

# Move Forward

by Loran Livingston

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*The sermon emphasizes the necessity of forgiveness and moving forward in faith to find true rest and freedom in Christ.*

**Duration:** 42:18

**Scripture:** Matthew 11:28

**Topics:** "Forgiveness"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of the Israelites' escape from Egypt and their encounter with the pursuing Egyptian army. He emphasizes the transition from boldness to fear that the Israelites experienced when they saw the Egyptians approaching. The preacher highlights how fear can paralyze us and prevent us from moving forward. God instructs Moses to tell the people to stop crying out and to move forward, even though they are faced with seemingly insurmountable obstacles. The preacher emphasizes that when the Israelites took a step in the direction God commanded, He miraculously opened up a way for them and delivered them from their enemies.

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## Transcript

Amen. Somebody else help me say amen. He's worthy to be praised.

Before we begin today I want to wish all the moms a happy day. Mother's Day is not a biblical day, it's not a Jewish holiday, but it's a special day and I wish all of the mothers here young and not so young anymore because once you are a mother you are a mother till you die and everybody knows that. And if my mother were here today I would go give her a big hug and kiss her on the cheek and thank her for bringing me up the way she did, the way dad and mom did.

She had a tough job and I'm not saying that to be funny, you know, I was not and am not the easiest person to raise. I'm better at it now but I was not an easy child and I know I wasn't an easy teenager. And I remember the day she died, she was in the hospital.

I happened to be alone with her at that time. Dennis and Janice had either gone for a few minutes or were coming but she was dying. They said she would not live through the day and she was struggling to breathe.

She had a respiratory disease and as I sat beside the bed she took her mask off and grabbed my hand. She said, son I want you to know I love you and that I did the best I could. I didn't do everything right because you were my first one and I had to learn on you.

And then here's what stuck me in the heart. She said, I want you to forgive me if I've ever hurt you or disappointed you because all I ever wanted to be was a good mother. And I said, mom you were a good mother and you don't owe me any apologies whatsoever.

But I've been reminded over the years that Satan does not stop even when you're on your deathbed. He accuses and points out your weakness and makes you remember your faults, makes you wonder if you're worthy for heaven. He constantly brings that stuff up and on her deathbed the last thing she ever asked me to do for her was to forgive her.

What a powerful thing to want to leave this world or live in this world saying to people, forgive me. To humble yourself as Christ did and say, forgive me. I want you to turn with me please to Matthew chapter 11.

I want us to read verses 28 through 30. This has been on my heart since our Tuesday staff meeting. In our Tuesday staff meeting a prayer meeting broke out and we actually prayed I guess around two hours as a staff.

And this verse was brought to our attention and I just couldn't get it off my mind. Read with me beginning with verse 28. Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. My yoke and my burden.

Heavenly Father always we come to you in the name of your Son Jesus. We stand here today recognizing that the work you started a long time ago in many of us or just recently in some of us will never stop until we stand before you. I pray today that you will give us a revelation and enlightenment of your rest.

Show us what it means to carry your burden and your yoke. And I pray today for all of those who feel heavy and oppressed who feel trapped or like my mother who just two hours before she went to be with you was still wrestling with what she had done with her life. I pray today that the peace of God, hallelujah, the peace of God which surpasses human understanding or explanation will fall upon this place and fill every life with it.

May we all go out of here with our burdens lifted and I ask it in the name of Jesus and everybody said amen. All right let's let's take it easy for a moment. This is Jesus talking about loads and yokes.

Jesus came to a society, his people, the Jewish people who were so encumbered with religious rules and expectations that were not from God. They were not in their scriptures. They were man-made requirements and when you pile on top of man-made church slash religious requirements our own sense of unworthiness to start with and our inability to forgive ourselves for what we've done in the past and the likelihood that we are desperately wondering if we'll ever get our life fixed.

Put all that together and your soul is heavy and restless. You're dragging around a burden that God did not intend for you to carry. So Jesus explained it like this.

