



Theme: 70 x 7 – The Road to Forgiveness

“Forgiving Ourselves to Develop the Heart of Forgiveness”

Sermon preached by Jeff Huber, February 11-12, 2023, at Summit Church, Durango

Weekly Memory Verse:

***¹ Oh, what joy for those
whose disobedience is forgiven,
whose sin is put out of sight! – Psalm 32:1***

VIDEO Forgiveness Sermon Bumper

SLIDE “Forgiving Ourselves to Develop the Heart of Forgiveness”

Today we conclude our sermon series on forgiveness by asking how we forgive ourselves so that we can develop the heart of forgiveness. We have been reading this book by Doctor Robert Enright who is known as the professor of forgiveness, doing research out of the University of Wisconsin in Madison on agape love and forgiveness.

GRAPHIC 8 Keys to Forgiveness

Several years ago I shared with you that there are now websites you can go to in order to apologize to people. Those websites have expanded exponentially in the past few years because so many of us carry burdens on our hearts as we hold onto bitterness, anger, or things we have done in the past. If you don't know how to get in contact with the people with whom you need to apologize, or if you want to give it a

trial run by apologizing anonymously, and then follow through a personal note, this is a great website that clearly is needed based on all the responses you find on it. www.perfectapology.com which will show you how to write or say a good apology, and give you a place to post anonymous apologies, like a confessional.

I'm sorry. You were waiting for the car to get out of the parking place so you could back in. I slipped in front of you. I had to do this because I was desperate to get into the store so I could use the men's room and there were no other spaces. My apologies. I hope you read this and understand. Signed, driver of gray Honda.

To all my high school classmates, I am so sorry for all the mornings that I came to school without brushing my teeth. I don't know where I got the idea that if I didn't eat, I didn't need to brush. I know you tried to hint, and I didn't get it. I'm really sorry.

Those are all kind of silly but there are some on the webpage where you could just feel the pain of losing out of the letter.

I am sorry for searching on Google Images for the leaked nude pictures. I am sorry, women, all women, for contributing to the violent nature that is behind this act. Breaking into privacy, I may as well have been the one generating the random screen names and passwords to break into the accounts. I am sorry for all the female actresses I have done this too. I apologize to the everyday women, for the disgusting amount of time that I have logged watching pornography. Searching for images and videos of teenage girls. I wish I could go back to my childhood and change it all and start over again.

I apologize to my sweet son who died almost a year ago from Leukemia. I am sorry I didn't have the ability to save you, I am grateful that you saved me. I am sorry you aren't here to hear me say I love you, and I am grateful you never questioned that Love. I

am sorry I will spend my life remembering you rather than discovering new things about you, and I am grateful for the life you lived. Sorrow and gratitude all wrapped up in one.

My dear beautiful son, I am so very sorry I chose such a wretched, damaged man, who became your stepdad. I did not realize that he was an abuser. This was a long time ago, but I still feel the flames of self-loathing and guilt over this. My son, you have turned out so well—you are so mature & so loving. I believe that I need to forgive myself, but it is so hard. The damage that my ex inflicted on you & me—it still feels nauseating. Please G-d, help me to forgive myself, and to open my heart to me. THANK YOU for this apology page for giving me an outlet to express my pain & grief. I am crying with gratitude.?????Bless you all.

I apologize to myself for making someone else responsible for me. I have been married twice, 7yrs the first marriage 25 years the second marriage, and I see how I sacrificed my self-respect to be in both relationships. It was easy to blame them it was hard to see I was equally responsible for the way they ended. I want to have mercy on myself, to give myself and my ex's kindness, so I can offer that to everyone... Praying for forgiveness towards myself that I may fully forgive others. Thank you for this place to write this.

These poignant stories echo something I often say to you as your pastor and is the reason God came in the person of Jesus to offer us forgiveness, mercy, and grace.

SLIDE We can't give what we don't have.

None of us gets out of this life without having these difficult moments, which is why Jesus talked about forgiveness more than anything else but money. When he healed people, he most often offered them forgiveness, knowing there was something inside of that wounded person holding them back. The theme verse for this series

comes from an interaction Jesus has in Matthew 18 with the first disciple he called to follow him.

BIBLE

21 Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?"

