

*Christmas at the Movies*  
*Home Alone*

Good morning and welcome to church. Thanks again to all of you for being here...Your presence matters!! Our teams work really hard to make this church feel like your church.

I'm often overwhelmed at the amount of great people God has brought to us here at City Hope.

Did you know we have a group of people who show up here every Saturday to set all of this up? And another group that stays after church to take it all down. Week in and week out.

Would you guys help me show some love to all of our teams who make Sunday happen??

If you're looking for a place to get plugged in, one of these teams is a great place to start. Another great place to jump in is our Christmas Eve Services. 3 services. Family serve opp.

Last week we kicked off our series called Christmas at the movies.

This is a fun season where we are spending a few weeks combining faith and film to help everyone see and believe in the true meaning of Christmas. We do this by looking at the Godly characteristics we see in the life of Jesus. As well as some of the commands He gives to us.

Today I want to tackle a topic that's not the most fun. For some reason God keeps telling me to preach on these kinds of things...so I'm just being obedient. So, if you don't like today's message...take it up with Him.

Today we are going to talk about...**Forgiveness.**

Forgiveness is the heart and essence of being a Christian. It effects how we behave and without it, (Listen to this next part) we cannot be healthy.

**Without forgiveness we cannot be healthy.**

Here is a fact for all of us...someone is going to hurt you. Someone is going to say something, do something, throw something. You are going to get betrayed, hurt, stepped on, abandoned, taken advantage of.

The question is what are you going to do with that?

The movie that is going to help us this week is a Christmas classic...Home Alone.

Young Kevin McAlister's family is gearing up for a big Christmas vacation. and Kevin is feeling pretty picked on and mistreated. Let's take a look at this first clip.

### Show Clip | 11:28 - 12:37

Kevin felt hurt...and his words came from that place.

Have you ever said something in the heat of the moment? You wish you could just rewind that moment and edit that part out.

If you're human, you've done this. Not only have you done it, but someone has also probably done it to you.

Each of us can recall where we needed to receive forgiveness or needed to give it.

Jesus actually speaks to this in some incredible ways. Let's take a look at what Jesus tells Peter in Matthew 18.

Stand

**Matthew 18.21-36 | <sup>21</sup> Then Peter approached him and asked, "Lord, how many times must I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? As many as seven times?" <sup>22</sup> "I tell you, not as many as seven," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven. <sup>23</sup> "For this reason, the kingdom of heaven can be compared to a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. <sup>24</sup> When he began to settle accounts, one who owed ten thousand talents was brought before him. <sup>25</sup> Since he did not have the money to pay it back, his master commanded that he, his wife, his children, and everything he had be sold to pay the debt. <sup>26</sup> "At this, the servant fell facedown before him and said, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you everything.' <sup>27</sup> Then the master of that servant had compassion, released him, and forgave him the loan. <sup>28</sup> "That servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him, started choking him, and said, 'Pay what you owe!' <sup>29</sup> "At this, his fellow servant fell down and began begging him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' <sup>30</sup> But he wasn't willing. Instead, he went and threw him into prison until he could pay what was owed. <sup>31</sup> When the other servants saw what had taken place, they were deeply distressed and went and reported to their master everything that had happened. <sup>32</sup> Then, after he had summoned him, his master said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. <sup>33</sup> Shouldn't you also have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' <sup>34</sup> And because he was angry, his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured until he could pay everything that was owed. <sup>35</sup> So also my heavenly Father will do to you unless every one of you forgives his brother or sister from your heart."**

Pray

I think Peter is trying to get a little cute with Jesus here. He's putting a mathematical equation on giving people forgiveness. Jesus is obviously much smarter and comes back with a bigger equation.

**When it comes to forgiveness, we are really good at keeping score.**

You may be slow to remember past things. Your math skills may be weak...but you sure can remember that time 12.5 years ago at 2:30 pm when they said that thing that hurt.

You can recall that one pretty quickly, right. That's what we do.

I came across this illustration in my studying. **(Show Excel Spreadsheet Picture)**

We keep score, don't we?

You know what happens when we keep score? We never end up with the right equation. We carry this with us, and we get mad. We get snippy. We get bitter. We hold in anger.

It takes a toll on your life. It weighs you down. It wears you out.

That's what Jesus is teaching here...stop keeping count. It's too much. It's too heavy.

One of the issues when it comes to forgiveness is this...what are the boundaries of forgiveness? When is enough, enough? When can I delete this person? When are they cancelled?

Jesus blew their minds when he said...nope. There is no limit to forgiveness. You can never stop forgiving. 7 times is not the standard. Here is what He was getting at:

**Forgiveness is not about tracking offenses; it's about choosing to forget the score.**

That's what Jesus' formula was, is, and always will be. That's the formula He applies to me and you.

King David tells us of Gods formula in **Psalm 103.10-12 | He has not dealt with us as our sins deserve or repaid us according to our iniquities. <sup>11</sup> For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his faithful love toward those who fear him. <sup>12</sup> As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.**

We are so grateful that's Gods formula for us, but for some reason, it's really hard to apply that formula to those who hurt us. Especially family.

Let jump back to our movie for a second...we find some needing a lesson on forgiveness.

## Show clip I 1:08:02 – 1:12:26

There is that heaviness again. That weight being carried around and passing through generations.

When we try to use man's formula...meaning there is a limit to my forgiveness we see the weights starts stacking up.

God's Word warns us of this weight...**Ephesians 4.31-32** | <sup>31</sup> **Let all bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you, along with all malice.**  
<sup>32</sup> **And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.**

When a friend or a family member sin against us, we are reminded today of how important it is to our Creator that we forgive that person.

Peter was trying to keep score and Jesus said nah bro... that's not how this works. Well how does it work?

**Matthew 6.14-15** | <sup>14</sup> **“For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well. <sup>15</sup> But if you don't forgive others, our Father will not forgive your offenses.**

Meaning: **We cannot possibly walk with God in true fellowship if we refuse to forgive others.**

Forgiveness at its core is giving others what God has given you.

Grace and Mercy should flow out of a life that has received Grace and Mercy.

If you are a follower of Christ, you have received forgiveness. It has flowed to you, now it must flow through you.

The blueprint that Jesus is teaching us...Think about every time God has forgiven you...apply that to the person you are angry with.

We can forgive because we've been forgiven.

Pray and ask God to help you open up and release forgiveness.

Let's watch this last clip of our movie and see what the results of forgiveness could look like. **Show Clip I 1:35:17 - 1:38:50**

Healing starts with forgiveness. (Explain Band-aid)

Conclusion:

**Unforgiveness in the heart of believers is the single biggest open-door for the enemy. --Watchman Nee**

When I focus on the act or the person, its nearly impossible. When I focus on Christ, He shows me the formula to forgiveness.

**Romans 5.8 I But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

He knows...He's always known, and He still decided you were worth it.

Maybe the reason your marriage is in a mess is because you have never truly accepted God's forgiveness. **It's really hard to give something you have never received.** Change that today.

Take a bold step in your journey and accept the love and mercy and grace and forgiveness that Christ offers.

Don't walk out of here today knowing that God is calling you to take this step. We have Pastors ready and willing to talk with you and pray with you.

Maybe God is urging you to take a bold step of faith and offer forgiveness today. Let today be a day of freedom for you. Through faith, lets forgive like we've been forgiven

Whatever it is, let's say Yes to Jesus today.