1. **Introduction**
   1. Pray
   2. Steps 1-6 = making peace with God. In Step 7, Follow.
   3. After we get right with God, we find the first place he leads his children is to make peace with others.
   4. Matthew 5:9 - *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*
2. **Peacemaking Process. Forgiveness, Amends, Reconciliation.**
   1. A process of pardon, payback and balance for debt of sin
   2. Sin and Justice:
      1. Sin is costly, it creates debt in relationships (with God and others).
      2. Rebalancing a relationship. Make up for the losses (amends), or give up repayment claim (forgiveness).
      3. Reconciliation: when both parties agree that all accounts are settled.
   3. Understand Biblical Peacemaking through Christ.
      1. We owed God a debt that we could not pay. Sometimes, wounds are so deep no payment can ever make up for the harm of sin. All sin creates debt with God. God’s holiness demands perfect justice to satisfy holy wrath.
      2. Christ came to make amends (repay our debt) on our behalf (a perfect sacrifice to satisfy God’s justice).
         1. Colossians 2:13-14 - *And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with [Christ], having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.*
      3. Biblical forgiveness: Your sin debt was not excused; it was paid in full by Christ! The Father transferred his demand of justice for sin from us to the Son at the cross. Christ suffered holy justice for our sin to offer his perfect payment on our behalf—to provide a way to be forgiven and reconciled to God.
      4. Reconciliation with God occurs when we (accept God’s terms).
   4. First part of biblical peacemaking is forgiveness:
      1. Step 8, Forgive: We forgive those who have harmed us and become willing to make amends to those we have harmed.
      2. Foundation 8: Ephesians 4:32-5:1 - *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.*
3. **Forgiveness**
   1. Forgiveness is a transfer of justice to God (vertical transaction).
      1. Question: If you have trusted Christ, accepted that Christ’s suffering was sufficient to pay your debt of sin, have you also considered Christ’s suffering as sufficient payment of the debt for the sins against you?
         * 1. For Christians who have hurt you—Christ’s blood covers all sin—yours and their sins against you.
           2. For non-Christians—Will they become Christians? Or is God’s holy wrath for those who reject Christ will not enough vengeance for you?
   2. Reasons we forgive:
      1. Follow Christ’s example, command, loving.
         1. Colossians 3:12-13 - *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*
      2. It is a surrender of justice and vengeance to God (all-knowing, all-powerful, just).
         1. Hebrews 10:30–31 - *“Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*
      3. It’s frees you to love others despite their sin. No longer see through the lens of sin but rather need for reconciliation with God.
   3. Reasons we don’t forgive.
      1. **Misunderstandings; *Forgiveness is not:***
         * 1. **Excusing sin** or saying a wrong suffered is now okay. There is no excuse for sin. God hates sin (See Hebrews 1:9) and demands death as justice for sin (Romans 6:23). Christ died for sin (See Hebrew 9:22–28). Sin is never okay.
           2. **Freeing the guilty of a demand for justice**. All sin must be paid for because God is holy. God will execute justice for all sin in his time and his way.
           3. **Denying hurt or stuffing your anger**. You should be hurt/angered by sin—God is. Christ suffered for sin. Forgiveness frees you to honestly work through pain, grieve sin, release resentments to God.
           4. **A feeling or conditional**. Forgiveness is an act of the will to release your claim for justice to God (either through Christ’s blood orGod’s holy wrath). Off my hook, onto God’s hook.
           5. **Forgetting.** To forgive you *must* remember the offense, the cross, and God forgiving you.
           6. **Trust.** Forgiving past doesn’t mean someone is trustworthy for future. Forgiveness = gift, trust = earned.
           7. **Dependent upon someone making amends or reconciling with you**. Forgiveness is a transfer of debts between you and God alone. You can forgive someone unable/unwilling to make amends/reconcile.