22 "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!"

SLIDE Forgiveness is a choice AND a journey.

Jesus is pointing us to this truth about what it means to be human. The truth is that forgiveness is absolutely essential to our lives. We can't survive in any family relationship without extending or asking for forgiveness. We can't see our working relationships prosper without forgiveness. We are not going to have any friends for the rest of our lives if we don't learn how to do forgiveness because we would move from one friendship to another because the truth is that something always happens in a relationship that causes brokenness or hurt, and someone needs to either offer forgiveness or seek it out and be willing to take the first step. Societies cannot stand unless there is a willingness for people on the two sides of any given equation to forgive those they disagree with. We need this as cultures and nations as well or we would forever be locked in constant world wars.

I was reading an article in Inc. Magazine this week that talked about the most effective leaders in business, and they found one thing in common. It was the ability to say these six words.

SLIDE "I was wrong."

SLIDE "I am sorry."

When we don't have the ability to say those 6 words, we cannot be most effective. What's worse is when we say "fake" apologies like, "I'm sorry YOU felt offended by what I said. I'm sorry YOU can't take a joke!" Apologies like that make it impossible to move to the next three

words we need to be willing to say to make any relationship work.

SLIDE I forgive you.

These nine words are essential to our lives, and while we can learn to say them, we also must learn to feel them in our hearts, which in some ways is much more difficult. Paul Tillich, the Greek 20th century theologian, wrote a sermon about 50 years ago entitled, ***“To Whom Much is Forgiven.”*** He had this to say.

SLIDE *Forgiveness is the divine answer to the question implied in our existence.*

Forgiveness is God’s answer to the question implied in our existence. What is the question implied in our existence? Here’s another letter from one of the apology websites.

My dear beautiful son, I am so very sorry I chose such a wretched, damaged man, who became your stepdad. I did not realize that he was an abuser. This was a long time ago, but I still feel the flames of self-loathing and guilt over this. My son, you have turned out so well—you are so mature & so loving. I believe that I need to forgive myself, but it is so hard. The damage that my ex inflicted on you & me—it still feels nauseating. Please G-d, help me to forgive myself, and to open my heart to me. THANK YOU for this apology page for giving me an outlet to express my pain & grief. I am crying with gratitude.?????Bless you all.

If you are the child in that apology who experienced abuse when you were little and your mother didn’t do anything to stop it, the question that is implied in our existence is, ***“How do I keep bitterness and anger and hate and the desire for revenge from consuming me?”*** Forgiveness is God’s answer to that question.

If you are the mother who is living with guilt because you didn’t step in, and you wished you had. You wished you had only known but you didn’t or a part of you lived in denial, then there are several

questions forgiveness is the answer to. ***“How can I be reconciled to the one I wronged? How can I ever make this right? How can my burden of guilt be removed?”*** Forgiveness is God’s answer to these questions. We all ask these kinds of questions if we were honest.

It may not be as serious as that story, but we have all struggled with these questions because we are human. Because we are human, we are going to make mistakes. Because we are human, we are going to hurt other people. Because we are human, and others are human, other people are going to hurt us and we must know this answer which is forgiveness. If we do not know this answer, then we find ourselves stumbling in the dark and looking for meaning to the entire purpose of life. That is how important forgiveness is when it comes to our existence as human beings.

The first thing we must do is something Suzanne Freedman talked about with me in our interview preparing for this series of sermons. Dr. Freedman is a professor at the University of Northern Iowa who does research, teaches, trains teachers in forgiveness, and was one of the main speakers at the International Conference for Agape Love and Forgiveness my wife and I attended this past summer. She was describing to me the 4 phases of forgiveness and it struck me how many of struggle with the very first one. Let’s take a listen.

VIDEO Dr. Suzanne Freedman Clip 1

We are all human and we all experience pain, and the first step in forgiving ourselves and being able to forgive others is to be honest with our feelings.

SLIDE Be honest about our “uncomfortable” feelings.

SLIDE Be honest about what is ours and what is not.

Rather than saying feeling are “negative,” think about them as uncomfortable. The scriptures talk about this need for clarity in our memory verse for the week from Psalm 32.

BIBLE

2 Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty!

