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Jessica: Welcome to Tangible: Theology Learned and Lived.
We're exploring the ways in which theology
permeates all aspects of life.
Through conversations with faculty
at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
we will challenge you to deepen your theology
and live out your faith in Christ.
I'm your producer and host, Jessica Bordeleau.
I'll talk with a variety of professors
on a variety of topics, something different every episode,
but all pointing to the intersection of faith and daily life
when it's Tangible: Theology Learned and Lived.
Today, we're talking about the significance of forgiveness
and the lack of it.
It's the topic of the newly published book, Unforgivable,
How God's Forgiveness Transforms Our Lives.
And I have the authors of the book
in the studio with me today,
Ted Kober and Dr. Mark Rockenbach.
So, Ted Kober is a certified Christian conciliator.
He assists those struggling with forgiveness
and guides them to reconciliation.
Over the last 30 years,
he has become an international speaker on the topic
and has written training courses, articles, Bible studies,
and books, including these titles,
Reconciling Under the Cross, Confession and Forgiveness,
and Conflict Resolution Versus Reconciliation.
In 2021, he was awarded an honorary doctorate
by Concordia Seminary St. Louis.
Mr. Kober, welcome to the show.

Ted: Thank you, it's great to be here.

Jessica: The book's co-author is Dr. Mark Rockenbach.
He is a professor of practical theology
and the director of the Doctor of Ministry program
here at Concordia Seminary St. Louis.
He also has a master's in counseling
and a PhD in psychology in which he researched forgiveness
as part of his dissertation.
He has served as a parish pastor, a professor,
and a mental health counselor.
Dr. Rockenbach, welcome to the show.

Mark: Thanks for having me.

Jessica: Between the two of you,

we have a wealth of knowledge and years of experience. You've helped people work towards mental health, specifically in the area of reconciliation and forgiveness, and that's gonna be the theme for our discussion today. First question, Mr. Kober, in the introduction of the book, this is what you wrote.

As a reconciler for over 30 years, I have found that unforgiveness is the most difficult challenge for Christians in conflict to overcome.

Many find it impossible.

What led you to that realization?

That's a big statement.

Ted: It is a big statement.

What led me to that realization is working with Christians in conflict.

And it's challenging to help them acknowledge their own sin, their own contribution to a conflict, but for me, the most difficult part was when Christians struggled to forgive.

Some refused to forgive, others struggled to forgive.

They wanted to, but just couldn't bring themselves to it.

And then there are also those who want to be forgiven, but are not finding it from others involved in their conflict.

And so it became obvious to me even for Christian people, the most challenging aspect of reconciliation has to do with overcoming unforgiveness.

Jessica: How would you define forgiveness?

Ted: So we are choosing to define forgiveness in a much more narrow sense than most books on this topic are. Most books look at it from a global perspective and even a secular perspective.

But we define forgiveness as how God has forgiven us through Christ, which is a very narrow definition.

So the definition of unforgiveness then is withholding God's gift of forgiveness when people are ready to be forgiven by God and by their brother or sister in Christ.

Jessica: How can we withhold God's forgiveness?

Ted: Because the gift of forgiveness we give is not our own. I can only forgive based on how God has forgiven me. In other words, forgiveness for me is a gift. I share that gift.

And the only way I can share that

is if I have received that from God already.
So when I'm unforgiving,
I'm withholding that gift to that person.
And sometimes as a result,
it becomes a block even for them to understand
how forgiven they are in Christ.

Jessica: Now, Dr. Rauchenbach,
when you wrote your dissertation for your PhD,
you described your research like this.
You studied the lived experience of non-clergy Christians
who forgave an interpersonal transgression.
That sounds fascinating to me.

Mark: Definitely with your definition, Mr. Kober, of forgiveness,
what made you choose that as your dissertation topic?
So I wanted to understand actually how people
were responding when someone had sinned against them.
And it was fascinating to listen to people's stories
because forgiveness, of course,
wasn't the first thing that they were thinking about,
or if they were, they had a difficult time with it.
Many of them were angry.
So when someone had sinned against them,
they were really angry about what had taken place,
and they tell their story about how angry they were.
So I really wanted to understand that.
So in a qualitative research,
what you do is you interview people
and you listen to their stories,
and their stories then help you to understand
the experience that they had
and what they had to go through to get to the point
of actually being able to forgive someone then
for this thing that they had done against them.
So what was significant about it was
all of them discovered and realized
that they could not forgive someone else
until they first realized how forgiven they were in Christ.
And that was a key to everyone in the research.
So because they were forgiven
and God had not used their own sins against them,
who were they then to refuse to forgive someone else?
So really the key was knowing how forgiven they were
in Christ actually helped them then to forgive
this other person who had sinned against them.
All of them talked about that.
Now, someone in their life helped them
to come to that point, like it was their pastor.
One case it was his father.

