

CONTACT



AUTUMN 2019

Are you waiting for somebody to say “I’m sorry”? A person in your life - a family member or a friend or a colleague - who owes you an apology, but it hasn’t yet arrived? Maybe because they aren’t aware of what they’ve done, so you’re waiting for them to realise or to have the conversation where you can tell them. Maybe because they are aware of what they’ve done but feel there’s nothing to apologise for. Maybe because they simply don’t care about the situation. Whatever the reason, do you have someone from whom you want to hear “sorry”?

Some apologies, of course, we don’t want to hear because they seem false. Like a public figure offering their humble sorrow over something they’ve done which has gained them bad publicity: they aren’t actually sorry about doing wrong to others; they’re just sorry about harming their own reputation, losing income, getting caught out. Or like a person who apologises to you because they’ve been told to do it: you know they don’t mean it; it’s insincere. Or the individual who genuinely says “sorry” but makes no changes to their behaviour, so very quickly they are saying it all over again, and again, and again. There are apologies which have little or no value to us.

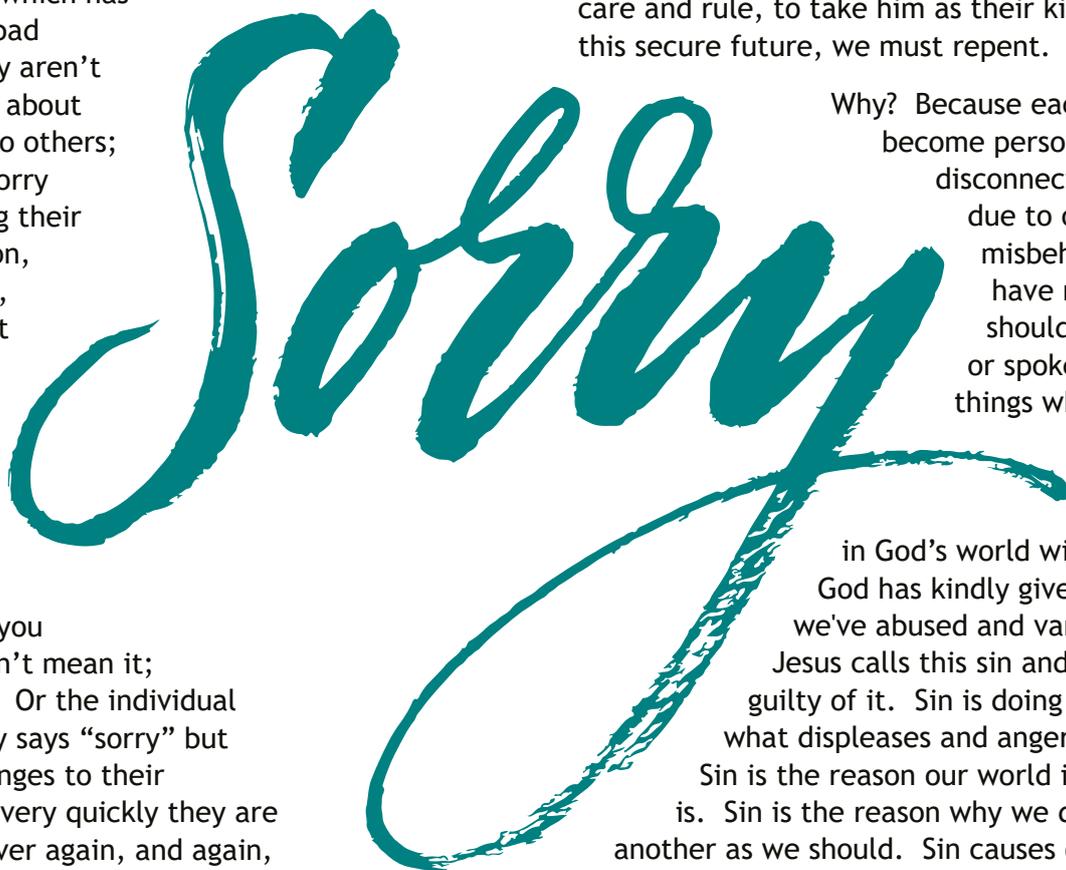
But true sorrow is valuable. A real desire by the other person to: show remorse for what they’ve done; put things right where they can; and treat you differently in the future. A “sorry” like that can transform a situation. It has tremendous power to open up the opportunity for forgiveness and reconciliation. Are you waiting for somebody to say “sorry” to you in that way? What about the other way round? Is anybody waiting for you to say “sorry” in that way?

