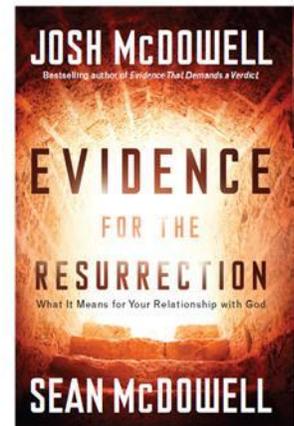


# RECLAIMING EASTER

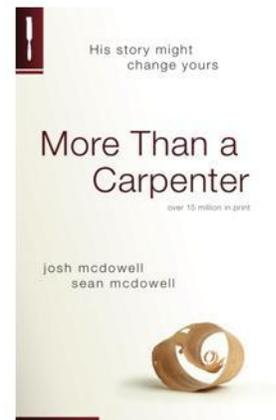
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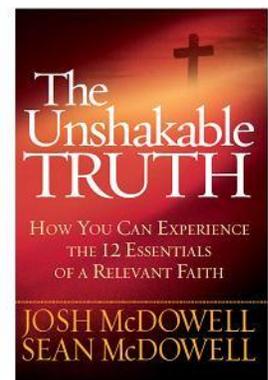
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# IS THE PAIN FROM YOUR PAST STEALING THE HOPE OF YOUR FUTURE?

By: Mark Fitter

## ILLUSTRATION:

An old cartoon shows two men talking at work. One man says “I hate arguing with my wife; every time we do she gets completely historical.” “You mean hysterical,” says his friend. “No,” he corrects. “I mean historical. She brings up everything from the past.”

## INTRODUCTION:

- ◆ How many of you have been hurt by someone? Raise your hand.
- ◆ Encourage the folks to look around so they realize they are not alone in their hurt.
- ◆ Do not ask for a visual response to this next question: The real question is how many of you are still hurting?

Many of us walk around our whole lives with an invisible wheel barrel. We put a brick in our wheel barrel every time someone hurts us. We never get rid of these bricks. We do however dump the entire load each time we are hurt. At every painful experience, we add a new brick of pain, and dump the entire load. After the hurtful experience, we pile all the bricks back in the wheel barrel and go on our way until someone hurts us again. Then we go through the entire process all over again. And so on and so on the rest of our days.

- ◆ This morning there is good news. You can be free of your hurt – Jesus died and rose again to set you free.

But let me ask you a question, to this point in your life what have you done with the pain from your hurt?

And how is that working for you?

**Unresolved anger is like drinking poison and expecting someone else to get sick.**

## I. JESUS KNOWS SOMETHING ABOUT HURT

### A. THE TRIALS OF JESUS:

1. First Jewish Trial – Annas, Father-in-law to Caiaphas.

“So the Roman cohort and the commander and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and bound Him, and led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was expedient for one man to die on behalf of the people.” (John 18:12-14 NAS)

- ◆ **Jesus was innocent: Why didn't He defend Himself?**
- ◆ **Jesus was God: Why didn't He use His authority to defeat His captors?**

## 2. Second Jewish Trial – Caiaphas, High Priest.

“So Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.” (John 18:24 NAS)

- ◆ **Jesus was innocent: Why didn't He defend Himself?**
- ◆ **Jesus was God: why didn't He use His authority to defeat His captors?**

### a. Beating

“Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking Him and beating Him, and they blindfolded Him and were asking Him, saying, ‘Prophecy, who is the one who hit You?’ And they were saying many other things against Him, blaspheming.” (Luke 22:63-65)

- ◆ **Jesus was innocent: Why didn't He defend Himself?**
- ◆ **Jesus was God: why didn't He use His authority to defeat His captors?**

### b. Sanhedrin

“When it was day, the Council of elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him away to their council chamber, saying, ‘If You are the Christ, tell us.’ But He said to them, ‘If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I ask a question, you will not answer. But from now on THE SON OF MAN WILL BE SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND of the power OF GOD.’”

“And they all said, ‘Are You the Son of God, then?’ And He said to them, ‘Yes, I am.’”

“Then they said, ‘What further need do we have of testimony? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.’” (Luke 22:66-71)

- ◆ **Jesus was innocent: Why didn't He defend Himself?**
- ◆ **Jesus was God: why didn't He use His authority to defeat His captors?**

### 3. First Roman Trial – Pontius Pilate, Roman Procurator of Judea

“Then the whole body of them got up and brought Him before Pilate. And they began to accuse Him, saying, ‘We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.’”

“So Pilate asked Him, saying, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ And He answered him and said, ‘It is as you say.’” Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, ‘I find no guilt in this man.’”