No matter what they have put on you, if you come to me, all of you who are working, laboring, heavy-laden, I'll give you rest. You think you'll never get out of this mess. You think that it just gets tougher and tougher.

I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle. That means meek.

Okay, I'm learning something here. What is it Jesus wants to us to learn from him? First of all, he's meek. He has no fight.

He has nothing to prove. He doesn't have to be right. On Easter Sunday, I told you that when Jesus was raised from the dead, he did not go back to Pilate or the Romans or Herod and say, lookie here.

He didn't do that. He had nothing to prove. He was in competition.

He wasn't trying to be number one. That's what he means by meek. I am meek and I am lowly in heart.

Jesus said, blessed are the poor in spirit. That means you are a needy person. There is no self-sufficiency.

You are totally reliant on God. Read what Jesus said about his relationship with the father. I can't do anything without the father's help.

I don't know anything that the father hasn't taught me. I am his son. I and my father are one.

My life is because of my father's life. He said, that's how you have to live if you want rest for your souls. You've got to be meek.

The fight has to come out of you. You've got to stop trying to prove everything to everybody. You can't try to be right all the time.

Even when you are, you can't flash it and exhibit it. You just have to take solace in the fact that you're right and God knows you're right. If God knows it, what does it matter if anybody else knows it? I am meek and lowly in heart.

I'm totally reliant upon my father. My words are his, my breath is his, my life is his. He said, you will find rest for your souls.

Twice he's mentioned rest. When the fight is gone and being number one is no longer there, when you don't have to have a champion spirit anymore, suddenly you find rest. There's a peace that comes over you.

There's nothing else to prove to anybody. For my yoke is easy. My yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Seems maybe two or three years ago I gave this illustration and I had to go back and do some reinvestigation last night. My yoke, he said, and usually that has been explained by the yoke of an ox. You know, two wooden rings and one ox gets in one side.

He's the lead ox and the younger inexperienced ox gets in on the other side and all he does is pull. He doesn't make any decisions. That's not the kind of yoke here apparently Jesus was talking about.

He was talking about a stick, a post that was designed for the shoulders of a servant onto which you would hang buckets and carry grain or water or possibly milk. You've seen the little milkmaids. That's the yoke Jesus was more than likely talking about and he said my yoke is easy.

Now the question is begged. If the yoke I'm carrying is not easy, then whose yoke did I put on? Whose burden am I carrying? If the burden is breaking my back and stealing my joy, if the burden I am carrying is making my life horrible and miserable, I have picked up the wrong yoke and I have acquired somebody else's burden. If my Christian life is so fraught with tears and agony and not ever knowing if I'm gonna make it through the day all the time, at some point I have to ask myself the question what did Jesus mean when he said my yoke is easy and my yoke or burden is light and if you carry my yoke and my burden you will find rest for your souls.

So what's the point? Where have I missed it? How is it so easy to pick up another yoke? How am I always carrying somebody else's load? Why is their burden breaking my back? Why is their yoke, which was not fitted for me, my responsibility? And every time I pick up someone else's yoke or carry somebody else's burden, the first thing I notice is that there is no rest in my soul. There is no peace in my life. So once again the preacher had to go to the book and figure out what all this means and I've got an odd way of studying.

I tell you, don't, please, I defy every rule of the seminary but it gets me going and here's what I found last night. I went back to Exodus and once again reviewed that whole Red Sea thing because it seems to me the longer I live and the more I studied the more that whole Red Sea thing fits everything about the Christian life and so what I found again was that God told Israel to go where he put them. We all hear when I preach this.

He put them in a miserable place. He put them in a dangerous situation. He designed their steps.

It was not a bad decision by Moses, it was not a prayerless decision by the people, it was the decision that God made for Moses and for the people to be in that scary place. And so when they are there they see the Red Sea. They know the mountains are impassable and all of a sudden they hear the rumbling of chariots, the neighing of warrior horses, the clanging of swords and spears, the screaming and cursing and blaspheming of angry Egyptian soldiers who have seen their country destroyed.

