

## **Finding Light in Dark Places: A Forgiveness Meditation**

Seeing light in dark places takes practice. It's something we need to practice every day. Today we're going to practice seeing the light in dark places by exploring the idea of forgiveness.

Before we start, it's important to clear up some misconceptions about forgiveness. Most of us know that God wants us to forgive others, but in reality, it's not that easy. Forgiveness is messy. It requires great strength. Some of us have been wounded very, very deeply. We need to understand that forgiveness doesn't mean excusing or condoning an action that has been taken. What it means is that you're finally able to move on, you're finally able to heal.

But we also need to accept that forgiveness isn't something that can be forced. It can feel impossible to forgive when the pain goes too deep. You may be unable to release all your anger, pain or resentment, and that's ok. This morning's practice is about catching just a glimpse of light in dark places.

So we'll start by inviting Jesus into our space. Close your eyes. Picture Jesus in the room with you, or picture yourself in a special or sacred place with Jesus by your side.

[...]

With Jesus now beside you, begin reflecting on a time you felt hurt by someone in your life. It could be a time you felt betrayed, misunderstood, rejected, or deceived. It could be a time when someone let you down or a time when you didn't feel appreciated or respected. Bring to mind that scenario and describe to Jesus the emotion of what happened, rather than the details. Share with him what's beneath all that hurt.

[...]

Now ask Jesus to show you a little bit of light in that situation. Maybe you experienced growth as a result of what happened. Maybe you learned something new about yourself, or you found strength within you that you didn't know you had. Maybe you were drawn deeper into connection with Jesus, or maybe a new relationship was kindled in the midst of the pain. Acknowledge the darkness but ask Jesus to reveal any light in the situation.

[...]

Sometimes the light comes from within. Even though it may be difficult, ask Jesus to give you even the slightest bit of compassion for the person you want to forgive. Ask Jesus to reveal to you the person as he sees them. Ask him what kind of hurt, fear, or trauma they have experienced. Hear Jesus whisper that he loves them, even though you may not understand how or why. Now imagine Jesus weeping for the pain this person has experienced, as well as the pain they have caused. Is there a glimpse of the light of compassion within you? It only takes the tiniest amount to create an image of forgiveness.

[...]

If you aren't ready to let go of your hurt right now, that's ok. Tell Jesus that you want to forgive, but you just can't bring yourself to do it right now. Imagine Jesus looking at you with tenderness and forgiveness in his eyes. Ask him to help you let go when you're ready. Ask Jesus to soften your heart and free you from the pain you've been holding. Hear the words of Jesus as he tells you that your desire to forgive is a glimpse of light in the darkness, and he will bring that light into focus if you let him.

[...]

As we finish our imaginative prayer time with Jesus, remember his words when he said “if you forgive other people, God will also forgive you.” But this doesn’t mean that God is stingy with his forgiveness. It means that in order to truly embrace God’s forgiveness of us, we need to experience the light of forgiveness for others in our own heart. Remember that forgiveness isn’t something you do for the person who wronged you, it’s something you do for yourself. Forgiveness releases anger, resentment, and breaks the chains of the past. Forgiveness creates closure and freedom. When you practice forgiveness for others, you practice seeing the light in dark places. And this helps you begin to see God’s light in your own heart.