

Unrequited Justice – Finding Grace on the Other Side



*“You can’t always get what you
want...
But if you try sometimes, you just
might find...
You get what you need.”
— The Rolling Stones*

When I was asked to preach the title immediately rammed its way into my head and I had to look it up **Was it a even a thing?**

I’ve heard of unrequited Love..... kind of what I had **David Cassidy in the day**. It one way never acknowledged never returned and somehow you have to resolve life with out the out the love you so wanted.

We live life with unresolvable issues example childhood trauma or unjust scaring that will never be resolved.

And I’ve known my fair shard over the years I’ve often cried out to God – as can be attested by Friends listening to this today. Where is MY Justice.

A Graffiti artist is not your usual source of spiritual direction.

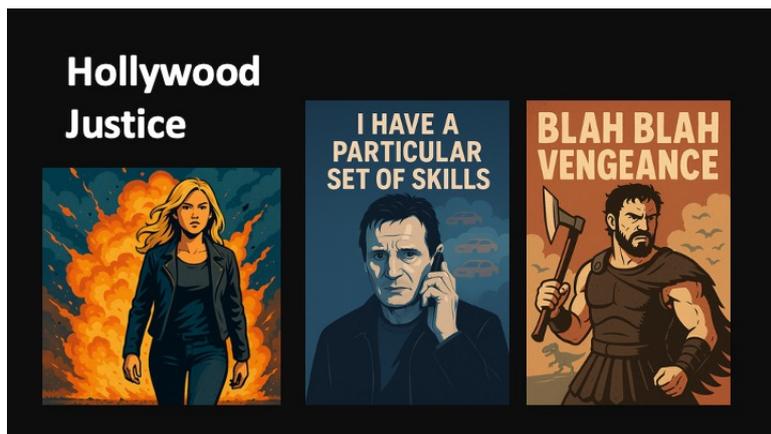


There was graffiti on an overpass near where i live which said, "I hope you heal from the apology you never got." It was covered over by council after a few weeks, **but I wish it hadn't** its great statement and **I wonder about the situation that caused some one to crawl up and make that statement for the world or at least the drivers on south road to see.**

This graffiti captured something most of us have whispered in the dark: There are wounds that will never be acknowledged.

injustices that will never be named by those who caused them. Childhood wounds. Broken promises. Betrayals that go unmourned because the other person moved on. We don't get the satisfaction of being proven right. We don't get our day in court. We just get... life. And somehow, we have to heal anyway.

Here's one way of dealing with these things.



Hollywood Justice

In movies: the wife/dog gets kidnapped...
and you know there will be a beatdown.

We love it because:

- There's justice.
- There's closure.
- The bad guy loses.

But real life?

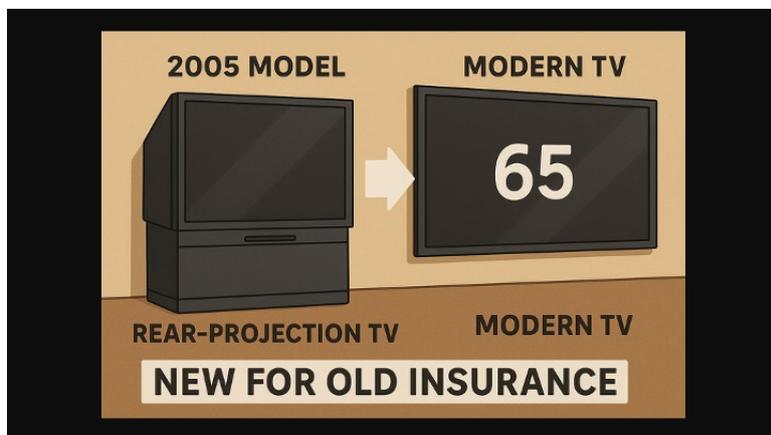
- No soundtrack.
- No neat ending.
- Unrequited justice.

Hollywood Justice

The movies that start with wife/dog murdered or kidnapped or the dog and you know there will be a beat down. What happens to the guy in the end.,

“What if we flip the paradigm on its head and not looked at gaining Justice but Restoration. What would that look like and how would we do it.”

I'm going to talk really briefly about 3 natural things and then we'll come back to the cure.