There are no cattle left, there's no grass, there are no trees, the water is impure, hail has destroyed all crops and the firstborn in every family is dead which means many in the army have been killed. All throughout the land there's nothing but death. There are graves and boxes to put people in.

They've seen their country destroyed by the God of these people who were down there facing the sea and are trapped by the mountains and they are ripe for the pickings. And here's what the Bible says and I love it. It says when God delivered them they went out with boldness.

Talking about Israel I'm looking at verse number 8. And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt and he pursued the children of Israel. Look at it and the children of Israel went out with boldness. They bowed up, they stood straight up, they were a rich bunch of slaves now.

They had gotten all of Egypt's jewelry. Do you understand what I'm saying? Here's uneducated people that don't know how to fight, barely able to carry all the riches they've got but now they're trapped. But they went out with boldness.

We got money, we are free, Pharaoh can't touch us, Moses is the man. They went out with boldness. Verse number 9. So the Egyptians pursued them, watch it, and all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen, his army, and overtook them camping by the sea of Pahiroth near Baal Zephan.

Look at the next verse. And when Pharaoh drew near, there it is, the children of Israel lifted their eyes and beheld the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord.

Don't you think it's amazing how quickly you can go from boldness to fear? Don't you think it's amazing how you can leave a great church service here and before Monday comes you are cowering again at the same problem that you've been fighting for years? I think it, I just can't even comprehend this. It's life in a tiny little seedling right here in the scripture. Go out with boldness.

Hear the devil suddenly become fearful. Cry out to God. God delivers.

Get bold again. Hear the devil. He brings up the past.

Your load gets heavy. Your yoke's about to break your back. Suddenly you're full of fear again.

It's an unending cycle. And ladies and gentlemen, I want to tell you something. Pharaoh was not there to kill them.

That's been preached. But he was not there to kill them. He was there to recapture them.

He needed them to rebuild his nation. He needed that money back, that gold, that jewelry, that silver, and he needed those slaves to go to work and make more bricks and build more buildings and plow more gardens and raise more cattle so they could be a nation again. And I can prove what I'm telling you because here's what Pharaoh said in verse number 5. Now it was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people and they said, why have we done this? That we have let Israel go from serving us.

Do you hear what I'm telling you this morning? He wasn't there to wipe them out. He was there to bring them back. And I want you to understand something.

Pharaoh meant to recapture them and then they looked and there was nowhere to go. And as long as they stood still, fear paralyzed them. God saw them shaking and afraid and paralyzed and then that's when God said to Moses, tell the people to move forward.

If you stay here and look at that, if you stand here and remember that, you will never be free. So tell the people, stop crying out to me and move forward. Can you believe God said that? Hush your praying, stop your crying, now get up and move forward.

If you want to get out of this mess, move forward. Where are we going to go, God? We can't move mountains. That army is bigger than we are.

There's an ocean and God said, move that way. And when you move that way and take a step in that direction, God will open up that which hinders your progress. But I'm not, wait, but I'm not going to part the sea till somebody starts moving forward.

I want to tell you something. One of the heaviest burdens you can carry, one of the most irritating yokes to have on your shoulder is unforgiveness. Now don't ask me how I've woven this into this message.

I'm just giving you what the Lord gave me last night. One of the things that will steal rest from your soul, bend your back, break your spirit, and keep you depressed and defeated is unforgiveness. There is nowhere in Scripture at any time for any reason that the people of God are allowed to live with unforgiveness.

No matter what has been done to you or who did it, you are never given permission to hold things in your heart against anybody. And when people say, I don't know how to forgive, I don't know if I can forgive, let me tell you, if they nail you to a cross and split your side with a spear, you can still forgive because He did it first. And the same crucified and risen Jesus that said, Father, forgive them, they don't know what they're doing, is the same Jesus that now resides in you.

And if He could do it then, you can do it now. Unforgiveness is a seed that traps you at a standstill. As long as you stand there unwilling to move forward from that situation, that heartache, that disappointment, you will be paralyzed.

And I want you to hear me well. Satan knows he cannot recapture you, so he does his best to control you. And that's what he was doing to the children of Israel that day.