      2. Other Reasons: rebellion; we use pain as protection; we use another’s sin to justify our sin; we use the harm suffered to control, overpower, manipulate a relationship to our advantage
      3. Unforgiveness is deadly. Holding onto sin (ours or anyone’s) rots us from the inside out. ILLUSTRATION: a cigarette.
         1. Using pain to protect/comfort yourself or justify actions is substituting a destructive solution for the comfort, protection and peace of God. Sin is not a solution/excuse for any area of life. God is the solution.
         2. Using a sin against you to control a person or pay back is like trying to kill them with second-hand smoke: It may hurt them, push away to keep safe distance—while it is killing you. Often just blowing smoke.
         3. Truth: Unforgiveness hurts you, isolates us, affects your surroundings, saps time and emotional energy, is costly, affects how you operate in all environments, it affects how friends/neighbors/co-workers relate to you (no one wants to be around a bitter/resentful person), it stinks. God created us for relationships.
   4. I can’t forgive God: holding onto unresolved anger or pain
      1. The Question: Why would a perfect, loving, just God allow my suffering?
         1. God never guarantees innocent people won’t suffer evil.
         2. Fallen world +free will=sin/pain/injustice.
         3. *REGEN QUOTE: We are in the middle of God’s rescue of a world damaged by the sinfulness of its people. God will get rid of all sin and fully execute justice when he is finished turning enemies into children. Until then, people will get cancer, children will die, dictators will commit genocide, rich will exploit poor, and so on.*
      2. Job. God answers Job’s questions by reminding Job of his nature: powerful, in control, present, understanding, just and good. “Will you trust God’s character in the midst of pain you don’t understand?”
      3. What can be redeemed from the horror or injustice you suffered in an evil world? YOU.
   5. *I can’t forgive myself.* Only God can forgive sin.
      1. We can’t forgive ourselves. A higher authority must release us from debt.
      2. Holding onto guilt and shame. Possibilities:
         1. You haven’t accepted Christ’s sacrifice for sin. You are guilty, unsaved, the wrath of God awaits.
         2. Pride. *I’m better than that.* Pride struggles to accept God’s charity, to exalt human nature.
         3. God’s word is not definitive. I accept an opinion of me other than God’s opinion (mine, dad’s, peers).
         4. Low self-worth, misplaced identity. *I don’t deserve to be forgiven. I’m not worth it.* Seeking significance apart from the cross. The Father slaughtered his beloved innocent Son FOR YOU, the Son willfully subjected himself to slaughter---FOR YOU. You don’t think you are valuable? You were purchased at the greatest price by the ONLY ONE WHO MATTERS! You matter to God!
         5. The truth: We are great sinners, unable to overcome sin, capable of great harm. Minimizing your need for the cross or rejecting the cross as definitive measure of significance is to minimize/reject Christ’s sacrifice. We’ve been reclaimed by God through Christ’s blood! God calls us forgiven, beloved, righteous children.
   6. How to forgive
      1. Prepare your heart: Prayer (help to forgive as I’ve been forgiven). Recall Christ’s forgiveness of your sin.
      2. F.R.E.E.
         1. Face the truth: Be honest about the sin. Evaluate it by God’s word. Don’t deny or minimize sin.
         2. Release the hurt: Give pain to God. God knows/cares-Christ suffered for sin too. Grieve the damage of sin as you surrender it to God.
         3. Entrust justice to God: Transfer your claims for justice to God. Let him repay the debt. He will judge and avenge all sin perfectly. Give up your rights for apologies, vengeance, or to dwell upon the sin.
         4. Exalt Christ. Thank God for paying for your own sins. Thank God for loving your offender enough to offer him/her forgiveness through Christ. Ask him to help you love your offender supernaturally by the Spirit. Praise God for freedom from all sin—your sin and the sins against you.
4. **Closing**
   1. God’s loves you deeply. God’s love for your offenders too. Sometimes the greatest witness of Christ’s love to an offender can come through their victims.
   2. Through Christ you no longer must be controlled by your sin or the sin that has been done to you.
   3. He came to set you free so for you to have peace with God, but also to have the peace of God in your relationships.
   4. Pray.