Insurance New for Old Policy

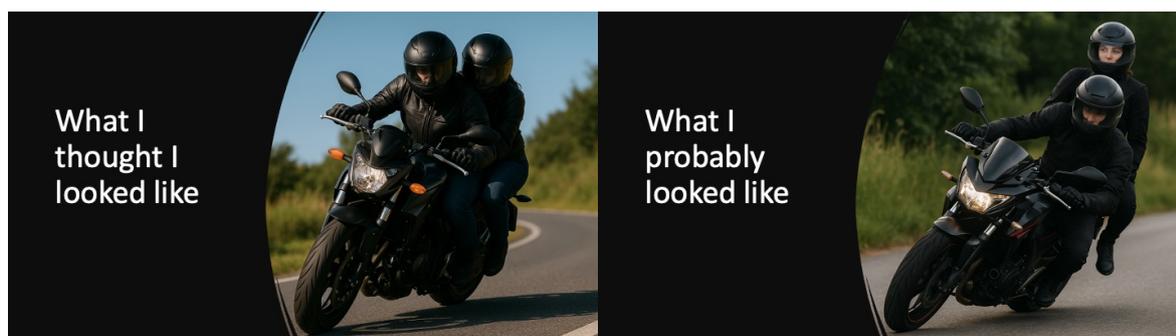
“New for old” means the insurer replaces your lost or damaged item with a **new equivalent**, not what it was worth second-hand.

So if your big old 75-inch rear-projection TV was stolen, you wouldn't get another bulky 2005-style unit. You'd get a **modern flat-screen TV** of similar size and quality that does the same job — new, straight from a retailer.

It's about restoring the function, not the exact item. The insurer covers the cost to make you whole again *as if* you were buying new today, not what the old one would sell for at Cash Converters.

The Motorbike Principle

Russell had motorbikes in our lives when we were young, and it took ages to trust the leaning with the driver when going around corners. I made it more dangerous by counter leaning.



Also, Russell taught me about steering. When you're on a motorbike, **you naturally go where you look**.

If you stare down at the road right in front of the wheel, you'll tend to wobble or overcorrect. If you look at what you want to avoid bam you're going to end up going towards it.

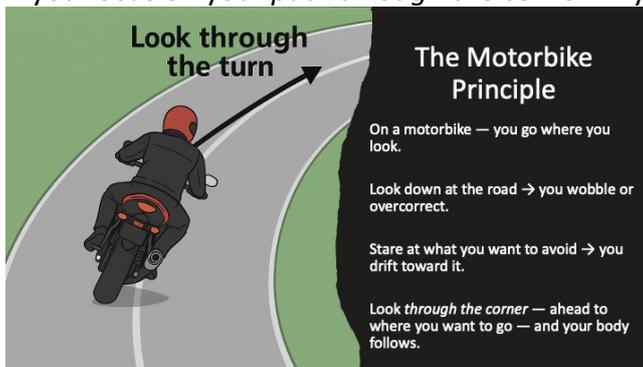
But if you look **through the corner** — ahead to where you *want* to go — your body and the bike will follow smoothly.

“target fixation”, and it can work for or against you:

- If you focus on the hazard — you'll likely steer *into* it.



- If you focus on your *path through* the corner — you'll ride it cleanly.



It's not just a riding technique, it's a bit of a life metaphor too: **look where you want to go, not at what you're afraid of.**

When we've been wronged or hurt, our natural instinct is to stare at the damage. We replay it. We analyse it. We fixate on the person, the betrayal, the "why." But the more we focus on what broke us, the more our hearts lean toward bitterness and self-protection — we steer right into the guardrail.

God is a God who Loves us and doesn't want us living in past hurt.

Restoration doesn't come from staring at the crash site. It comes when we lift our eyes — when we start looking *through* the bend toward what God is restoring in us.

Not the apology we never got, but the healing He's still offering.

Not the justice that didn't arrive, but the grace that's waiting on the other side.

We don't ignore the pain — but we choose not to steer by it.

We look toward the road of peace, wholeness, and the quiet strength that comes from grace.

1. Proverbs 4:25–27 (ESV)

Let your eyes look directly forward,
and your gaze be straight before you.

Ponder the path of your feet;
then all your ways will be sure.