“But they kept on insisting, saying, ‘He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee even as far as this place.’ When Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man was a Galilean.” (Luke 23:1-6, see also John 18:28-38)

◆ **Jesus was innocent: Why didn’t He defend Himself?**

◆ **Jesus was God: why didn’t He use His authority to defeat His captors?**

### 4. Third Jewish Trial – Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee & Perea and Son of Herod the Great Governor

“Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him. And he questioned Him at some length; but He answered him nothing.”

“And the chief priests and the scribes were standing there, accusing Him vehemently. And Herod with his soldiers, after treating Him with contempt and mocking Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate. Now Herod and Pilate became friends with one another that very day; for before they had been enemies with each other.” (Luke 23:8-12)

◆ **Jesus was innocent: Why didn’t He defend Himself?**

◆ **Jesus was God: why didn’t He use His authority to defeat His captors?**

### 5. Second Roman Trial – Pontius Pilate, Roman Procurator of Judea

“Pilate summoned the chief priests and the rulers and the people, and said to them, ‘You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined Him before you, I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against Him. No, nor has Herod, for he sent Him back to us; and behold, nothing deserving death has been done by Him. Therefore I will punish Him and release Him.’ [Now he was obliged to release to them at the feast one prisoner.]”

“But they cried out all together, saying, ‘Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas!’ (He was one who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection made in the city, and for murder.)”

“Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again, but they kept on calling out, saying, ‘Crucify, crucify Him!’ And he said to them the third time, ‘Why, what evil has this man done? I have found in Him no guilt demanding death; therefore I will punish Him and release Him.’”

“But they were insistent, with loud voices asking that He be crucified. And their voices began to prevail.”

“And Pilate pronounced sentence that their demand be granted. And he released the man they were asking for who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, but he delivered Jesus to their will.”

“When they led Him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus.” (Luke. 23:13-26, see also John 18:39-19:16)

## II. JESUS RESPONSE

- ◆ **Jesus was innocent: Why didn't He defend Himself?**
- ◆ **Jesus was God: why didn't He use His authority to defeat His captors?**
- ◆ Because the Joy He would have saving us from our sin outweighed the pain he had to endure.

