in this section. Previously, he talks about a man being sinned against and offended. And then he tells this story so contextually, it's about a man who is sinned against. And the story that Jesus tells is this, there's two guys and they have a debt. Again, the debt here is financial, but it is showing the debt of sin. So one guy, let's say he owes a million dollars, he can't pay it back. He's, he's over his skis. He goes to the man, uh, to whom he owes the money. And he literally just pleads for mercy. He's like, I know I owe a million bucks. I can't even make the interest only payment. Please don't take my house. Please don't take my wife. Please don't take my kids. Because what he had done in that day, he put up everyone and everything in his household as collateral for the debt. And this means that this guy now gets your wife and your kids are his slaves, and his wife is your concubine. And his house is now, um, your house. And now you gotta go home and tell your wife and kids, sorry, honey, you're a concubine. Sorry, kids. Your slaves dad failed in his financial dealings. I mean, catastrophic. So he goes to this man and he pleads, please give me mercy. Please forgive me. And the guy does it. The guy not only gives him more time to pay off his debt, doesn't even renegotiate the deal terms, just forgives it. Can you imagine a bank like this, right? You're all chuckling. So, but you go to the bank, you're like, I know I got a nice house and I can't afford it. Could you please just say, you forgive me, right? Uh, and, and, and the bank does. The bank's like, you know what, we'll forgive the debt. So this wealthy man just forgives the debt. You know what? He just received forgiveness. Did he earn it? Nope. Does he deserve it? No. Is it pure grace? Absolutely. You think this guy would be really happy? He goes home, tells his wife and kids, good news. We're debt free now. Right? We accepted Dave Ramsey in our heart, we have no debt. You know, um, in addition, honey, you could be my wife, not his concubine kids. You're free, not slaves. Next thing you know, knock on the door. It's, uh, let's say it's a guy that, uh, that he's in business with, or it's his landscaper, and this guy owes him like a thousand bucks in comparison to the million bucks. And the guy is asking for the same thing. Could you give me some time to pay off my debt? Could we renegotiate the a PR? Could we figure out the deal terms? And what he says is, no, there's no forgiveness. There's no grace, and there's no mercy. You pay me everything, or I'm gonna put the screws to you and I'm gonna wreck you. And what he says is, if you're forgiven and you're not forgiving, you're like that man. See, we tend to think of all the people that have done us wrong, but we forget how wrong we've done God. And if God's willing to forgive us and we're not willing to forgive them, we're no better than that man. Now, there's a haunting line in Matthew, uh, 18 where it says that the man who was forgiven but not forgiving, he gets actually thrown in jail. That the man who forgave him reverses the deal, throws him in jail. And it says that he is tormented. Uh, depending upon your English translation, he is tormented by the jailer. This is where Jesus says something haunting. Similarly, he says, uh, I won't forgive you if you don't forgive them. That's a paraphrase. That's a Scooby do verse. That's a ro soys. That's a scary verse, right? You don't forgive me unless I forgive them. That's kind of the analogy in the story. And the tormenting from the jailer. Most bible commentaries believe that the jailer is a picture of Satan, that if you're unforgiven, you're in bondage. Um, you're not free, you're enslaved. Satan is like that, that he, he literally imprisons people and he torments them. What that means is if you're a man who is unforgiving, you're going to be demonically oppressed and tormented. You're gonna, statistically, there's a guy, uh, named, uh, Fred Luskin. He wrote a book, uh, called, uh, forgive for Good. And he was at Stanford. He ran something called the Forgiveness Project. And he wasn't even a Christian, but he said, if you don't forgive, your blood pressure goes up. If you don't forgive, you have a stroke earlier than other men. If you don't forgive, you have mental health problems more susceptible to suicidal ideation, angry outbursts to suicide than other men Do you know why? When you don't forgive, you're literally inviting Satan and demons. You're inviting the jailer and all of his minions up into your life. Some of you men know exactly what this feels like. You've got bitterness