Do not swerve to the right or to the left;
turn your foot away from evil.

(This one's basically the biblical version of "look where you want to go.")

Baader-Meinhof Phenomenon

Baader–Meinhof phenomenon, also known as **frequency illusion**.

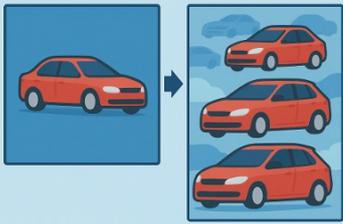
What it is:

When you notice something new, then suddenly start seeing it everywhere.

Your brain flags it as *important*, so your awareness tunes in to it.

THE BAADER-MEINHOF PHENOMENON

BEFORE **AFTER**



It's the feeling that once you notice something—like a particular car make or model—you suddenly start seeing it everywhere. In reality, your awareness has simply tuned in to that pattern, so your brain starts filtering and flagging those instances more often.

Why it happens:

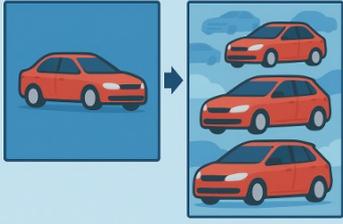
Two mental filters kick in:

Selective attention: You notice it more often.

Confirmation bias: You interpret repeats as proof it's everywhere.

THE BAADER-MEINHOF PHENOMENON

BEFORE **AFTER**



It's a mix of two cognitive biases:

1. **Selective attention** – your brain starts focusing on the thing that caught your interest.
2. **Confirmation bias** – you then notice and remember every time it appears, reinforcing the idea that it's suddenly everywhere.

So, if you're car shopping and suddenly every second car seems to be that Mazda CX-5... you're just deep in the Baader–Meinhof zone.

The **Baader–Meinhof phenomenon** (or **frequency illusion**) can work *against* forgiveness because it makes your brain *keep noticing evidence* that confirms your hurt or sense of injustice — even when healing might be trying to take root.

Why it matters:

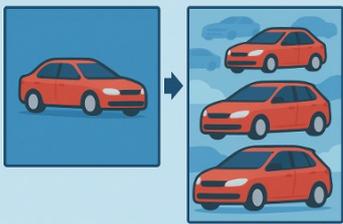
What you focus on grows in your perception.

If you dwell on hurt or injustice, you'll keep spotting it.

If you look for grace or healing, that's what your mind begins to collect

THE BAADER-MEINHOF PHENOMENON

BEFORE **AFTER**



Here's how that plays out psychologically and spiritually:

Selective Attention to Hurt

When someone wrongs you, your brain (and heart) go on high alert. You start noticing every little thing that reminds you of that person, that event, or similar patterns of unfairness.

- A phrase someone uses.
- A movie plot that mirrors your pain.
- Even small acts that seem to echo the same betrayal.

Your mind, trying to make sense of what happened, keeps spotlighting these “matches.” But this constant noticing reinforces the wound — it doesn't allow distance or rest. Forgiveness, by contrast, *requires some mental quiet* — the ability to *not see* that hurt in every corner of life.

Confirmation Bias: The Story Keeps Rewriting Itself

Once you've been hurt, your brain seeks proof that the world (or people) can't be trusted. That's confirmation bias.

So every time you see something that “fits the story,” it strengthens the narrative:

“See? People always let you down.”

“They've moved on — I'm the only one still carrying it.”

Forgiveness requires a **different narrative** — one that makes space for imperfection, grace, and the possibility of change. But the frequency illusion keeps the old narrative looping, whispering that the pain is still fresh and everywhere.

Pro Tip here sometime people's first reaction can be the wrong — be aware they have **Baader–Meinhof** going on to. Wait for the considered reaction.

Emotional Pattern Recognition

The same neural mechanism that helps you notice a car model also helps you *spot threats or emotional triggers*.

When you've been hurt, the “pattern” of hurt gets stored. Then when something *feels similar*, your body reacts — even if the situation is completely different. You're not responding to the new moment; you're reacting to the old one replaying in disguise. That's why forgiveness feels so slippery — your brain keeps reactivating the hurt through everyday cues.

How to Reverse the Lens

The good news: the same phenomenon can *work for you* when you start intentionally noticing signs of grace instead.