I remind you that the word sin is meant to simply describe how we get separated from God, each other, and ourselves. In many ways, the first step towards forgiveness is simply being honest about how others have wronged us, and how we have hurt others. If we claim too much responsibility, there is guilt and shame, if we don't claim enough, then we run the risk of not asking for forgiveness when we need to do that.

The writer of the Psalms felt this weight and owned it, which is why we find seven penitential Psalms. These are Psalms in which you can feel the writer in anguish as they are separated from God. They feel a strong sense of guilt because of their brokenness. The psalmist speaks of this in Psalm 38.

BIBLE

4 My guilt overwhelms me—it is a burden too heavy to bear. 5 My wounds fester and stink because of my foolish sins. 6 I am bent over and racked with pain. All day long I walk around filled with grief. 7 A raging fever burns within me, and my health is broken. 8 I am exhausted and completely crushed. My groans come from an anguished heart.

This idea of feeling crushed and exhausted and having a weight that is too heavy to bear is a helpful image. I shared this image with you before, but I find it a powerful enough metaphor to use it again. When we don't ask for God's forgiveness and we don't seek to be reconciled to God through repentance, which we will talk about in a minute, we carry around with us guilt and the weight of our sins. We may not even recognize it at first because some of them feel very small at first. These small rocks that I am putting in my backpack can represent a small insult or the little jab that we gave to someone. It might be simply

walking away from someone who needs help, or how we treated somebody at the cash register at the gas station, or the way we snapped at our spouses or our children.

These larger rocks can represent those things which are more serious and sometimes are intentional things that we say or do which caused hurt. Maybe it's that lie we told at work. So long as we don't confess them, and repent, they become this weight that we carry around on our backs. Some of them, like these larger stones, become quite heavy. If somebody found out about these things, then we might lose our jobs. We might find ourselves in violation of the law and looking at jail time or other consequences. Every so often, something so significant happens that if it really became known, we might lose our family or the things most important to us. If we don't come to God and repent and ask for healing and deliverance, we carry them with us. Forgiving ourselves begins with being honest.

So long as we keep insisting on carrying them, we find a burden after a time that becomes overwhelming. We can carry them in the beginning, like this backpack which is weighed down with rocks. We might not even notice it very much, but the longer that we carry it, the heavier it becomes. Especially as we age, the weight of our sins can cause us to hunch over and can literally damage our bodies as well as our souls. We can't run anymore, and we find ourselves winded when we just try to walk. Joy and strength are sapped out of us. We find ourselves feeling like the Psalmist in Psalm 32 that we read earlier.

BIBLE

3 When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. 4 Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat.

Our guilt overwhelms us like a burden that is too heavy to bear. We keep carrying it and we add to it and until we repent and come

before God, that distance between us and God becomes wider and wider. God becomes more distant.

The good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ is that God is rich in mercy and abounding in steadfast love. God is taking the initiative to heal us from what is broken. God wants to take a burden lifted from our shoulders. More than any other world religion I'm aware of, the Christian faith is one of grace and redemption and healing and forgiveness and mercy.

Before Jesus was born the Angel Gabriel called him Jesus, Emmanuel, the Savior. God took the initiative to save us from ourselves and from our broken places. As Jesus began his public ministry, he went about preaching the good news of the kingdom of God. He called people to repent, which meant to turn around and go in a new direction. Repentance is about embracing the forgiveness offered by truly longing to live life anew. Remember that Jesus primarily ministered to those who felt estranged from God and from the church, which was the Jewish synagogue of the first century. He was constantly looking for the sinners, the tax collectors, the prostitutes, the thieves, the outcasts and the broken who were lost and far away from God. Jesus wanted the pious religious folks, like you and I can get sometimes if we're honest, to recognize our need for salvation, because we fall short and make mistakes just like everybody else and stray from the path.

Jesus ate with the broken hearted, which was meant to be an intimate experience, dining with someone in their home. When Jesus ate meal after meal with those considered sinners, he was basically saying to them, **"I want you to be my friend. I want you to be reconciled to God."**

When the woman was caught in the very act of adultery, it was the religious leaders who came to stone her to death because the law prescribed this punishment. Remember what Jesus said as he stood in

front of those holding up the rocks?