They all searched for something to help them with,
but once someone helped them process that,
that was the key, understanding how forgiven they were.
God had given them forgiveness,
so who were they to not give that forgiveness
to someone else?

And that's how they were able then to forgive
the other party who had sinned against them.

Jessica: Mr. Kober, in your work with reconciliation,
did you find that same thing to be true?

Ted: Yes, and it's why I asked Mark to co-author this book with me
is because what I'd experienced in 30 years of ministry
is what he was finding in his research, it just matched.

So an example is that I was doing a mediation
with several people who were deeply hurt by an individual,
and after some time that individual finally came
to confess his sin to them.

But on the other side of the table where the people were,
they were so deeply hurt, they didn't know how to respond.

So I asked them, do you believe what the Bible says
when it says, if we claim to be without sin,
we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

But if we confess our sins, God is faithful
and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us
from all unrighteousness.

And they said, yes, we believe that.

I said, then will you join me in proclaiming God's
forgiveness to this person who has just confessed to you
based on the words of Holy Scripture?

And I have a forum where we use scripture
and declare God's forgiveness to him.

So they together with me proclaimed God's forgiveness
to this person that just confessed.

Then I turned to them and I said,
now that you have proclaimed that God has forgiven them,
what is your response?

The anger you could see dropped out of their faces.

And they said, as God has forgiven both you and me,
I also forgive you your sins against me.

And it's that connection to God's forgiveness
that transforms people's lives, allowing them to do
what we cannot do on our own strength.

And that is to forgive as God has forgiven us.

We can only do that in the strength of knowing
how forgiven we are through Christ.

Jessica: What is the transforming power in that then?

How does the forgiver change?

Ted: God's forgiveness changes us.

It empowers us to live the Christian life,
to do that which is divine and not human.
Only through Christ can we do those kinds of things.
And so when we try to do something on our own strength,
we're gonna struggle, we're gonna fail,
or we're gonna refuse to do it.
But in Christ, we transform and live for him
instead of living for ourselves.

Jessica: So Dr. Rakenbach, in your research,
what is the psychological implications of not forgiving?

Mark: So one of the things that happened
when someone had sinned against them is,
the fancy term we use is they were ruminating on it
or cognitive looping.
So what happens is whatever the event was,
they were replaying that event over and over and over
in their mind.
And as they replayed it, they got angrier.
As they played it, they got more bitter.
As they replayed that event, they would add things to it
that really didn't happen,
but they had made some assumptions.
So it just got worse.
It became like a spiral.
They were spiraling downward into this dark pit.
And so when that happens,
we call that cognitive looping or rumination.
So the idea is how do you interrupt that looping?
In the psychological world, how they do it
is they do it through coping mechanisms.
You learn how to cope with the situation.
All right, so what's different in the church
is we still acknowledge the fact
that this looping is taking place.
It's happening.
And they're spiraling downward, of course,
because of the looping.
And well, so some things that happened with people then
when they do that, some of my participants, for example,
one in particular I remember is,
call her Joyce in the book,
in order to try to cope with the situation,
she actually started drinking alcohol.
She used alcohol to self-medicate then
about the spiral she was feeling.
And the other thing she did is she also picked up smoking,
which was not good for her either.
So she tried to find ways

to be able to cope with the situation,
but the things that she was doing
actually were causing more problems
and contributing even worse to her physical health,
mental health, spiritual health.
So those are some things that were going on.
But all those things were not helping her
because she was continuing to live in unforgiveness.
What forgiveness does is forgiveness interrupts that looping.
It interrupts those ruminations.
And it does so in a way
that coping mechanisms cannot help.
It does so in a way, because when you forgive someone,
you are unhitching yourself from them,
is how some of my participants talked about,
or you're letting go, you're putting it in God's hands.
And now all of a sudden they had peace,
peace in a way that they had not had before.
But it came because, as I said before,
first of all, they realized how forgiven they were.
They were able then to forgive the other person
for the sin that had been committed,
and that brought peace to their life.
And all this comes from outside of themselves.
What God has done for us through his son, Jesus Christ,
is outside of us.
And part of the problem,
some of the problem with the psychological stuff,
is it's all internal, it's things you have to do.
But with forgiveness, it's already been done.
It is a gift that has been given.
And you just share that same gift
that has been given to you
with someone else through forgiveness.