Hebrews 12:2: “Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

## III. JESUS CAN HELP YOU WITH YOUR HURT

### A. HE IS QUALIFIED TO HELP BECAUSE HE IS OUR GOD AND CREATOR

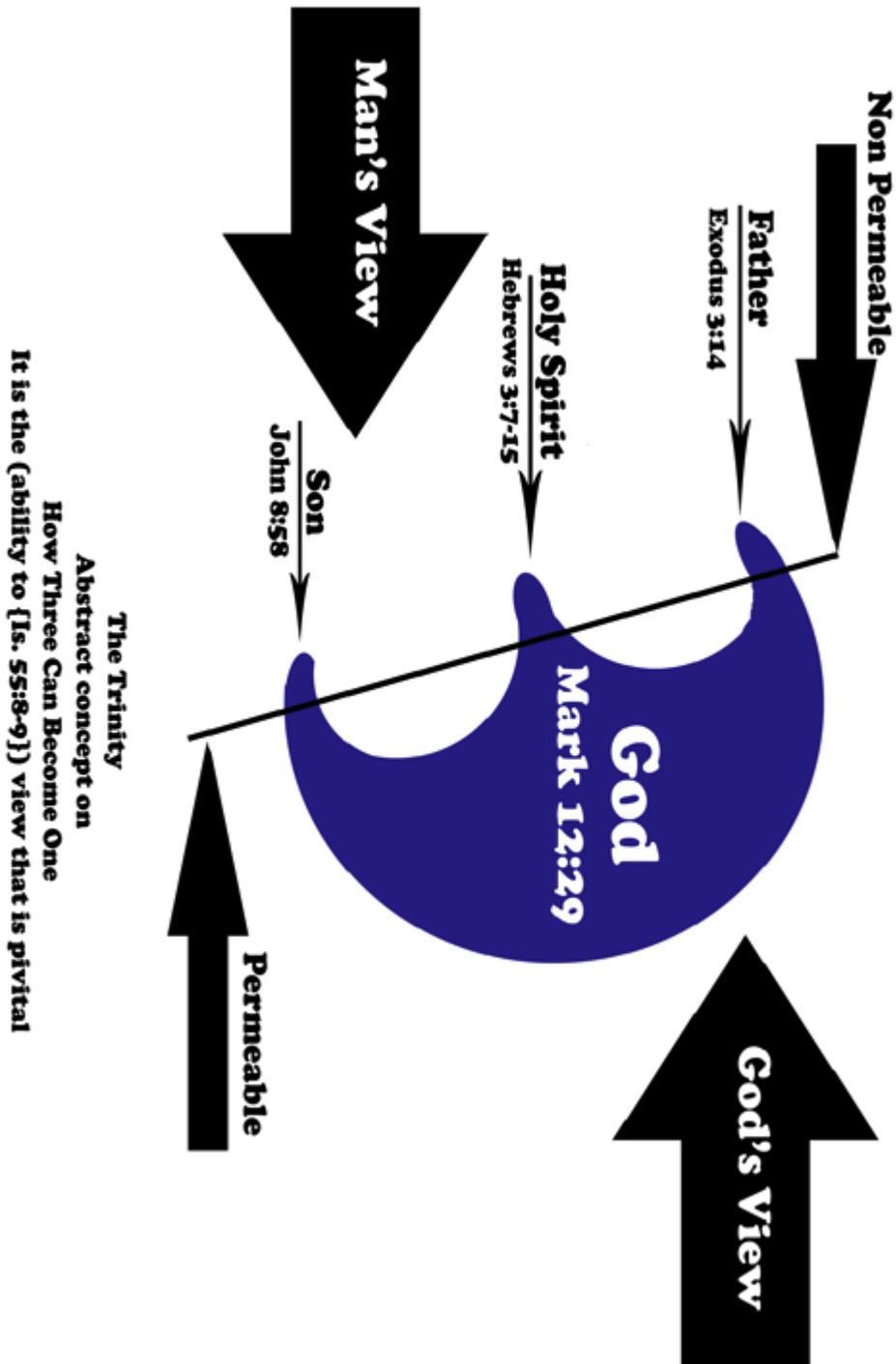
1. John 8:58 / Exodus 3:14

Comparing the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Old testament) and the Greek New testament, the wording of God the Father and Jesus is exactly the same...*ego eimi* “I AM”.

2. John 10:27-33; John 14:5-11; John 1:1, 2-3

Dividing everything into one of two categories, created and Creator, Jesus is Creator.

The following illustration shows us that our inability to comprehend the trinity does not affect God's ability to be Three in One.



## B. JESUS' RESURRECTION GIVES US HOPE IN THE MIDST OF OUR HURT.

Matthew 28:1-10: "Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow."

"The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you.'"

"And they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples."

"And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me.'"

1. He died, He was buried. Three days later the tomb was empty.

Everyone in the ancient world agrees that the tomb was empty on that first Easter morning. The opponents made up a story that the disciples stole the body. But they lacked motive and opportunity. (see Matthew 28:11-15)

2. Jesus was seen alive and those who witnessed this were willing to die for that claim.

3. Jesus appeared alive to more than 515 eyewitnesses, including skeptics whose lives were changed. (I Corinthians 15:1-9)

4. Ancient records documenting the resurrection go back too early to be the product of legend.

5. The disciples were willing to die for their belief/fact. No one knowingly and willingly dies for a lie.

6. Thomas Aquinas: "You can lead someone up the stairs of faith and leave then one step from salvation, the step of faith." Romans 1:16-23; Hebrews 11:1-6; Isaiah 55:8-9

## C. JESUS IS OUR QUALIFIED TO HELP BECAUSE HE IS OUR PERFECT EXAMPLE FORGIVENESS

1. Even while being tortured He prayed that His Father would forgive the torturers.

Luke 23:33-35: “When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. But Jesus was saying, ‘Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.’ And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.”

“And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, ‘He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One.’”

## IV. WHY IS IT THAT WE HOLD ON TO THE HURT AND DO NOT FORGIVE PEOPLE?

- A. BECAUSE WE **CHOOSE** TO STILL HURT (like daily re-opening a wound)

Ephesians 4:26: “Be angry and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger.”

**Illustration:** A story is told of a man who lay on his deathbed, harassed by fear because he had harbored hatred against a person all his life. He sent for man with whom he had had a disagreement years before; he then made overtures of peace. The two of them shook hands in friendship. But as the visitor left the room, the sick man roused himself and said, "Remember, if I get over this, I still hate you!"

**Song:** Garth Brooks: We bury the hatchet but leave the handle sticking out

Ephesians 4:32: “And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

- B. BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THE OFFENDING PARTY HAS NOT BEEN REPAYED ENOUGH FOR WHAT THEY DID TO US.

Romans 12:19-21: “Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.”

“But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

C. BECAUSE AS LONG AS WE CHOOSE TO BE HURT, WE CAN BE THE VICTIM. AND AS LONG AS WE ARE A VICTIM, WE BELIEVE WE ARE JUSTIFIED IN OUR FEELINGS AND ACTIONS.

