

KARMA OR FORGIVENESS

Week #5 of the 8-Week Series, "The Game"

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How are you? I am so excited to be with you! You know, there was a couple more talks that I wanted to give in this series. And even though I'm on vacation right now, having a glorious time, I wanted to share these two talks. So this week I want to talk to you, and then next week I'm going to talk to you, as well. It's going to be on video. But it was so important!

And then following that, Richard -- our wonderful Richard Maraj -- is going to speak. And then we have Sue Frederick is going to come in the last week. So I think you're going to have a great time! I'll be back for the last Wednesday in June, being rested and relaxed and tan, hopefully! And just a whole new outlook on life!

So are you ready for today? Okay; let's go.

Alright. Have you ever had an experience of profound Grace? Do you know what I mean by Grace? Like a level of life that you know you don't deserve, and yet you're experiencing it anyway.

You know, when I was writing this talk -- when I was thinking about that -- there were two incidents that came to my mind right away. The first one was a couple of weeks ago; I'd had a long day. I did service, and then I went up to Flagstaff to celebrate my grandson's first birthday. Came home; was tired. And, you know, we have these pups. And these pups want exercise every morning, every evening. And they don't really care how tired I am; they never get tired! So when I got home after a long day, they were ready to roll; they wanted exercise.

So I ... Sometimes what I'll do is I'll ride my bike, and I'll have them on the side. And we'll do the same route, but we'll just run it. They'll run it; I won't run it! They'll run it and I'll bicycle. And we get the whole walk done really quick, and it's fabulous!

Well, two weeks ago we're having this experience, and our little Gracie -- the little one -- got spooked by something. Got frightened and ran out in front of the bicycle. And I slammed on the brakes and went right over the handlebars. And I landed on my side. So there was a little road rash on my arm, on my hip. And I landed on my side. And, you know, I was stunned, right? I was like, "*Uh-hooooop-uh-huh!*" Right? And they were freaked out, because Dad took a header. And it was ...

So I had to kind of get up, and we walked back home. And we got home. And I got up the next morning, and I was pretty sore. Tuesday morning I was really sore. I don't think there was an inch on my body that didn't hurt. And my lovely wife said, "*Okay; I didn't make you go to the emergency room on Sunday; I didn't make you go to the emergency room on Monday. I even let you go to work. But you're going to the emergency room!*"

And so I got to, you know ... I got to earn my frequent flyer miles at Honor Health this week. And, you know, paid my tuition to go in. And I just had a fabulous experience: great doctor. She checked everything out. And she started playing with my ribs. And I mean, not playing ... she was examining me. I don't mean to get any wrong impressions here! But she started wiggling my ribs. And the little one -- the baby rib -- wiggled back. And it was loose.

And she said, "*I'm going to get an X-ray to see how many of your ribs are broken, but I know this is ...*" And I know how Jesus walked on water. I literally know how Jesus walked on water. [Laughs] Because I went straight off the bed. When she poked that rib, I just had a spiritual experience; I just levitated right off that bed! And she gave me some things for the pain. And I went on about my day. And, you know, I was sore, but pain medicine is a wonderful thing! And I started feeling better and better and better.

So that night my wife and I prayed, and she really prayed. And I woke up the next morning, and I wasn't in any pain. Now, if you've ever had a broken rib, it's up to a month of pain. You can't breathe; you can't cough; you can't laugh. And I woke up the next morning, and I was literally ... you know, there was no pain! I haven't taken pain medication now for two weeks, because there was literally ... there was no pain. And I could kind of feel it moving, but there was no pain attached to it. No pain!

And I absolutely believe that that was an act of Grace. Like, that I had a little mini-miracle. That for the last two weeks -- as I'm getting ready for vacation and everything -- I felt good! In fact, that Wednesday I felt so good. I felt like ... I felt fabulous! I felt like I was 20 years old! I felt like the energy of Spirit was moving through me. I felt fabulous!

And I felt so good Wednesday and Thursday, and Jillie's watching me and making sure I don't do much. And by Friday morning she could see how good I was feeling. And she said, "*I think it's time for you to go out and clean the backyard. Like, if you feel that good, it's time for you to get to work!*" And I got to go out.