Instead of them thinking about where God was taking them and who they are now and how free and delivered, they were thinking about Him, Pharaoh, the Egyptians, the pain, the labor, the misery, the death, the killing, the poverty. They were looking back rather than moving forward, which means although Pharaoh did not have them physically, he had them mentally. They were still under his control.

And I would tell you this morning, brothers and sisters, ladies and gentlemen, Satan cannot recapture you, but he can control you mentally. He can keep the past in front of you. He can remind you of all the bad stuff.

I don't even need to start listing things. He can just enslave and entrap you and control your mind so that you cannot pray, you can't worship, you can't sing, you can't function, you can't do anything. You feel debilitated and drained all the time.

There is no rest in your soul. Your back is breaking from the load. And I want to tell you, as long as you stand there, as long as you stand still and listen to Pharaoh, as long as you look back rather than move forward, as long as you allow unforgiveness, the Red Sea of your emotions to loom in front of you, you are under Satan's control.

You may be a child of God, but you're under Satan's control. Can I get an amen from somebody? I want you to understand me, hear me plainly. This has to be clear.

You can be a child of God and be under the influence of the devil. You can be free in Jesus Christ and yet emotionally enslaved to yesterday. You can be blood-bought and blood-washed, filled with the Spirit and you are declared the temple of God, and yet Satan exercises reign over you, a bridle over your life.

You do what he tells you to do because you just won't move forward in Scripture and do what Christ told you to do. You prefer to stand there in fear and in paralysis and listen to them and listen to them. And as long as you do that, Satan exercises control over your life.

Listen to me now. If you've not heard another thing I've said today, listen to me now. I can tell you how you can at this moment, immediately, right now, defeat Satan, honor God, destroy the oppression in your life, and lighten your burden.

You can do all of that in this moment, right now, by saying to whomever, I forgive you, I will not hold this against you, I will not be a slave to Pharaoh any longer, I am a child of God, the devil is not going to keep control over me as long as I operate in unforgiveness. I don't have any rest, I don't have any power, and my burden is too heavy. But as of this moment, I do not have an enemy in my life, I do not have a competitor in my life, I forgive everybody, I am free because Jesus made me free.

I believe forgiveness is the most powerful, God-like action. You can perform, it will move you forward, it will drown Satan and his power over you. It always pleases God for you to be a forgiver.

The greatest men and women of the Bible were great forgivers, because something happened to all of them. A great marriage is made up of two great forgivers. A great friendship is made up of those who can forgive.

A great family is a family that can just forgive, walk away from it, be done with it, and refuse to let Satan have any more control. Forgiveness always defeats Satan. Forgiveness always brings victory to your life.

Forgiveness always lightens your burden, and forgiveness always brings rest to your soul. Stand with me please. I told Sandra yesterday, I can't, I'm not gonna be able to do three services on Sunday much longer at the rate and at the length I do them.

I said I'm cutting my time down that I'm preaching, because we need more prayer anyway. I know, I know what I'm about to tell you is the truth. There are people in this building today who are prisoners in your mind.

Oh, you're on your way to heaven, but in your mind you're a prisoner to somebody or to something that happened. That's why your load is so heavy, and this yoke is so miserable. There are people here today who haven't been happy in a long time, or free in a long time.

Now you can either continue to carry it, or you can come to Jesus and say, I understand you're meek and lowly in heart, and you told me to learn from you, so here I am Lord, teach me. Take out the fight and the will to be right and first, and just let me have peace for my soul. I'll ask anybody I need to to forgive me.

If it takes it, I'll get on one knee, because I want peace and rest in my soul. I want this to be over. I want to be like Jesus.

If that's you, I'm asking you to come down and stand with me. If that's you, because I just gave somebody some good news this morning, and here's the good news. Look right here.

Here's the good news. You don't have to go out the way you came in. You don't have to carry out what you brought in, because Jesus is a healer, a forgiver, and he gives rest.

