

DAYS
20-26



S.C.A.R.S.

ABSOL.



UTION

DAY 20

SURGERY NEEDED

My wife, Allison, grew up on the mission field in West Africa in a small country called Togo. During her time there, she noticed, among some of the tribes, that if a boy stubbed his toe, a friend or the mother would strike the rock that had hurt the child. If a girl fell out of a tree, then her brother would smack the tree. They were trying to set things right by hitting the tree or rock that hurt the other person. But hitting a rock or a tree doesn't make anything right, of course. In our society, we may have a similar reaction if we do something like run into the corner of a table in the dark. We might instinctively slap our hand on the table in anger.

Sometimes, we react in the same ineffective way when we're confronted by sin. When we are hurt by sin, we lash out, sometimes at completely innocent people. Then we brush it off by saying, "I'm having one of those days." We need to invite Jesus into those days.

As we mentioned on Day 2, only 22 percent of American men and 33 percent of American women say they depend on Jesus to overcome sin. This means that the majority of us are trying to find other, creative ways to try to put things right. But the only way to conquer sin is to depend on Jesus.

The process of finding forgiveness and spiritual healing in Jesus can be compared to the healing process for physical injuries, in which wounds turn into scars. This is not always an easy process, and many times it can even be extremely painful.

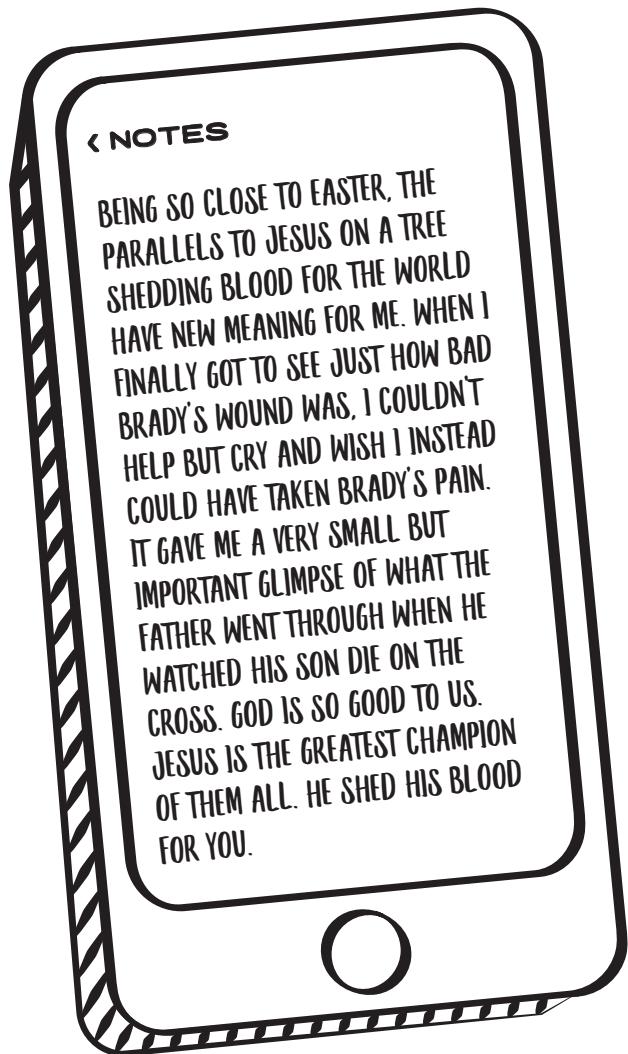
One of my scariest moments of parenting was right before the Easter season in 2018. My son Brady was seven at the time, and we were hosting a church staff party at our house. The adults were just about ready to eat, and all of the church staff kids were playing outside. As I was praying a blessing over the food, Brady came charging into the house with a type of cry that I had never heard before. It wasn't a loud, piercing cry, but a fear-filled cry. He had been climbing a tree in our backyard, and as he had done hundreds of times before, he jumped down from the tree, expecting to land on his feet. But this particular time, he stumbled as he was jumping. On his fall down the tree, an extremely spiky branch dug into and lacerated his armpit, peeling off a large chunk of skin. Not to get too graphic, but the surgeon would later describe what happened to his armpit as similar to peeling a banana. He had a layer of skin about 5 inches long and 2 inches wide literally just hanging like a banana peel.

Although I struggled because of his pain to get a clear look at what was going on in the moment, I knew this was serious. Brady grew up with an incredibly high pain tolerance, so I knew this was different. I rushed him to the hospital and, amazingly, was greeted by a nurse who attended our church. I didn't need to say anything to her. She knew this was serious just by looking at my face. They took Brady into the emergency room and brought in a surgeon.

Immediately, Brady went into surgery and my wife, Allison, and I were left alone in the lobby of the hospital.

Everything in the couple of hours leading up to this point was a blur to me. Adrenaline had kicked in, and it wasn't until that moment alone in the lobby that I had a little bit of time to process what was going on. But it all started with me and Allison just sitting there with one another, holding each other and crying. It was so hard for us to see our son go through this.

As we were there, I jotted down these words in my notes on my iPhone:



I then opened my Bible, and the very first verse that I read filled me with the comfort I needed in a desperate moment:



I AM THE LORD,
THE GOD OF ALL
MANKIND. IS
ANYTHING TOO
HARD FOR ME?

- JEREMIAH 32:27



#FORGIVINGCHALLENGE

A couple of hours later, we saw Brady. The surgeon used more than 60 stitches to essentially put the “banana peel” of skin back where it belonged. Those stitches would turn into a pretty killer scar that tells a pretty killer story. Brady not only made a full recovery, but is now using that very same arm to light it up on the Pee-Wee flag football fields!

As painful as the healing was for Brady, part of this process was the surgeon entering into the place where Brady got hurt to ultimately bring healing.

The freedom process that we are undergoing requires similar healing. The process of healing will not be without pain for you, but the most painful part of the healing process has already taken place in the crucifixion of Jesus.

Jesus went to the cross to shed His blood to fulfill the requirements and pay for the sins of the world. Yours, mine, and the whole wide world's. Past, present, and future.

Our week of absolution is about hearing God's declaration of forgiveness over us, and as we enter into it, I want you to most hear His forgiveness in the deepest, darkest, most shame-filled places of your story. You cannot do this on your own. You need Jesus.

Hearing His forgiveness in those deep, dark, shame-filled places will require us to revisit them. When we do, we'll find that this same Jesus who went to the cross to pay the price is unafraid and willing to go back to those painful memories. He will enter into your worst moments with you. Jesus is waiting for you. He's the surgeon you need to heal.

Will you allow Jesus to enter into your worst moments?

CHALLENGE

NOTHING IS TOO HARD

Write this verse from Jeremiah 32:27 three times:

"I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?"

Do you believe the words in this verse?

What is the hardest thing(s) you need God to do in your life?

When it comes to your sin, what are the deep, dark, shame-filled places that you need the surgeon Jesus to heal?

Do you believe He can bring healing into those places?

20/40