Ted: I'd like to add to that.
Throughout scripture, it talks about this.
So for example, Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5,
"For the love of Christ controls us,
"because we have concluded this,
"that one has died for all, therefore all have died.
"And he died for all that those who live
"might no longer live for themselves,
"but for him who for their sake died and was raised."
What transforms us?
The love of Christ, which is shown to us
in the forgiveness that he earned for us on the cross.
And it's that forgiveness that enables us,
that empowers us to live not for ourselves,

but for him who for our sake died and rose again.
In other words, when we struggle to forgive
or when we refuse to forgive,
what helps us get there is knowing
how forgiven we are in Christ.
That love of God demonstrated through the cross.
And that's what we're talking about.

Jessica: Is that a cognitive decision or is that a feeling?

Ted: I would say neither.

I would say it's the spirit working in us
through God's word, through that means of grace
that changes our hearts.
Some of it's cognitive, but forgiveness is not a feeling,
it's a decision.

It's something that we decide
whether we feel like forgiving or not.
But we do it because God has forgiven us.

Mark: If it was just based upon our feelings,
we probably wouldn't forgive anyone.
And this is why I think the book too
is so different from anything else that's out there
is because like even in the psychological community,
they're more kind of in tune to the feelings
or in tune to maybe the cognitive thing
that you guys think you gotta think through
or you gotta emotionally kind of attend to it.
But scripturally speaking, what we can do
is we can actually attend to it
through what God has done through us through Christ.
That's a whole new way of thinking about it.
So that the approach is different,
but I think the approach is much better
to know that you're forgiven.
There's nothing like it in all the world
when someone announces forgiveness of sins to you
and tells you and acknowledges to you
that what Christ has done
through this forgiveness of sins for you.
And when that happens, it is as Ted says,
it's that Holy Spirit then that gives you the ability
then to forgive others.
I would never ever be able to forgive
someone else on my own.
I mean, I could try,
but I think I'd always end up back with unforgiveness
or wanting something from them or, you know,
but I can't do it on my own.
I need that faith in Jesus Christ

that gives me the ability then to forgive someone who has wronged me in some way.

Jessica: What was your initial motivation to study this and work towards this?

Ted: When people live in unforgiveness, they suffer terribly.

The truth is those who are unforgiving suffer far more than those they haven't forgiven.

Unforgiveness is the poison we drink hoping the other person will die.

Who does it hurt?

Who does it imprison?

And I met people that had been bitter over something for more than 40, 50 years, and they were in prison and they had anger, they had bitterness that broke up other relationships in their life because they were so angry and bitter, they were miserable to be around.

Or they found things like alcohol or other drugs to self-medicate because they hurt so much.

And there's only one thing to free them from the prison of their unforgiveness, and that's Christ's forgiveness for them.

And when they embrace that, it takes away that desire to withhold the gift for others.

Jessica: Your original area of profession was in business administration, right?

Ted: Right.

Jessica: This is a shift from that.

Ted: It is. What happened?

So I was managing my dad's estate, and in eight years, we had 59 lawsuits.

I employed 30 attorneys in seven different states.

And one of the most emotionally difficult lawsuits involved me leasing a large commercial property to a Christian who then defaulted on the lease, and we were in litigation for a year.

We were in court twice and headed there a third time when he convinced me through the mediator to try Christian mediation.

And I was reluctant.

I refused at first, but after spending all this money on this litigation and not resolving the issue at all, I decided to go into mediation.

We'd been in the courts for a year with no resolution, but in two Saturdays with three Christian mediators, we not only resolved the material issue, the financial issue we were fighting at,