and vengeance and unforgiveness, and you feel oppressed because you're oppressed. You feel tormented because you're tormented. You feel attacked because you're attacked. And it starts to manifest itself in men with depression and anger and anxiety and vengeance and outbursts. This is why some guys are like a grenade with a pin pulled, and other guys are scared of that version of themselves. So they self-medicate with alcohol and drugs and porn, and they're just trying to dial themselves back to a manageable, controllable state. And one of the stupidest things we tell men is that time heals all wounds. It doesn't, time doesn't heal any wounds. What's true physically is true spiritually. If you get shot, just say, well, I'm just gonna wait. Time heals all wounds. Um, you won't be waiting long. What's true physically is true spiritually. So what happens is bitter men become broken men. And here's what I know about men. Some men are bad. They're just evil sons of the devil. Other men are bad. They're just broken someone or something in life has broken them, and this is the broken version of them. And so ultimately, the Holy Spirit can heal them if they're willing to forgive. And what that does, it literally releases them from the jail cell of torment and oppression, and it frees them to be new men and live a new life. Um, I'll share a story with you of what a, a bitter man is a broken man, and ultimately a bitter man who is a broken man becomes a self-destructive man. I, I'm just gonna verbal process at this point. You know, something as of the Lord, when it's a win-win, you know, something is of the flesh when it's a win lose, you know, something is of the devil. When it's a lose lose, it's like a suicide mission. Like, I'm must, I'm gonna blow myself up to blow you up. It's like, what kind of plan is that? That's demonic. Some years ago, we moved into a house. Uh, my wife, grace and I, when our kids were little, I don't think we had all five kids at the time, and there was a house, uh, nearby. I won't say the details. Um, and she loved the house We drive by, she's like, oh my gosh. You know, like, I love that house. That's my favorite house. And so one day I, uh, I pulled over and I was talking to the guy that owned it. I lived nearby. And uh, I was like, yeah, you know, my name's so and so live around the corner. Neighbor saying, hi, good, good to meet you. And, uh, he custom built the house. I said, so tell me about your house, how long you lived in. He is like, oh, just, you know, a year or two. I was like, wow, it's beautiful house. He looked at me, he says, do you wanna buy it? I was like, well, didn't you just custom build this house? He's like, yep, this was our forever dream home. We've been saving up our whole life. We got it built about a year or two ago. Do you want it? You wanna buy it? I was like, wow. I said, uh, I said, well, I would love to. It's my wife's dream home. Every time we drive by, she makes sure that I'm aware of this fact. Uh, I said, so I would love to buy it from you. I said, but I don't think I can qualify for your price point. He said, uh, well, what could you qualify? I was like, well, what do you want? What do you think it's worth? And he said, well, we did an evaluation. We're getting ready to go to market. It's not on the market yet. He said, I think it's worth here. I was like, yeah, I can't afford that. Like, I'm a young pastor with multiple kids and the people's republic of Seattle. I'm not there, right? That's where I'm at. And so I was like, yeah, I can't afford it. And I said, he said, well, why don't you make an offer? I said, well, I don't wanna offend you. I said, you know, I said, I I don't wanna come in with some low ball offer. And he said, quote, well, the reason we're getting a divorce is, uh, my kids have grown up and I hate my wife. And even though it's our dream home, I don't want to be in it with my wife. It feels like a haunted house when she's around. He said, so we're getting divorced. He said, why don't you send me a low ball offer and I'll accept it just to tick her off. Okay? I was like, well, pastor Marks doubled into an opportunity here, okay? Uh, I said, so let me get this straight. You want me to send you a low ball offer for the dream home? He's like, yep, okay. I mean, you know, that's the word of the Lord, you know, I'm his servant. So, um, so I sent in a low ball offer and then her realtor called and was like, yeah, we got your offer. Just wanted to let you know we're not gonna accept it. It's too low, da da da. I said, well, that's weird. 'cause the husband said to send it in. And, uh, she said, oh, the husband. So then I get a call back and the wife is like, I will take that offer and give you all these concessions and financial kickbacks to even lower the deal to tick off the husband. Okay? So, so then that dude actually came over to my house and he's like, I can't believe she took the offer. He is like, he's like, I'm gonna give you more concessions and I'll give you a look. He, so he's, so they are, here's what they're doing to the value of their home. Very quickly depreciating it. They're both losing money. You know why they're bitter? She's like, I'm gonna hurt him. He's like, I'm gonna hurt her. I'm like, you guys are splitting this asset. And they're like, I don't care if we run it down to zero, as long as I put the screws to the other one.