But I believe that it was an act of Grace!

The other time that I just really think that I lived by Grace was: I was driving ... If you know, I was driving Cave Creek Road. And about Dynamite -- if you're familiar with that area -- there's an earthen dam on the west side of the street. And I've always wanted to just kind of walk down that and see what it was like, and see what the trails were like, and stuff. So I get this idea that I'm going to kind of pull off; right of the side of the road there. And the man behind me is in this full-ton work truck. And as I slow down and pull into the left-hand turn lane, he clips the right-hand rear bumper and sends me spinning into oncoming traffic. And I did three loops before I ended up facing the direction with the traffic right where you would park the car. And, in fact, it was right up against the curb. It was like a perfect parallel parking spot!

And we called the police, and the guy pulled over and eventually came back. And the policeman said, "*I cannot believe that you're alive. I just ... It's hard for me to believe that your car ...*" Because you could see the spin marks; you could see the tire tracks. He said, "*That your car spun three times into oncoming traffic, and wasn't hit once.*" That there was a break in the traffic just as I was coming through. I spun three times; the car parked perfectly, like a little angel had parked it. And it was perfect!

And I knew that was something had happened there just by the expression on the police officer's face. Like, you know when something abnormal has happened, because the people who are picking people off the asphalt day in and day out know when you should not be alive. And his face said it all.

And tonight I want to talk about those times where Grace steps in. Where a level of good happens that is greater than we've earned; that we deserve; that is available to us. That by any rights, it shouldn't have happened. Because as we explore this area, what I want you to see: we've been using this Florence Shinn's book, *The Game of Life*. And I love this book! I love this book! Right? And we're going to talk about the chapter that's entitled, "Karma or Forgiveness."

And let's go to the first slide. And the first slide is the Grace Prayer. Let's throw that up there.

The Grace Prayer

For Thee I thirst.
Into Thy hands I commit my spirit
(my soul, my body, my life, this problem,
all unforgiven states).
Thy will is my will.
Thy will be done through me.
Heal me at depth.
Reveal that which needs to be revealed.
Heal that which needs to be healed
so I can glorify You, God,
and live in the fullness of grace.
It is finished.

And I want you to read it with me if you can. Even if you're at home. If you can see it; you can take a screen shot of it. Or you can take your phone out. Because I want you to hear this prayer. Because this prayer is powerful! It says:

*For Thee I thirst.
Into Thy hands I commit my spirit
(my soul, my body, my life, this problem, all unforgiven states).
Thy will is my will.
Thy will be done through me.
Heal me at depth.
Reveal that which needs to be revealed.
Heal that which needs to be healed
so I can glorify You, God,
and live in the fullness of Your Grace.
It is finished.*

Like, to me, that prayer is so impactful.

*For Thee I thirst.
Into Thy hands I commit my spirit
(my soul, my body, my life, this problem, all unforgiven states).
Thy will is my will.
Thy will be done through me.
Heal me at depth.
Reveal that which needs to be revealed.
Heal that which needs to be healed
so that I can glorify You, God,
and live in the fullness of Your Grace.
It is finished.*

You know, one of the things I believe when we have a miracle -- or something happens in our life that is greater and more wonderful than we feel like we deserve -- I believe that we have an opportunity to talk about our miracles. I believe that we have a responsibility to share with others what God is doing in our life that's exceedingly good. Because for so many of us, we don't think that God is an active presence in our life. And I've been telling anyone who slows down to get close to me that I have had a "mini-miracle" in my life. That I've been healed! That two weeks ago I was in incredible pain where I almost couldn't get out of bed. And then the next day I pop up like I'm 20 years old! Like every bone in my body is made out of rubber! Like, it was a difference!

And Grace is that activity that is about greater good; that it's not about even exchange. The Law says, *"It's an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."* And when we look at the Old Testament -- when we look at the Hebrew Scripture -- what we see over and over again is that "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth" mentality. That everything needs to be equal. Everything needs to be compensated.