but we reconciled as brothers in Christ
through confession and forgiveness.
And how did that begin for me?
In the mediation, when we told our stories,
one of the mediators who was my pastor took me aside
to talk to me about my sin in the conflict.
Now, I thought I was the victim
and I justified all my behavior based on that.
But in the course of what I had done,
I had sinned against the man who had sinned against me.
I said angry words, I gossiped about him,
I slandered about him.
The anger affected my other relationships,
especially my family.
I was just enraged by all this stuff.
And as I acknowledged my sin before my pastor,
he proclaimed God's forgiveness to me.
We call that private confession and absolution,
theologically, but from a very practical point,
I was acknowledging my sin before God
in the presence of my pastor.
And he said, Ted, I have good news for you.
Jesus died for all those sins you just named.
And on the basis of Holy Scripture,
your sins are forgiven.
As far as the East is from the West,
so far has God removed your transgressions from you.
I was aware of now of how forgiven I was
on things that I hadn't even seen.
And so I was prepared to go and confess my sins
against the man who had sinned against me
and to forgive him.
Well, his pastor was a mediator
doing something similar with him.
And so when we came together,
we reconciled through mutual confession
and sharing God's forgiveness with one another.
And then it was easy to negotiate the material issues
and what the courts couldn't resolve in a year,
in just two hours after reconciliation,
we had fully negotiated.
That turned my life upside down.
And I was so impacted by that experience
that less than a year later,
I had left the business world
to get trained as a Christian conciliator.
And that became my full-time profession.

Jessica:

Dr. Rockenbach, what motivated you

to pursue the study of forgiveness?
Mark: So when I left seminary,
the congregation that I went to,
it was in conflict.
The previous pastor was in conflict with the congregation.
And so I arrived and didn't know quite what to do
or how to handle things, you know,
cause I was new, but I wanted to help them in some ways.
So right away out of seminary,
I was in a situation that was a conflict
that I wasn't part of,
but the congregation was hurting as a result of it.
People had left,
there were divisions within the congregation,
they were having financial problems,
all those things were taking place as a result of conflict.
So I was very interested then in finding ways
to be able to help and to assist them.
And we did some things,
but then I had Ted Kober was,
I think at that time working for Peacemaker ministry
where they were going around and doing these conferences
and throughout the districts, throughout the Synod.
So I attended one of those,
saw him at other places,
and that was very helpful to get a different way,
a process by which to be able to help people
who are in conflict.
And into the process of doing that,
then I also got nominated to be district reconciler.
So every district in our Senate has four reconcilers,
two are pastors, two are lay people,
Synod trains you to do this work.
And the majority of what I did there
as part of the district office was coaching and mediation.
So congregations that were in conflict,
or they're, let's say pastor and the principal
were in conflict, or whoever it was,
I would go in and coach and then we'd have mediations
to be able to help them
because we wanted to address those conflicts
before they actually got to the district president's office.
Cause usually once they got to his office,
it was so bad and things were, it was just bad.
And so usually a worker would have to leave
or take a call somewhere else.
But we were trying to do is being very proactive.
And so I spent a lot of time doing that kind of work

and helping people, walking them through this process.
And then at that time I was working
on my doctorate degree then,
I wanna do something in this area
because this is what I do
and I wanted to learn more about it.
And so my PhD dissertation then was about
how do people, when they've been sent against,
then how do they get to the process of actually forgiving?
And interesting enough,
the psychological community has studied forgiveness
because people were showing up in counseling offices
and says, I need help forgiving my husband,
my wife, my brother, whoever it is.
Psychological community didn't know what to do with that.
So they started studying it.
So they have some interesting things
and they all agree it's a process.
But what they don't agree on is what that process is
and the actual key to be able to help people.
They have all different opinions about that.
So I wanted to study that
and I wanna contribute then
to the psychological literature
and even to the church at large,
then using research about what that means
and what that looks like.
So the PhD work just helped me to better understand that
and listening to people's stories is huge
because it really gives you a sense then
of what they're struggling with and what the issues are
and how to help them then with that process
that they need to go through.

Jessica: Did you find that the forgive and forget idea was prevalent?
Is that the same thing?

Ted: So it is prevalent, but it's not biblical.
When God says in Jeremiah,
I will remember your sins no more,
it's not because he has dementia and can't remember
and therefore he forgives.
God chooses not to participate in that sin
by remembering it, bringing it up and looping
as Mark talked about.
He chooses to forgive
and therefore he remembers that you are forgiven,
not what you have done.
So likewise, some people,
that phrase in English confuses people

because they think they have to forget the offense to forgive it.

Well, that's ridiculous.

You're not gonna forget major offenses in your life, but you can remember them differently.

You can remember that you forgave that particular issue.

And over the years, because I was so interested in this, I met with different people

that had miracle stories of forgiveness and that's what they learned to do.

They hadn't forgotten what had happened.

So for example, Gladys Staines was a missionary in India.

She was born in Australia.

She married the director of the hospital she worked at there in India who was also an Australian.

His name was Graham.

And they had three children.