According to Jesus, the answer you should give to that final question is “yes”. The first time in the Bible that we meet Jesus speaking publicly to

crowds, he opens with the following words which capture the heart of his message to us all:

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”

What does Jesus mean? To repent is to change your mind. But it’s clear from the rest of Jesus’ words that he does not mean simply for his hearers to make a few new choices. Rather, it’s a radical call to a whole new way of life. A call to turn from chasing our own desires to come back to God. That’s why he links it to what he calls the “kingdom of heaven.” He means that what he’s saying is from God, who lives in heaven. The God who made everything and everyone - our creator. The God who has supreme power, knowledge and authority. That God is inviting all people to come under his loving care and rule, to take him as their king. But to gain this secure future, we must repent.



Why? Because each one of us has become personally disconnected from God due to our misbehaviour. We have not lived as we should; we have done or spoken or thought things which go against what God made us to be. We live

in God’s world with lives that God has kindly given to us, but we’ve abused and vandalised both. Jesus calls this sin and all of us are guilty of it. Sin is doing what is wrong: what displeases and angers our creator. Sin is the reason our world is in the mess it is. Sin is the reason why we do not treat one another as we should. Sin causes our troubled consciences. Sin is the reason we have to apologise to one another. Sin is the reason why God seems so far away or, even, non-existent. We have selfishly treated our creator badly. However, we can repent and return to him, says Jesus.

But that must begin with “sorry”. We cannot simply go to God as though there’s nothing to apologise for. We have to go to him truly sorry, wanting his forgiveness for how we have behaved. When Jesus says to repent that has to include sorrow, it has to include a true regret for misbehaviour and a heart’s desire to be reconciled to God.

On one well-known occasion, Jesus described all this using a story about a family upset. His tale is of a father with two sons. One of the sons demands his

share of the family savings, then heads off to spend it however he likes, despising all his father's wisdom and hopes. The result is disastrous, leaving him a broken man with no future. Finally, he decides to go home, hoping his dad might at least employ him in a small role in the family business. But he knows he has to begin with this apology: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you." That's a powerful picture of what it means to repent. However, Jesus' story does not end there. On his return, his father lovingly welcomes him back, forgives all that's passed between them, and throws a party to rejoice in his return. It's a beautiful reconciliation. But the story is not just about healing family upsets. In that father Jesus was showing how God responds to those who turn from their sins back to him. He welcomes us lovingly, with open arms.

You can know God. But it must begin with "sorry". Sorry for how you have ignored or despised him. Sorry for how you have assumed he owed you. Sorry for the ways you have misused your life, showing disrespect to God and hurting others. Sorry for anything you have ever done which has spoiled this world which God gave to us. Can you do that? If you can, then God is waiting to forgive you and welcome you into his eternal family.

Never saying "sorry" ultimately creates only misery. That's true generally in life. It's certainly true in regard to God. Rejecting him leads to our eternal loss. But Jesus alone offers the way back to God. Listen to him and discover this for yourself. We have some sermons on 15th Sep where you can do just that. We hope you'll come along.

David Last
Pastor of Forest Baptist Church



Special Events

The impact of childhood

Gayle Pennant

A public talk and discussion

7.15pm-9.00pm

Fri 13th Sep 2019

Leytonstone Library



Further info: tinyurl.com/yynlysa5

You can't say that!

Two Sunday sermons on the words of Jesus

10.30am & 5pm
Sun 15th Sep





Forest Baptist Church

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To contact our pastor, David Last, just use the details above.



Sunday Services

Morning : 10.30am
Evening : 5.00pm

**Bible Teaching
Every Sunday**

Friday Club

* 3.30-5.00pm * Term Time *
* For ages 5-11 * FREE *
Get in touch with Pauline on
07895 112 915

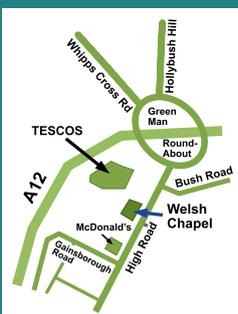
JustTalk

An informal group which gets together in Leytonstone every fortnight. Come and meet others, discuss an issue, seek advice or, even, simply practise your English. To find out more, visit:

forestbaptist.org.uk/justtalk

ENGLISH CLASSES

Contact Ferris on 07727 082 449
or ferrislindsay@gmail.com



Forest Baptist uses the Welsh Chapel on the High Road in Leytonstone, halfway between McDonald's and the Green Man Roundabout. Buses 66, 145, 257, W13, W14 and W19 all stop outside. The Tube station is just over half a kilometre away. A few car parking spaces are available on the site. Some of our activities occur in other locations. Please get in touch to find out times and places.