So we got a really good deal on a house. Um, Okay. And I don't know if that was godly or not, but I'm just telling you that's what happened. But this is what happened. When you become a bitter man, you become a broken man. Eventually you become a crazy man. Eventually you become a self-destructive man. And all of a sudden it was like, I don't care how much I lose or how much I hurt, as long as they lose and they hurt. Yeah. That's where broken men get when they live in bitterness. Let me move fairly quickly here. Um, forgiving men become anointed men. Let me just read this to you. This is the section of scripture in 30 plus years as a pastor, I have used in more counseling sessions than any verse I've ever used in my whole life. Ephesians four, be angry. Okay? Anger isn't a sin. It depends if it is righteous or unrighteous anger. If the anger is to defend the honor of God or a woman or child as a man, that is more likely to be good in righteous anger. If it's just you getting hurt, you getting offended, you getting triggered, you getting butt hurt, then that's probably not the righteous anger of God. But not all anger is a sin. Jesus gets angry and God gets angry. So there's not positive and negative emotions. There are emotions that are in the spirit and emotions that are in the flesh, anger in the flesh, deadly anger in the spirit, motivating to do good. And stop evil. Be angry and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger. What he's talking about here is when you're frustrated, you feel it. Okay? Some of you guys are a little more passive aggressive and, and you just kind of carry your stress and your anxiety. Some of you guys are more just aggressive and we could tell when you're upset. You just wear it on your face and, and you show it in your body and your disposition. But what he says is, when you feel the anger come, make sure that you don't let it linger too long. Uh, pastor Jimmy Evans, uh, one of my pastors, he says, today's anger is not a problem. Yesterday's anger is a big problem because here's what happens as a man. One day you're angry. The next day there's somebody else with something else. The next day there's somebody else with something else. And let's say you live 60, 70, 80 years, guess what you've got? You've got an incredibly long line of people and things that have made you unhappy and upset and even angry. And I'm not even going to say that they're unjustified or wrong. Let's say that your judgment is a hundred percent correct and every one of those offenses is qualified and justifiable for anger. But if you let them stack up, they're going to avalanche and they're gonna bury you. Don't let the sun go down on your anger. So deal with today's frus, forgive today and start with a fresh account tomorrow. And do not give opportunity to who the devil. Satan comes to bitter men. Satan comes to angry men. Satan comes to hurting men, and that's his entry point. And he will lie to you, I think if I remember correct, in the Greek here, it's dala, he's a liar. John eight, Jesus says, he's the father of lies. He's gonna enter it at this point, and he's gonna talk to you. Say, you know what? You're right. That was wrong. They deserve it. You know, get back at them. You know, forget your wife. You know, you've, you've earned a right to go out and have a good day. You, he is going to whisper some things in your ear. And, and lemme just verbal process. When Satan whispers in your ear just as a, just as a qualifier, I just feel like I was supposed to tell you this. It's usually in the second person, you deserve this. You should do that. You didn't get blank. Most of us don't talk to ourself in the second person or in the first person, rather. Um, you know, when I talk to myself, it's, I, I am gonna go get a ham sandwich and then I'm gonna take a nap. Most of it's only like, I don't say to myself, you're gonna get a ham sandwich and you're gonna take a nap. 'cause I'm not crazy. But when, Excuse Me, when you hear in that, when you hear you, oftentimes that's the father of lies. The diaas, the devil speaking to you, and he's lying to you. And if you believe that, then you're gonna act on that lie and you won't know the truth. And Jesus says, if you know the truth, the truth sets you free. And if you believe the lie, Matthew 18, you go to jail. You're not free. And you get tormented by the jailer, the devil, the diaas. Some of you men, I just sense this in the spirit, there are some lies that you believed from a very young age. You Are sinned against, you were abused, you were neglected. Uh, your girlfriend cheated on you. Your dad abandoned you. Your father hit you. Somebody molested you, somebody bullied you. Something happened at a young age for many of you men. And in that moment, you, you were sinned against. It was evil, it was wrong, it was unjust. But in that moment, you got angry and unforgiving. And what happened in that moment? There was a lie that was told to you that has really marked your soul and it's guided your response pattern ever since. And God wants you to forgive them, heal from that. The truth sets you free. Get out of that prison cell of oppression and judgment and just go live as a son of God who's dearly beloved. Let no corrupting talk. Come outta your mouth. You know that