SLIDE **“Let those of you who are without sin cast the first stone.”**

They all walked away, and Jesus turned to the woman who was ashamed and filled with guilt, and he looked her in the eyes and said, “Woman, where are your accusers? Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.”

Zacchaeus was a tax collector and an extraordinarily prolific sinner. Jesus called him down from a tree and invited him to follow. That very day Zacchaeus gave up half of his wealth to the poor and he made amends with everyone he had wronged, and he began to follow Jesus.

When Jesus taught his disciples and us how to pray, one of the key parts the prayer contains these words, **“Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.”** Jesus talked about God as a father who had a son who went and squandered everything the father had given to them, and lived in ways that were exactly the opposite of what the father intended. But when that child came back and asked for forgiveness, the father ran to the son and wrapped his arms around and welcomed him back home.

When Jesus was eating the very last meal with his disciples, he took bread and he blessed it and he broke it and gave it to his disciples and said, “This is my life which is given for you.” Then he took the cup, and he blessed it and said, “This is my blood, the cup of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of your sins.”

As he hung on the cross, he looked down at the people who crucified him and he prayed, **“Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.”**

And when Jesus was raised from the dead, one of the commands he gives to his disciples after the resurrection was to go and to

announce the forgiveness of sins and, **“Whoever you forgive, I forgive.”**

Paul, the great apostle of the Christian faith, started out as a man who put to death the leading Christians of his day. He was known then as Saul, and he was one who had participated in the death of God’s people and yet God redeemed him and saved him and gave him a new life. This is what God does and this is what the Scriptures teach us about forgiveness. That’s why we read these words in Psalm 103.

BIBLE

8 The Lord is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.

10 He does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve. 11 For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. 12 He has removed our sins as far from us as far as the east is from the west.

This is the heart and the character of God. Our God is a forgiving God who offers extravagant grace and mercy. We might know that with our heads, but sometimes we struggle to let that sink in our hearts. We keep carrying these burdens that God has already sought to remove. God wants to take them away, but we feel like we should keep carrying them, as if we could hide them in something like this backpack, hoping that God would see them.

Our family watched a movie on Netflix this past week, *Dog Gone*. It’s based on the true story of a young man struggling to find direction in life after he finishes college. He adopts a puppy from the rescue shelter his last year in school and they are inseparable. While hiking on the Appalachian trail, Gonker gets lost and the young man and his father set out on a mission to find the dog. They have many interesting interactions, including this one with a biker gang.

VIDEO Dog Gone Movie Clip - Forgiveness

That is NOT what the young man expected from a biker gang, but it was like a gift from God, and something he needed to hear as he carried this guild about losing his dog. We each need to hear words like from that biker and know this what God longs to speak to each of us.

Over the years I've received several emails and letters from people seeking forgiveness and struggling. One of you wrote to me these words.

I struggle almost daily. I can see how God works in others' lives but in my own life I struggle. I know that God loves me no matter what I've done or what I've been in my life, but to really feel it in the core of my being, I struggle.

One of our members who served in the military sent me this note.

In the military I took lives. I spent years filled with guilt because of this. Having been in close combat situations, where you are looking at the person while you take their life, changes you. It's impossible to imagine God forgiving me for something I could not forgive myself for.

I saw one of our church members recently that I haven't seen in worship in a while, and when I asked if everything was okay, he told me something I have heard more than once.

I'm having a hard time coming back to church because I did something I'm really ashamed of and I just feel like I can come back.

I encouraged him that this is where he needs to be. The church is for the broken. We sometimes carry these burdens with us unnecessarily because it's so hard to trust that God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. As far as the East is from the West so far shall God remove our sins from us—this is the message for us from God. **“Give me your burdens and your**

baggage and your backpacks filled with rocks. Let me take it from you because I long for you to be set free.” Paul Tillich said in his sermon this about forgiveness said these powerful words.

SLIDE “Faith and grace is accepting God’s acceptance.”

God has already accepted you and me. When we turn to God and long to be with God, God is already reaching out his arms waiting for you, wooing you and longing for you to return. God has done everything necessary to forgive you and he offers this grace, which came at a great price. It is a free gift offered to each one of us. All we must do is accept that this is the nature and character of God.