And one day Graham went to the jungle to speak about Jesus, his favorite thing to do.

And he took his two sons with him.

His two sons were six years old and 10 years old at the time.

But in the middle of the night, these Orthodox Hindus hated Graham and his message about Jesus.

So they surrounded the car.

They started the car on fire.

And when Gladys found out about it, of course she was devastated.

And now her husband and two boys were dead.

In India, I believe because of the caste system, they're fixated on justice.

And so one day a reporter came from Chennai from a newspaper called The Hindu, a Hindu newspaper in a Hindu country, and came to Gladys to report to her that the law enforcement had caught 12 of the men most responsible.

The leader got the death sentence and the others got life in prison.

And what he wanted to know is, is that justice?

Gladys responded with, as to what the court has decided, I have no comment for God has given us government to provide justice in our land, reflecting what Paul writes in Romans 13 about the government.

But as for me, she says, I have forgiven those men.

Well, this reporter couldn't believe it.

He says, how could you forgive them?
Did you forget what they did?
As if Gladys will ever forget that.
She says, I forgive them because Jesus Christ
has forgiven me.
What this land needs for healing is forgiveness,
not retribution.
And that story went worldwide.
And people came from New York and London and Paris
and Toronto to interview this woman
to see if that's what she said was true.
But she was a very quiet person
and she refused most interviews.
And I was able to make contact with her
and she agreed to meet with me.
And I met with her and here's a miracle of a woman
that forgave these men, Hindu men,
for brutally murdering her husband and her two children.
There's not a bitter bone in her body.
But when I talked to her, she said,
every day she missed her family.
And when she saw boys that were now in their 20s,
she says, that's the ages my sons would be.
She had not forgotten anything, but she had forgiven.
And she remembered that she forgave them.
She missed her boys and husband dearly,
but she had forgiven them.
So forgive and forget is not helpful.
It confuses people on the relationship between those two.

Jessica: And that sounds different than reconciliation, right?
The offenders, the killers didn't say they were sorry.
They didn't repent.

Ted: It was one-sided forgiveness.
Christ died for us while we were still sinners.
Paul writes about that in Romans chapter five.
He didn't wait till we came to him
begging for mercy and reconciliation.
He died for us before we ever repented
and forgiveness was made available to us.
Now, it doesn't do us any good
unless we believe that that gift is for us.
And that's where confession and faith come into play.
The forgiveness is there for the whole world.
Jesus died for the sins of the whole world,
but not everybody benefits from it
because they don't believe that they need it
and believe that Jesus provided that forgiveness for them,
which gets back to the key again.

How do you overcome unforgiveness?

By remembering and acknowledging in confession of faith that God has forgiven you.

Jessica: Does that remove the earthly consequences of the offense or the sin?

Mark: So there are always gonna be sometimes earthly consequences. Sometimes those earthly consequences are done like through the government, like Ted was saying that happened. Sometimes they're just natural earthly consequences that take place. Consequences can be important because it can curb the behavior. So if there's a consequence there, then the person won't continue to do that behavior. And that's a good thing because you don't want it to continue to hurt or harm other people, for example. So the consequences of our sin are placed upon Jesus so that we don't have to eternally suffer from that. But there are sometimes earthly things, it's important that we have earthly consequences so that people don't do it again. And also for others to say, well, look, that person got caught and look what happened to them. I don't wanna end up in that situation. It's kinda like when I'm driving down the road and I see the police have pulled someone over, I'm like, oh, I don't wanna get pulled over. I see there's someone else sitting up there. So I slow down. So that consequence in that situation, someone else is getting the consequence, but it impacts me because I'm gonna change my behavior, change what I'm doing, seeing what someone else is enduring.

Jessica: A dear friend of mine is in an abusive relationship and her husband keeps saying, you need to forgive me. You need to forgive me. You're not being a good Christian if you don't keep forgiving me and not get a divorce, even though I'm abusing you or not try to move out. How would you help her? What should I say to her?

Mark: So, I mean, she does have to get to the point where she can forgive him,

but it doesn't mean she has to stay in that situation and continue to be abused.

And so this is especially a situation where hopefully she'd have a good mental health counselor, good pastor, people who support her and help her to get out of that situation.

Forgiving someone doesn't mean that you stay there and allow the abuse to continue to take place.

That would not be a good thing.

You can forgive someone and be able to move on into a safer environment or a safer place.

So you don't wanna be in a situation where someone's just gonna continue to abuse you.

