

This week, Dr Randall Parnell brings us the second installment in the "Toughest Jobs ..." series at Vineyard Community Church. In his message, "You Can Be Forgiven," Randall makes the point that forgiveness is tough. Forgiveness is tough for God, because it cost God the life of His Son to be able to set the world in a place where He could make us right with Himself. He did all that could be done to let us live in rightness with Him. If God had not set things right, in spite of our sin, and chosen to make a way of forgiveness, we would be utterly unable to accomplish it on our own. Randall points out numerous places in scripture that illustrate Jesus always setting things right again so that the person can go on and become what God intended. He did this after Peter denied Him. He did this with the woman caught in the act of adultery. Over and over, Jesus illustrates just how important setting things right again is to the Father.

Forgiveness, though, is tough for us to experience because of the ways we approach it. We do not want to admit what we have done wrong, and forgiveness comes following confession, agreeing with God that we have disobeyed Him. We do not want to humble ourselves enough to receive the grace God offers. The idea of somehow earning the "right" to deserve forgiveness is more appealing to us.

Experiencing God's forgiveness for our sin is tough, because we do not really know who God is. We fail to remember that He, unlike ourselves or people we know, places no limits on forgiveness. He does not grade the magnitude of our sin. All sin is sin to Him, and He chooses not remember our sins once He has forgiven us for them. Forgiveness is tough for us to receive, because often we fail to change. We continue along the same old path we were on before being forgiven and do not realize that with forgiveness, God has given us the opportunity to live a different life. Forgiveness allows us to think and act differently. We are no longer held captive by our old life patterns. Lastly, forgiveness is tough to receive because we ourselves don't forgive others easily. God says that He will forgive us *just* as we forgive others who wrong us. We have to choose to forgive if we want to be forgiven.

Is God's forgiveness tough for you to receive? It does not have to be. Will you choose to forgive others and allow God to forgive you?