When we talk about accepting that gift of grace and mercy, we talk about repentance. Repentance means to literally turn around and go in a new direction. Repentance means to see something and recognize that you don’t want to keep going in that direction but now you want to go in this new direction. Repentance is about turning away from what is lead to destruction and separation and sin and brokenness and towards the path that God longs for us. Repentance begins with acknowledgment and awareness, just like Dr. Freedman talked about. We must be willing to say, “I stepped off the path. I recognize that I have hurt others. I grieve that it hurts, and I want to turn away and turned towards you.”

Repentance is an outward recognition and an internal desire to walk in a new direction. We confess AND we ask for God’s mercy so we might turn back towards him, and towards those that we hurt. It’s very simple. I feel the burden and the weight, and I turned towards God. I expressed my remorse and try to make amends in whatever way I can, and I asked for God’s forgiveness, and God forgives.

When I have done something that hurts my wife Tami, and I do that sometimes because I’m not perfect, I begin to feel a distance or a gap between us. I begin to feel the weight of whatever it is I said or did and I wonder, “Why did I say that or do that? That was hurtful and

stupid of me to say or do. God asked me to love this woman and to choose to love her and I didn't act very lovingly towards her."

I go to her, and I say, "Tami, I'm really sorry for that thing that I said or what I did. I know I hurt you and I don't want to do that again. I am sorry." She almost always does the same thing. She comes to me, and we embrace, and we tell each other that we love each other. When I feel that embrace from her, she gives me a picture, or a glimpse of what God does when we repent and confess, and come before God with a contrite heart. This is why, when I do pre-marriage work with couples, I remind them that the purpose of Christian marriage is not always to FEEL loving feelings, but about CHOOSING to do the loving thing and discovering the heart of God in each other.

Dr. Freedman talked about how we can begin to do develop this heart of forgiveness, and it's something that is so Biblical, and I want to be sure we hear. It involved reframing and learning to look at our hurts and pains, and the other person, from a different perspective, much like the children's book we read about rising above the storm clouds. Let's take a listen.

VIDEO Suzanne Freedman Clip 2

None of us wants to be defined or remembered by our worst action, right? We easily forget that each of us is made in the image of God, when we wound someone else, we are wounding God. There is a piece of the divine living inside of each one of us. It's why the Apostle Paul, who was no perfect saint, wrote these word in Colossians 3.

BIBLE

³ Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

That's why in Psalm 32 we hear these words.

BIBLE

5 Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.

We finally accept acceptance from God. We trust in God's grace and mercy. We trust in God's word to us, that we are forgiven. We can remove this backpack of rocks, and we feel the burden lifted. At that moment, we feel like we could jump 20 feet in the air, and we might even be able to fly. That is how we feel when we confess and lay before God our broken places. When we trust that God has forgiven us, we find that we can dance again and breathe again. We can run and not grow weary. We can walk and not be faint because we have experienced the grace of God which is exactly what God wants us to know.

I want to be clear that God will not be played with. We can pretend we are asking for forgiveness and say sarcastically, "**Sorry!**" That doesn't cut it anywhere, not with God or other people. True repentance is having a heartfelt sense that we don't want to do that again and instead we want to walk on the right path once more. We can't say we are sorry, and then keep heading in the wrong direction or keep doing the same hurtful things, and experience true forgiveness. True repentance means are honest about our feelings, about what we've done or left undone, and we get back on the path.

I can hear some of you right now, "I have done that before and then I just start straying again, going in the wrong direction. Will God keep forgiving me?"

In those moments we need to remember what Jesus said to his disciples about forgiveness in our theme verse for this series, "**I tell you to forgive not seven times, but 70×7 times.**"

That is in essence infinity. When we earnestly repent, even if we stray again, God offers us grace and forgiveness. Listen carefully, however. That's how it works with God, but us that there are still

consequences when we hurt others, even if we are forgiven. Sometimes those real human consequences mean the relationship we hope to restore will never be the same again. Dr. Freedman and Dr. Enright would remind us of this important truth.

SLIDE *Forgiveness and human reconciliation are separate.*

God will always be willing to reconcile, but there are some human relationships that won't be restored, AND YET we can still do the work of forgiveness, so we don't carry the pain and hurt around anymore. But when it comes to God, God is always ready to receive us back when we earnestly repent. We trust this and then we find the words of the Psalm 32 become true for us.