I'm waiting. Come on. Well there's more than this, because many of us have adjusted to the unforgiveness.

We've learned how to deal with it, work with it. I haven't heard much from y'all this morning. You know, you can get used to misery, but I think it bears repeating.

You can be a child of God and be under the control of Satan. Paul writes to the Corinthians. Are y'all hearing me? He writes to the church at Corinth and says, please forgive one another.

Please forgive so Satan won't get an advantage of us. That's how Satan takes over. When we harbor things against people, Satan says, that's all I need right there.

I can control everything else, but the split second you let it go from your heart, Satan loses control. And listen to me, that sea of unforgiveness will part and you can walk across to where God wants you to be. How many council members we got here this morning? And pastors, hurry up, if you would, please come.

Because once again, I think it's only fitting that we anoint people with oil and pray for the power of forgiveness to overtake us today. Gentlemen, just anoint them with oil and you that are being anointed, hear me. Jesus has already spoken to your heart.

All you have to do is make the decision. I'm done with it. I'm over it.

I will not be captive any longer. If I lose money, no matter what I have to give up, I'd rather have peace for my soul and rest. Can I get an amen now? What's more important, peace or money? What's more important, rest or being right? Thank you.

So we sing. Father, sweep over my spirit, for as I pray, in fathomless below. You can sing it now.

All right. Every test in your Christian life is about the faithfulness of God. You see? That's all it's about.

It's about God's faithfulness to you. It's about whether what you read in the book is true. There's no other kind of test.

Now God says, if you will forgive, you will be cleansed and restored. If you will forgive, rest and peace will come to your soul. He says, if you forgive one another, Satan cannot touch you or control you anymore.

That's what he said. I believe it. I told Sandra last night, I will not have any more enemies.

I ain't, I'm not playing that game. I'm going to, listen to your preacher. See, I've had some situations.

I've had some preachers do me wrong, but we've all had people do us wrong. Haven't we? We've all had junk. I told her last night, I'm going to treat people the way I want to be treated.

They can spit on me, tell me to get out of their face, but I'm going to do the right thing. Listen, church, listen to your pastor. It's always right to love.

It's always right to forgive. Love suffers long and is kind. Love puts up with everything and just believes that God is in the arrangement.

Love will set you free. Forgiveness will set you free. And if you want God to forgive you and you know it, you have to forgive people and let them know it.

If I want to walk in purity and power, I have to walk even as he walked. And he just didn't have any enemies. Did you notice that father forgive them? They don't know what they're doing.

I'm telling you, I've learned the hard way in my life. Oh God, why do I have to learn everything the hard way? Eventually, how I treat people comes back to me. I get treated that way.

As a matter of fact, what goes around comes around. We reap what we sow. I want to stop this cycle right now.

So I forgive you and you and you and we may not be able to get along and we'll probably never be lunch mates or won't ever sleep together in a pump tent or take a trip to New Hampshire or anything like that. But you can be my brother, my sister, and I will treat you the way I want to be treated and I will treat you that way because it honors my heavenly father. Are you gonna praise him? If so, you ought to do it right.

I haven't prayed yet because I can't quit admonishing. Did you know a lot of our sicknesses, a lot of our syndromes up here all over can be traced back to an unforgiving spirit? Unforgiveness will make you sick. Unforgiveness will make you weak.

I'm telling you the truth. Father, in the name of Jesus, I'm asking you this morning to let these precious people who made a decision just by walking down to follow through with it, clear it up, clean it up and move forward. Don't let a one of us stay here paralyzed.

Don't let a one of us hear the chariots or the horses and don't let a one of us fall under the control of Satan. At this moment, in Jesus name, at this precise moment, set your people free, part the sea and let us watch our enemy drown. In Jesus, listen to me, in the name of Jesus, I pray it and believe that it's done.

Now go do what you know you ought to do. Then you'll find rest for your souls. Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight.

Oh Lord, my strength and my Redeemer. Amen. And before you walk out in the aisle, I love everybody.

I got nothing against nobody. Nobody owes me nothing except to love me. Adios amigos.

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