you're bitter by what you say. And I would say by what you type, can you find the bitter people on social media? They're very easy to spot. And so if, if what comes out of you is corrupting talk, just anger and violence and conflict and add-on collisions, you're not doing very well. 'cause that's not the spirit. But only such as is good for building up as fits the occasion that may give grace to those who here and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Man, we're really going deep tonight. Um, this isn't in my notes, but I'll just tell you what this means. So God, the Holy Spirit is on standby and he's like, let me help, let me help. I know you're angry. Let me help. I know you're frustrated. Let me help. I know you're bitter. Let me help. I know that was wrong. Let me help. And he's just, let me help 'cause he's the, he's the helper. So he is there to help. Jesus said, he is the helper. He is there to help. And what he says is, if you don't allow him to come and help you, guess what? You grieve him. Um, the Holy Spirit reminds me, I was preaching at the men's event about a year ago, and I did a word study on this. I forgot all about it. The word there for grieve in the original Greek text, um, it's the same word for trauma. This, this is, um, some of this is, this is for some of you men, some of some of us. We feel this where something happens. And, and it feels like assault, brokenness, trauma, betrayal. And the Holy Spirit feels the exact same way. If you don't let him help you, The Holy Spirit, he loves you so much and he's so concerned about your wellbeing and he knows that he's the only one who can help you. And that if you don't invite him and he doesn't help you, you're going to hurt yourself. Um, I just, how many of you have got a son and you love him and he just keeps making the same damn decisions? He just keeps self-destructing and being a fool. And you're frustrated and you're devastated and you're broken hearted and you're like, please let me help. And he doesn't. Like I love you. I'm here. Just please listen. Let me help. The Holy Spirit feels like that. Every time you and I are hurting or bitter or broken and we don't invite him in, the trauma that we're experiencing is nothing compared to then the trauma that he is experiencing. I just feel like I'm supposed to say this, I just get up and kind of prophesy a little bit at men's. But like, how many of you men, I'll just say this, you have kids and watching them suffer is worse than you suffering. Is that true? Yeah. As a man, do you get that? Yeah. Like your kid's sick, maybe they have chronic illness or they're hospitalized. You're like, God, please let me trade places with them. Yeah. Like, I love them. Let, let me, let me, let me get in their place and put them in my place. That's what the Holy Spirit wants to do. He, he wants to, he wants to heal you. And if you don't let him heal you, it breaks him. This is where the Holy Spirit is not just a thing or a force, it's a person. Jesus says in John's gospel, he think about this, how many times in our life as men has the Holy Spirit been like, please let me help. You're like, Nope, I'm angry. Nope, I'm hurt. No, I'm bitter. No, I'm broken. No, I'm frustrated. He's like, don't do that. The jailer comes, let me set you free. He goes on, do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let how much bitterness, oh, it's like digging up that root and wrath where you're upset and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you along with all malice. Be kind to one another. Tenderhearted. Here's the big line. What forgiving one another is God in Christ forgave you. And sometimes it's like, God, I can't forgive them. He's like, I forgave you, you forgive them and then you let me deal with them. This is where faith is required. Um, I'm over time. Um, let me share one story and then I'm gonna pray for you. And I've been praying for you all week. 'cause I feel like this is a sacred meeting with God. I've got more scriptures we don't have time for. Um, lemme just tell you a story that changed my life. I'm a, I'm a justice vengeance. Right and wrong. Black and white guy just am down the fairway. And there are some people and things in my life that I won't name or I won't even get into. But I felt very, uh, attacked, neglected, used, abused, and sinned against. And some of it for me is very public. And, uh, I was really struggling with anxiety and bitterness. And sometimes if you're a man, uh, you can start to fantasize about dark ops. You know what I'm talking about? Like, what could I do that the cops wouldn't find out about? Um, and so, um, I got a call from somebody, uh, he's now become a friend. His name is Dr. Ort Kendall. He'll be here to preach in April. He wrote a book called Total Forgiveness, and that would be a great book for you if you struggle with bitterness. And I went to his house and he and his wife adorable. Were sitting on their couch. He's in his eighties now. And we sat down and had a conversation for hours that changed my life. And he told me the story of Joseph, uh, the story of Joseph in the Old Testament. It's like, kind of Genesis 38 through 50. So Joseph grew up in a family where he was a bit over mothered, under fathered. He was a bit spoiled. He was the favorite, which was wrong. He