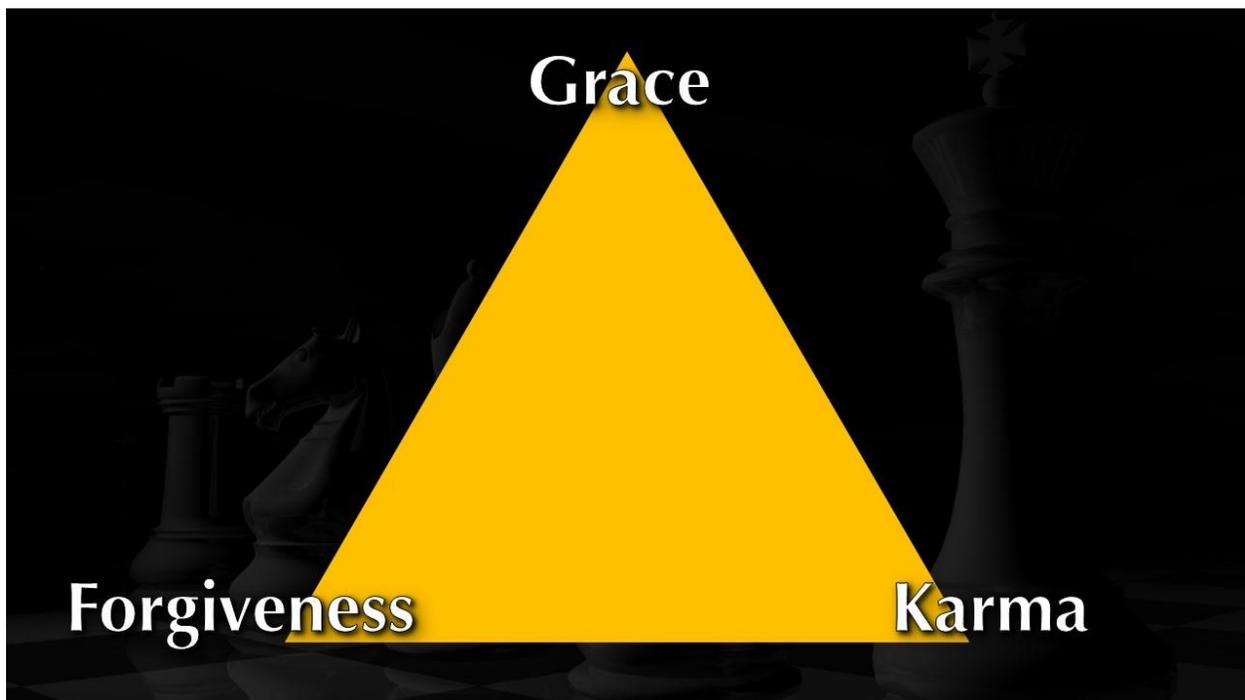
If I offend you, then you have a right to offend me. If I take from you, you have a right to take from me. And we can live at the "eye"; we can live at the level of the Law. We can live at the level that everything has to be balanced. Or we can live in the infinite Grace of God. Because the Grace of God is greater than you can ever imagine! The Grace of God is greater than -- for all of us! -- than we can ever imagine.

Grace is the highest form of God's good in our life. That we can't "earn" Grace. You can't do enough good for Grace. Grace is the act of God's love for us being shared, and you could either receive or not receive it. But you cannot earn it. You cannot be good enough to receive all the good that God has for you. And God doesn't expect you to act in a certain way! God wants you to open your mind, your heart, your soul to receive the overflowing Grace of God.

"I am" -- will you say it with me?

"I am open and receptive to the overflowing Grace of God."

Together: *"I am open and receptive to the overflowing Grace of God."*



Let's show the next slide. Shoot that up there. And I want you to see this slide: that Grace is the highest

form of God's good. It's the pinnacle. It's the very top. And then from Grace we move down to the next level. And the next level is all about forgiveness and karma.