1. Some people think they have to forget to forgive. That is simply not true. You can forgive without forgetting. The perk is also that when you forgive, it will help you forget.
2. Forgiveness is: "Giving-up my 'right' to retaliate."
3. There are three types of forgiveness that we need, one that we receive, and two that we offer.
  - a. We need to RECEIVE God's forgiveness.
    - i. Repentance: True forgiveness includes repentance.
    - ii. Repent: To have a changed mind.

There are two aspects to God's forgiveness

Our initial forgiveness that leads to our salvation.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

The rejection of God's forgiveness will result in eternal separation from God.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Our daily forgiveness that leads to a close walk with the Lord.

I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The rejection of this forgiveness results in a wounded walk with the Lord.

We need to forgive others.

*How many times do I need to forgive someone?*

Matthew 18:21 Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" <sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

Hyperbole: "An overstatement to make a point."

Examples:

"I am starving to death." – You probably are not actually dying in front of someone's eyes from malnutrition. What you really mean is that you are HUNGRY!

"My feet are killing me." – Again it is unlikely that you have folded yourself up so that your feet could reach your head (that might kill you itself) and they are literally smacking your head until you lose consciousness. What you probably mean is that your feet are really HURTING!

The point is; we never stop forgiving.

The consequence of not forgiving others is three-fold:

It will wound your walk with God.

Matthew 6:14-15 "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup> "But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

Parental forgiveness

It will drain you emotionally.

Heart puzzle illustration:

You can buy or make this. Start with a wooden heart and cut it in pieces like a jigsaw puzzle. Display the heart. One by one remove the pieces. Once there is only a skeletal structure left, hold it up to the congregation. Explain that this wooden puzzle with pieces missing is representative of an unforgiving heart.

Fallacy: We believe that the person with whom we are angry is hurting because we will not forgive them.

Equal: Love and hate are equally draining on your emotional energy.

Newsflash: When you are unforgiving, you are the one that hurts.

It can make you physically ill.

"Forgiving people live longer."

Remember, unresolved anger is like drinking poison and expecting someone else to get sick.

Illustration

On a cold winter evening a man suffered a heart attack and after being admitted to the hospital, asked the nurse to call his daughter. He explained, "You see, I live alone and she is the only family I have." The nurse went to phone the daughter. The daughter was quite upset and

shouted, "You must not let him die! You see, Dad and I had a terrible argument almost a year ago. I haven't seen him since. All these months I've wanted to go to him for forgiveness. The last thing I said to him was 'I hate you.'" The daughter cried and then said, "I'm coming now. I'll be there in thirty minutes."

The patient went into cardiac arrest. The nurse prayed, "O God, his daughter is coming. Don't let it end this way." The efforts of the medical team to revive the patient were fruitless. The nurse took the daughter aside and said, "I'm sorry." The daughter responded, "I never hated him, you know. I loved him, And now I want to go see him." The nurse took her to the room, and the daughter went to the bed and buried her face in the sheets as she said good-bye to her deceased father. The nurse, as she tried not to look at this sad good-bye, noticed a scrap of paper on the bed table. She picked it up and read: "My dearest Janie, I forgive you. I pray you will also forgive me. I know that you love me. I love you, too daddy."

What about the person who does not ask you for forgiveness?  
God calls us to forgive even those who have not asked for forgiveness.

If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.  
Romans 12:18

It may take two to have a relationship, but it only takes one to forgive.

One: Even one unforgiven relationship will hinder all of your relationships.  
Refer back to puzzle  
We need to forgive ourselves.

Hebrews 8:12 "FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES, AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE."

This is a legal term that means God will not reintroduce it as evidence.  
"Yesterday ended last night."

Illustration

Ernest Hemingway wrote a story about a father and his teenage son. In the story, the relationship had become strained, and the teenage son ran away from home. His father began a journey in search of that rebellious son.

Finally, in Madrid, Spain, in a last desperate attempt to find the boy, the father put an ad in the local newspaper. The ad read: "Dear Paco, Meet me in front of the newspaper office at noon. All is forgiven. I love you. Your father." The next day, in front of the newspaper office, eight hundred Pacos showed up. They were all seeking forgiveness. They were all seeking the love of their father.

D. Conclusion

Illustration

Unforgiveness is all about looking backwards. God wants us to forgive and be forgiven and look forward.

Many people go through life with a huge rear view mirror and a tiny windshield.

Note: Using either or both of these props will help communicate the message.

Is The Pain From Your Past Stealing the Hope of Your Future?

Today: Do you need to forgive someone?

Do you need to be forgiven?

Do you need God's forgiveness?

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. John 3:16

Jesus' resurrection means there is hope for you

Hope for your forgiveness

Hope for healing from your hurt

E. Invitation