BIBLE

1 Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight!

Ron Lee Davis wrote a book called *A Forgiving God in an Unforgiving World*. He told the true story in the book of a priest in the Philippines who was much loved and was doing an amazing job inviting his people to experience the love of God and offering the sacraments to them and leading them to experience the mercy and grace of Christ. But inside he struggled with the secret that he had all the way back from his days in seminary. He couldn't quite accept that God had forgiven him for this horrible thing he had done. He carried this burden even as he sought to alleviate the burdens of others as they came and confessed to him.

There was a woman in his congregation of whom it was said she had visions of Jesus in which Jesus would have conversations with her. People from all around come to see her and she would pray about their prayer requests and then she would have conversations with Jesus during her visions and she would share with them what the Lord had said to her. The priest was a bit skeptical about the woman and at the same time somewhat hopeful.

He went to her one day and said, "I understand you have visions of Jesus, and he talks to you."

To test her he said, "The next time you speak with Christ, I want you to ask him what sin your priest committed while he was in seminary." The woman agreed. A few days later the priest asked, "Well, did Christ visit you in your dreams?"

"Yes, he did," she replied.

"And did you ask him what sin I committed in seminary?"

"Yes."

"Well, what did he say?" His heart was now pounding in his chest.

"I told him that my priest was burdened by a sin that he committed in seminary, and he wanted to know if you know what it was. Jesus looked at me and said, '**Your priest's sin? I just don't remember what it was.**'"

Jesus doesn't forget our sins but chooses not to remember them.

Karl Menninger, the famed psychiatrist, once said that if he could convince the patients in psychiatric hospitals that their sins were forgiven, 75 percent of them could walk out the next day!

This is the promise of our faith. It is the promise of Joy. The choice is ours. We can keep trying to carry this backpack of rocks around, our past sins and broken places, but the Lord today would love to take it from you and set you free and forgive ALL your sins and remember them no more. Let's pray.

SLIDE Prayer

I know that some of you live in grace and you don't struggle with your past sins. You don't think about them because you've given them to God. Maybe today is simply a time for you to look back at the past week and say, "For the things I did this past week and the way I stray from the path, when I didn't do what you want me to do or say what

you want me to say, please forgive me.”

Just make a simple profession to God and trust again in his grace. But for those of us here today who are carrying burdens from the past, remember that God knows them already. Christ suffered for them already. Christ stands longing to take you into his arms and he’s asking you, “Please let them go. Please stop carrying them around. Please give them to me.”

I’m going to invite you to say a simple prayer, “Lord, I’m really sorry for this thing,” and then tell them what it is. Whisper it under your breath or tell it to God from your heart and ask him to forgive you and take away this burden.

Pause...

Then would you simply say, “Lord, give me the strength to walk in the path that you have for me. Make me new and help me to walk with you.”

Oh God, we give you thanks and praise for your grace and mercy, that you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and that as far as the east is from the West so far will you remove our sins from us. I pray thee would help each one of us to walk away from this place with joy in our step and freedom in our hearts, that we are forgiven, loved and free today. Make us whole make us yours. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

SLIDE

“You were made by God to be loved by God, and you are forgiven in the name of Christ.”

February 11-12 Order

1. Ely welcomes people and says, **“Today we are going to wrestle with how we can forgive ourselves so we can develop the heart of forgiveness.”**
2. Two Songs
3. Jeff welcomes, mentions the QR code, and invites people to greet each other, however we are comfortable.
4. Announcement Video
 - a. Summit U
 - b.
5. Sermon
6. Prayer
7. **Baptismal Water of Forgiveness offered.**
 - a. **It will involve using water in a small bowl to make the sign of the cross on people’s foreheads and saying the words, “You were made by God to be loved by God, and you are forgiven in the name of Christ.”**
8. Two Songs
9. Prayer and Lord’s Prayer
10. Offering SLIDE and Focus (Rooted Retreat)
11. Care Ministers (If any are present)
12. Prayers and Closing Thoughts
 - i. Prayer focus February is Relationships – Marriage Event and Relationship Course
 - ii. Books in the back
 - iii. Alpha and Summit U
13. Closing Prayer