And so forgiveness is Grace on a human level. Now let me explain that. When I forgive someone ... When I forgive someone what they've done to me, or when someone forgives me for something that I have done to them, that is Grace in human form. That is Grace in action. That's when we actually are instruments of the infinite goodness of God. That we actually -- from the activity of forgiving one another -- we move into a higher level of Grace. We actually experience Grace.

But here's the kicker. And this is what I want you to hear tonight. Those things that we do not forgive, we have to act out through karma. Now what is karma? Karma is the Hindu or the Buddhist belief that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Hindu and Buddhists believe that karma is that situation where we have to actually live it out. Karma is the human outworking of past experiences through spiritual Law.

And so what I want you to hear tonight -- which is so important! What you can't or won't forgive, you have to act out. You have to go through whatever experience over and over and over again until your heart is open to the act of forgiveness. That when we don't forgive, we are automatically now in the process of karma. And in the Hindu or the Buddhist tradition, it can be lifetimes of acting it out! Sometimes you're the victim; sometimes you're the victor. And you have to act it out until our heart opens and we are willing to forgive.

So karma, over and over again, is the "mulligan." Right? It is the mulligan! If you've ever played golf, when you hit a shot and it goes into the lake -- you know, this is not an official rule -- you shout out, "Mulligan!" And you get to hit another shot. That's what karma does for us! When someone offends us; when someone victimizes us; when somebody cheats us; when somebody steals our stuff; and we don't instantly forgive it, we -- at that moment -- move into karma. And karma has to work its way through us until we're finally willing to forgive.

And once we forgive, we're not just forgiving that one situation; we're forgiving all the times in our past where we have held a grudge. Where we have practiced unforgiveness. Where we have carried the harm of generations over and over and over again.

And what I want you to hear tonight is that -- in the human dimension; at the human level; at the human form -- you only get two choices. That no matter how much you've been harmed by life, or no matter how much you've harmed somebody else, you only get two choices. And you only can make these two choices. You're either going to forgive and move back into Grace. Or you're not going to forgive, and you're going to move into karma.

And karma will work with you over and over and over again until you are willing to move back into forgiveness. But that's your only choice! You can either be open and receptive, and realize that whatever somebody has taken from you -- whether they've victimized you, whatever way they've cheated you -- it cannot keep you from the Grace of God. The bounty of God -- the infiniteness of God -- is greater than any harm that has ever been done to you.

But the moment you start keeping track -- the moment you decide who's "worthy" of your forgiveness and who isn't worthy of your forgiveness -- at that moment you slide into karma. And your humanity has to go through over and over and over again -- experience after experience after experience -- where sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. And it doesn't matter. Until your heart opens and you are willing to forgive.

Over and over again, forgiveness is the way that we stay in Grace. I guarantee there's somebody -- a situation; a person; or an event in your life -- that you are still holding on to. Now do you have a God-given right to being resentful? Yes! And that's why the Universe created karma! So you can work it out!

If it takes 100,000 more lifetimes, God bless you! But if you want to forgive it in the moment, and be released, you have to forgive.

"I forgive everyone for everything."

Together: *"I forgive everyone for everything."*

Will you say that with me? *"I forgive everyone for everything."*

And at that moment, you move back into Grace. At that moment, you release every situation. And in karma you've got to work it out a hundred, a thousand, a million times ... over and over again. But one act of forgiveness erases all karma. One act of forgiveness releases it all.

Jesus said in Luke 23:34-35 -- he's on the cross, and he says -- *"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."* That is a statement where he realized that, through his forgiveness, he was releasing all the karmic debt that was being created in that moment.