brothers got very jealous. And, um, they decided that they were going to destroy him. Okay? If you know the story, uh, the brothers, um, threw him in a hole. He's a, he's a young man, threw him in a hole. Imagine the big brothers throwing the little brother in a hole in the middle of the desert. And then they sold him as a slave into another nation. Now their brother is, he's gone forever. Uh, they fake his death. They put a little blood on his clothes and they go home and they tell dad he died. Okay? He died. Now Dad thinks his son is dead. He's gotta have the, the funeral and the heart funeral and the grief and the loss. And this is his youngest son. I've got three sons. I couldn't imagine losing any of my sons. My youngest son is here. He's here. The thought of hearing your youngest son is dead. Like where's the body? It's gone. Like, you can't, you can't even, you can't even hold your son and say goodbye to his corpse. Then Joseph gets taken as a slave into Egypt, which is a godless demonic country. He doesn't know the language, he doesn't know the people, doesn't know the customs. Um, this is not the life that he wanted. So then he goes to work for a guy named Potiphar. And Potiphar is a political leader and ruler, and Potiphar's wife wants to sleep with Joseph. How many of you guys at this point you're like, look, I'm a slave. I'm in another country and I'm living in a big house, and if some hot chick wants to sleep with me, I'm in. Okay. Okay. The honest guys chuckle. Uh, the dishonest guys are like, I don't know. I would, I would read Leviticus and pray about it. No, you wouldn't, right? Um, And at this point, he's a slave, which means he has to do what the master tells him to do. So he can justify in his mind, sleeping with a guy's wife. And instead what he says is, I can't sin against my God or my master. I won't do it. So then he flees, she grabs his clothes. What does she accuse him of? Rape. Okay, your brother sold you into slavery. Now you're being publicly accused by a high profile politician's, wife of rape, and you are a virgin. He gets convicted, guilty, registered sex offender, and then he gets thrown in prison. In prison, there's some dudes that have some dreams and he has this prophetic anointing in the Lord to interpret dreams. It says in the story of Joseph on a few occasions that even the non-Christians look at him and say The spirit of God is in him. They know that there's an anointing of the Holy Spirit on Joseph's life. So he says, well, let me interpret the dreams that you're having. And then when you get outta prison, remember me, please get me outta prison. He interprets the dreams. They get delivered from prison. Do they deliver him? No. How many men at this point, you'd be like, I'm officially a bitterness. My brother sold me into slavery. I'm a registered sex offender who's a virgin. I'm in prison. And I got some dudes out and they forgot about their oath to get me out. If there was ever a guy to choose bitterness, I think Joseph would be near the top of the list. Ultimately, he gets raised up to be the right hand of the Pharaoh, the leader in Egypt. He's literally sitting in the Jesus seat at the right hand of the God in that counterfeit demonic nation. And then a famine hits. And if you know the story, and brothers are starving to death. So they go to Egypt looking for some food, and they show up in front of Joseph who's now overseeing all of the grain and all of the wealth and all the prosperity of Egypt. He looks like an Egyptian. He sounds like an Egyptian. He is not seen his brothers for a very long time. They don't recognize him, but he recognizes them. And as soon as they came, it says that he had to go into the other room because he was so emotional. He was, he was weeping. It's because he had already forgiven his brothers. And when he saw them, he had already forgiven them. So he had forgiveness for them, not bitterness toward them, but he still didn't trust them because forgiveness and trust are two things. Forgiveness is free, but trust is earned. Just 'cause you, just because you forgive someone, doesn't mean you trust them. So what he told them, what he asked, he's like, well, tell me about your father. They're like, well, he's an elderly man. All of a sudden he is like, my dad's alive. I didn't know his brothers go home. It's a series of events. Finally, they come back and in Genesis 50, the story reaches its zenith. And here's Joseph before his brothers, and they are now in his country. He is number two in command. He has all power and all money. He controls the economy. Guess what he can do to his brothers who aren't even citizens, whatever he wants. He can kill 'em, he can torture 'em. He can treat 'em like a POW. He can do whatever he wants. You know what he does? He blesses them. Jesus says, not only to forgive, but to bless. How do you know you've forgiven someone? You bless them. Blessing is the test of forgiving. If you can't bless them, you haven't forgiven them. 'cause not only does God forgive us, he blesses us. Joseph forgives them and he blesses them. And it says that his brothers, they're worried because they're thinking he is for sure gonna put the screws to us. And instead he says, he asked this pregnant question, I think it's in Genesis 50 19. He asks, am I in the place of God? The answer

