

Home Improvement

Week 4

Home Improvement: I Forgive You!

Story Time

Rip Van Winkle (by Washington Irving, 1819): He falls asleep during the American Revolution and wakes up 20 years later to a changed America—missing the revolution itself and the shifts in society.

Ephesians 5:14: “Awake, O Sleeper!” — A call to remain alert amid societal shifts, recognizing that things are changing irrevocably.

Key Message:

Things are changing all around us—culturally, spiritually, and personally. We must wake up to these shifts because waiting for the past won't bring it back. The future is approaching. Like Rip Van Winkle, many of us may be sleeping through vital moments in our lives.

August 10, 2006 – A Defining Moment

Why Forgiveness Matters:

It begins with the **Cross**: Jesus' ultimate act of forgiveness—"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

Christian forgiveness is rooted in grace, given freely, regardless of deserving it. Forgiveness is about **releasing others** from judgment—placing them in God's hands—while acknowledging that sin and evil are not justified.

The Process of Forgiveness:

1. **Recognize** your need for forgiveness—both from God and others.
2. **Receive** God's forgiveness by faith—let go of shame and self-condemnation.
3. **Release** others—extend mercy and grace, just as you received it.

Clarifications:

Forgiveness does **not** mean:

Ignoring or tolerating evil.

Excusing harmful behaviors.

Reconciliation at the expense of justice.

It's about **freeing yourself** from hate, resentment, and bitterness.

Practical Steps:

Seek God's forgiveness

Forgive yourself

Forgive others

Ask for forgiveness from others

Inspiring Example:

Kevin Ramsby: Forgave and ministered to his intruder after being stabbed over 40 times—a powerful example of radical forgiveness.

Let's Reflect and Act:

Will you ask for forgiveness where needed?

Will you extend forgiveness to others, even if it's difficult?

Remember, forgiveness is the key to awakening—and the first step toward healing and home improvement.

Altar Call:

Come forward to surrender your hurt, bitterness, and anger.

Seek God's mercy and ask Him to help you forgive and be free.

Closing Thought:

Forgiveness is not a sign of weakness but a step toward spiritual strength. Just as Rip Van Winkle missed the revolution, don't let unforgiveness cause you to sleep through your own restoration and renewal.