You need to get out of that situation and that person's gonna have to deal with their own things, but especially abuse is a situation like that.

You know, sometimes I've worked with situations where, for example, someone had abused children and now they're coming to a congregation.

They wanna be part of a congregational life.

And that's fine, that's great.

It's great that they wanna be part of congregational life, come to church, but we have to make sure though that we protect the children in that congregation so that something doesn't happen.

Because anyone who has some sort of an addiction or a desire for a certain thing, sometimes it can be habitual, you know?

And it can be something that even though they're trying, they can still end up slipping back into that situation doing it again.

All right, so if that's the case, then you're gonna have to work out a way to have good, clear boundaries so that that person won't have any access to the children or will be around children.

Like you wouldn't ask them to teach first grade Sunday school, for example.

That would not be a wise thing to do.

You wouldn't wanna put them in a situation where they're left alone with children.

Or if it has to be like teenagers, they go on the youth gathering with them and they're one of the chaperones.

That kind of thing wouldn't be good.

So we gotta make sure to be honest about what environment they are in, the context they're in,

how they're gonna operate in that context.
And so some of these churches had to figure that out.
How do we have him part of the congregation
but do so in such a way that doesn't give opportunity
for something else to happen
if those desires would overcome him?
So creating good boundaries
is a very important thing to do.
I mean, forgiveness is still a part of that, of course,
and you wanna forgive someone,
but if they continue doing it over and over and over again,
you're just contributing then to that particular behavior.

Jessica: As a parent of little kids,
I feel like I am the dealer of forgiveness at home,
where if the boys are fighting and they need to apologize
and I need to teach them to forgive each other,
and when somebody keeps doing the same snotty thing to me
over and over again and they say, I'm sorry,
then I wanna forgive them each time.
But sometimes I feel like it is the free pass card.
Mom, I'm sorry, I forgive you.
What else can I...
I wanna teach them and train them
and mentor them to stop sass talking me,
but also forgive them the way that God does
and completely still give them forgiveness and love.
Give me some help here.

Ted: So that's a great example
where you have a teaching opportunity now to say,
as God has forgiven me, I also forgive you,
but sin has earthly consequences.
And because I love you and God loves you,
here's gonna be the discipline as a result of that.
But know that you are loved and forgiven,
but this discipline will help you
to change your behavior in the future.

Jessica: Who is the intended audience for this book?

Mark: I think there's a couple intended audiences.
So number one, anyone who is struggling with forgiveness,
and that could be a lot of different people.
In fact, it could be most of us
who struggle with forgiveness.
The other thing could be helpful for
is those who work with people
who are struggling with forgiveness.
It also can be used for pastors for preaching,
Bible studies.
I've had quite a few people ask about,

could this be used as a Bible study?
So if you have a small group in your congregation
that's looking for a book to use
as a Bible study on forgiveness,
it'd work very well for that also.
So I think there's a variety of different ways
that you can use the book.
And that was the intent.

Jessica: So it's not just all theory and ideas,
but like you said, that there are questions at the end
that you could work through and talk through.
And again, the name of this book is Unforgivable,
How God's Forgiveness Transforms Our Lives.
It's published by Concordia Publishing House,
and you can find a link to it on our website.
All right, so final question.

Ted: What do you want our listeners to remember?
I have really good news for you.
God knows everything about you.
He knows the good that you've done
with the gifts He's given you,
but He also knows all of your failures.
He knows all of your sins.
In fact, He knows them more than you will ever realize
or acknowledge before Him.
But nonetheless, He loves you.
He loves you so much that He sent His Son on the cross
to die for you and pay for your sins.
And so the good news is this.
God made Jesus, who had no sin, to be sin for you
so that in Him you would become the righteousness of God.
You are forgiven.
You are His precious child.
Receive that gift from God,
but the gift is not for you alone.
It's not for you to hoard or to admire, put up on a shelf.
No, the gift is meant to be given away.
So receive God's gift and then forgive
as you've been forgiven in Him.

Jessica: Thank you.
That's it for today.
I'd like to thank our guests.
Ted Kober, thanks for coming all the way from Montana.
Dr. Mark Rockenbach, thanks for being here.
And thank you for listening.
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or on our website, ConcordiaTheology.org.

We've got a lot more resources there.

Check it out.

If you'd like to see the show continue,
please subscribe, share, and leave a review.

I'm your host and producer, Jessica Bordeleau.

Join me next time when we talk about the intersection
of theology and daily life

when it's Tangible: Theology Learned and Lived.