And what I want you to see: as you forgive, not only do you release your own karmic debt, but you actually set the other person free, as well. That your act of forgiveness frees their soul as much it frees yours. That over and over again, we are spending an enormous amount of energy in these karmic relationships that we have with others, where sometimes you're the victim and sometimes you're the victimizer. Sometimes you're up; sometimes you're down. And we go through this over and over again to simply get us back to this state where it says, *"I forgive you. I forgive you for everything. I hold nothing back from you. I forgive you for every mistake. I forgive you for every word; every choice; every behavior. I forgive you for everything, because I don't want to do karmic relationship anymore. I want to live in the overflowing Grace of God. I want to know that the overflowing Grace of God is greater than our little, piddly human wounds that we carry around like big, bright badges of how harmed we were."*

Tonight ... You ready for your homework? Tonight your homework is: I want you to clearly see everyone who has ever harmed you. Everyone that you've ever had a resentment about; anyone that you've ever hurt. And I want you to see your opportunity tonight to forgive and release every karmic relationship you have with anyone. Whether it's an old boss; an old girlfriend; an old boyfriend; an ex-spouse; your kindergarten teacher; your gym teacher. Whoever it was; whatever the story -- your banker; Bank of America. Whatever the story is; whatever the situation might be. Whatever it is, I forgive everyone for everything.

Now this also applies to you! That until you can forgive yourself, you, too, are in a karmic relationship where person after person has to come into your life so that you can learn to forgive yourself. That forgiveness is a two-way street. You not only have to forgive everyone for everything, but you have to forgive yourself for everything. You can forgive yourself for everything. And as we practice this, right?

Like, say you've been involved in an addiction. You have to forgive yourself for that! If you've made bad choices, you have to forgive yourself for that! If you're not making good choices in any area of your life, you have to forgive yourself for that! If you want to move forward -- if you want to move out of the karma that you're living right now and move back into Grace -- you have to forgive yourself.

"I forgive myself for everything."

Alright, here's your list. Tonight I want you to get so clear with yourself of how much time and energy you are spending cleaning up past situations; having karmic relationships with people because you couldn't forgive them at the moment. And the moment you forgive yourself and everyone involved, the moment you set yourself free!

You know, I'm a big advocate of Ho'oponopono. And I love Ho'oponopono. Let's shoot it up there; do you mind?



I'm a big advocate of Ho'oponopono. And I want you to see that there are four aspects of Ho'oponopono. And the first one is when you say to someone or yourself, *"I'm sorry."*

When you say, *"I'm sorry,"* in that moment, you clear the deck. And you're sorry for not only what you've done, but what you didn't do. Or what your people have done. Or any thoughts you had. Or any way that you're responsible for whatever's going on in their life: *"I'm sorry."*

And the next step is: *"Please forgive me."* Please set me free of our karmic relationship. Please forgive me.

And the next line is: *"I love you"* and *"I thank you for being in my life."*

Now Ho'oponopono is the old Hawaiian tradition of reconciliation. [Laughs] Now, you know, if you live on an island, there's only so many people who you can tick off! Right? Because it's an island, right? It's a limited field, right? So Ho'oponopono, in Hawaii, they had to find a way to make amends to each other -- to move each other out of karmic relationship. And that's what Ho'oponopono is: it's a way of setting ourselves free of the karmic relationships of the past.

"I'm sorry."

I remember the first time I said this to a person, and I wasn't involved in the situation at all. She was abused. And I said, *"I'm so sorry that you were abused."* And she said, *"It wasn't about you."* And I said, *"I know it wasn't about me, but I'm sorry for the fact that you went through that; that you had to go through that."* And I could just see the tears welling up. And she said, *"You know, nobody's ever said they're sorry for that situation. You're the first human that's ever said, 'I'm sorry' that I went through that."* And she said, *"I can't tell you how deeply my soul takes that in."*

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Please forgive any part of that situation that I've ever played a role in. Like, for generations that have created that.

Over and over again, *"I'm sorry; please forgive me; I love you; and thank you for being in my life."*

So let's pray.

Tonight I want you to take a deep breath, and I want you to feel the activity of God. And tonight it's all about Grace. And living in a life that is filled to overflowing with the Grace of God. That we absolutely have permission in the moment to forgive and move back into Grace. Or we can take the long road and work it out over weeks and months and years and lifetimes. And over and over again, we come back to the truth that, as I forgive, I am forgiven. As I forgive, I live in the Grace of God. So in the name and through the power of the Living Christ, we give thanks. And so it is. Amen.

God bless you, friends! Have a great week, and I look forward to being with you later this month!

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