is he was, he was sitting in the judgment seat for the nation, and he was worshiped like a God, and he could do anything he wanted to them, and he chose to forgive them. Then he says in Genesis 50 20, it's this pregnant line. He says, what you intended for evil, God used for good and the saving of many lives as men, when we are offended, you need to say That was evil, but I'm gonna forgive you and trust that somehow God will use your evil for his good. Okay? This is the story of Jesus. The greater Joseph, the most evil thing in the history of the world was the murder of Jesus. And God used it for good in the saving of many lives, including our own. That's why we're here. So in that moment, Joseph forgave and blessed. And here's what my friend Rt said. He said, uh, the deeper the forgiving, the greater the anointing, had Joseph not forgiven his brothers and his slave traitors and Potiphar's wife and the crooked, corrupt court system, and also forgiven the guys who didn't get him outta jail when he interpreted their dreams. Had he not done all of that forgiving, he wouldn't have all of that anointing. Let me say this, man. The reason that he could rise to that position is because he had forgiven for decades. And, and here's what RT said. He looked at me and he said, uh, he said, he said, mark, he can either have bitterness or anointing, but you can't have both. And he said, you've got a decision to make. If you're gonna be bitter, you will have no anointing. If you choose to forgive, you'll have anointing. And the deeper the forgiving, the greater the anointing. Does that make sense? I love you guys. I think that the thing that is haunting you and is halting your anointing for many of you is bitterness and unforgiveness. Okay? And I want to get that out of the way so that the spirit of God can flow freely in your life. So I, I just wanna pray with you and for you, and I'm over time and I appreciate your patience with me. But if you're a man and this resonates with you and you're like, this is the day that I need to forgive, I'm gonna ask you in just a moment to stand and it's a public testimony in front of brothers who will lay hand and pray on you. And then I'm gonna pray over you. And for some of you, it's someone or something that you've been holding onto for a very long time, and it is hindered and haltered his anointing on your life. And today, what I want you to do is I want you to just forgive them, and I want you to release that. And I want you to trust that into the hands of the same God who dealt with your sin, to deal with their sin. And that I want the anointing of the Holy Spirit to start to heal you so you can be a joyful man and an enjoyable man, A man who's not broken, but healed for your wife and for your kids, and for your friends. And so, if you're that man today, and I just feel like asking if God has, uh, brought someone in, in your mind or on your heart, that right now, this is the day you've gotta forgive them, and we just need to meet with God for a moment. Would you men have the courage to stand and then we'll pray together? If you're those men, would you just stand so we could pray with you? Any other men that want to join them, we love you. We're here. We're here to help. And we honor men. We honor men who use the gospel of Jesus Christ. Okay? So for those of you men that have stood, would you please just open your hands? And it's your way of saying, I'm gonna let it go. And for those men who are around them, would you lay a hand on them and intercede and join your faith with theirs? For those men who are standing, please just pray after me. Heavenly Father, thank you for forgiving me. Thank you, forgiving me. Thank you for not being bitter against me. Thank you for allowing me bitter against me. Thank you for adopting me as your son. Thank you for adopting me as your son. I choose. I choose to treat my enemies. To treat my enemies. The way your son, the way your son has treated me, has treated me. I forgive them. I forgive them them, I release them. I release them. I bless them. I bless them. And I invite the Holy Spirit to bless me. Bless me. In Jesus' name. In Jesus' name. Amen. Feel free to take a seat, gentlemen. Thank you for praying with us. Um, we'll let you have some time around tables. Let's just jump to questions. We will release the live stream in the moment. Do you fully believe that God has forgiven you and Jesus Christ is not angry at you and is not punishing you? What did the Holy Spirit highlight in the talk for you? And then how can we pray for you? And I'll say this, I love you. I thank you for the honor of teaching you God's word. I'm proud of you, and I'm excited for what God has next.