SERMON: **Forgiving the Hard-to-Forgive**

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 45
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PLACE: Flint Hills Community Church

Introduction: One of the most difficult things we are ever called upon to do is to forgive those who have hurt us deeply. Let's face it, forgiveness of *any kind* is hard work. But there are some who hurt us so deeply that it's almost impossible to forgive them. Almost.

Why should we forgive?

It is required by God. (Matt. 6:14-15, Eph. 4:32)

It is essential for the health of the church. (2 Cor. 2:5-11)

It is the only way to stop the pain.

Some people are *especially* hard to forgive.

Chronic offenders

Those who hurt our children

Invisible people

Those who do not care

An amazing real-life example of forgiving the hard to forgive: Joseph forgives his brothers. (Genesis 45)

Forgiveness requires honestly acknowledging someone has hurt you. (45:4)

Forgiveness requires faith in the providence of God. (45:5,7-8, 50:19)

Forgiveness releases the offender from his obligation to you. (45:5, 50:19)

Forgiveness allows for restoration of relationship. (45:14-15)

What about the hardest persons of all to forgive?

Conclusion: In a world where life can be unbearably unfair because of the evil all around us, the only power we have at times to make it better is love's power to forgive, to heal memories of the past, and then to get on with living life to the fullest by the power of the Holy Spirit.