



EPISODE TITLE: "By Whose Requirement?"

Forgiveness, Episode 2

Featured Guest: Bruce Van Blair

Bruce's interests keep him going in several different directions including the startup of a new house church (now streamed live from our Countryside Chapel), and most recently joining the Countryside community to begin our new ministry "Converging Paths," a partnership venture with the BTS Center in Bangor, Maine, exploring our vocational callings in our everyday workplaces, and our leadership in faith communities. Bruce has written a wide collection of sermons as well as several books, including *The Believer's Road*, and *In A Nutshell*.

Questions:

1. Are we required to grant forgiveness whenever someone asks for it? If not, what might be a situation where it would be appropriate to refuse to forgive someone, even if they did ask?
2. What stood out for you from Matthew 18:21-35?
3. Bruce discusses three layers of forgiveness; stopping the damage, recovering our own value, and restoring relationship. Why is each of those important? What is unique about each one?
4. Eric suggests that there are four steps to forgiveness; rebuking, repentance, revoking and restoration. How do you see this process working? Which step might be hardest for you?
5. What do you think Eric means when he says forgiveness is messy? How does that play out in real human relationships? When should we forgive many times, and when should we refuse to forgive?

Pneuma Divina Scripture: Matthew 18:21-35

²¹Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' ²²Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.'

²³'For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' ²⁹Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'

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