- Look for kindness, not confirmation of harm.
- Look for small ways restoration is happening, not reminders of what was lost.
- Look for evidence of your own healing — not their failure to apologise.

As you begin to “see” grace more often, your brain builds new neural patterns — and suddenly **forgiveness feels as present and visible** as the hurt once did.

What You Focus On Expands

“As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” — Proverbs 23:7 (KJV)

What you fix your inner gaze on shapes who you become.

If you keep seeing reminders of the hurt, it grows in power.

If you start noticing grace, mercy, and evidence of God’s faithfulness, that becomes your new pattern of recognition.

Renewing the Mind

**“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”
— Romans 12:2**

Forgiveness isn’t a one-time act; it’s a *mental renovation*.

The renewing of the mind is the process of retraining your attention — breaking the “frequency illusion” of pain by repeatedly choosing a new focus.

The Power of Fixing Your Thoughts

This is one of the scripture I learned early in my life. I’ve lost count of how often I sing it or speak it over my life

“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.” — Philippians 4:8

Paul is describing the exact antidote to selective attention to hurt.

You don’t deny what happened — but you refuse to let your inner attention feed only on it.

Taking Thoughts Captive

“We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” — 2 Corinthians 10:5

This is the discipline of interrupting the mental loop that keeps replaying wrongs.

When you “see that car everywhere,” so to speak — the mental picture of the offense — you pause and say:

“No, that thought will obey Christ, not my resentment.”

Guarding the Heart

“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” — Proverbs 4:23

When your attention keeps circling back to injustice, your heart becomes the filter through which you see the world.

Guarding your heart means choosing what gets repeated in your awareness — what becomes the “model you see everywhere.”

Jesus’ Example on the Cross

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” — Luke 23:34

Even in the midst of unresolvable injustice, Jesus models releasing the loop.

He refuses to dwell on the hurt or the hypocrisy — He fixes His focus on mercy and restoration.

God's Forgetfulness (in Grace)

“For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” — Hebrews 8:12

This is not divine amnesia — it's divine *attention control*.

God chooses not to focus on our failures.

this is an example we can use to our mental benefit— not to pretend the wound never existed, but to *choose not to keep seeing it everywhere*.

The Restorative Vision

“He restores my soul; He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.” — Psalm 23:3

Healing begins when our inner sight is led back to still waters and right paths — when our frequency shifts from re-seeing injustice to re-seeing restoration.

Lately I've been looking, naming acknowledging Gods restoring things that I've never attributed as restoration it makes a difference when you do

We've had amazing sermons that can be watched on line, such Joy, Gratitude, Awe, Bron's amazing communion on Forgiveness (ask her for notes)

Justice asks, “What's owed?” Restoration asks, “What could be healed?”

Quick tips

- Practice forgiveness
- Realise what you are really up against -

John 10:7-11 7 So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The **thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.** 11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep

- Sometimes you have put up your hand and say NO enough. Realise it's in the past and **choose to move on** you're not that person any more
- Fail Forward!
- Be gentle with yourself
- Get help - Talk to a trusted friend, or counselling

The table of Random Stuff

“As I finish up...”

Let's take one last look at this table.

Did anyone try to work out what these things meant?

Why I chose them — what they said about me, or maybe about you?
Maybe you felt a little uneasy not knowing. Maybe you didn't even notice.

That's the thing about unresolved stuff — it just sits there, quietly shaping the room.

When I gathered these random items, I didn't overthink it. But even random has a pattern hiding underneath.

My daughter-in-law Monica came over and saw the vinegar, the gloves, the vitamin C — she guessed I was trying to control my world.
(She probably wasn't wrong.)

And the Hulk doll?

I could've picked Spider-Man or Iron Man.

But I went with Hulk — probably says more about me than I'd like to admit.

We live with things that don't line up neatly — the strange mix of strong and fragile, resolved and not.

Maybe that's where healing actually starts — in the moment we stop needing every piece to make sense.

Justice looks back and says, *"Fix what happened."*

Restoration looks forward and says, *"Grow something new."*

Prayer

God, You see what's still unspoken — the hurts that never got an apology, the questions that never found answers.

You're the One who restores what justice can't reach.

So today, where bitterness has taken root, plant peace.

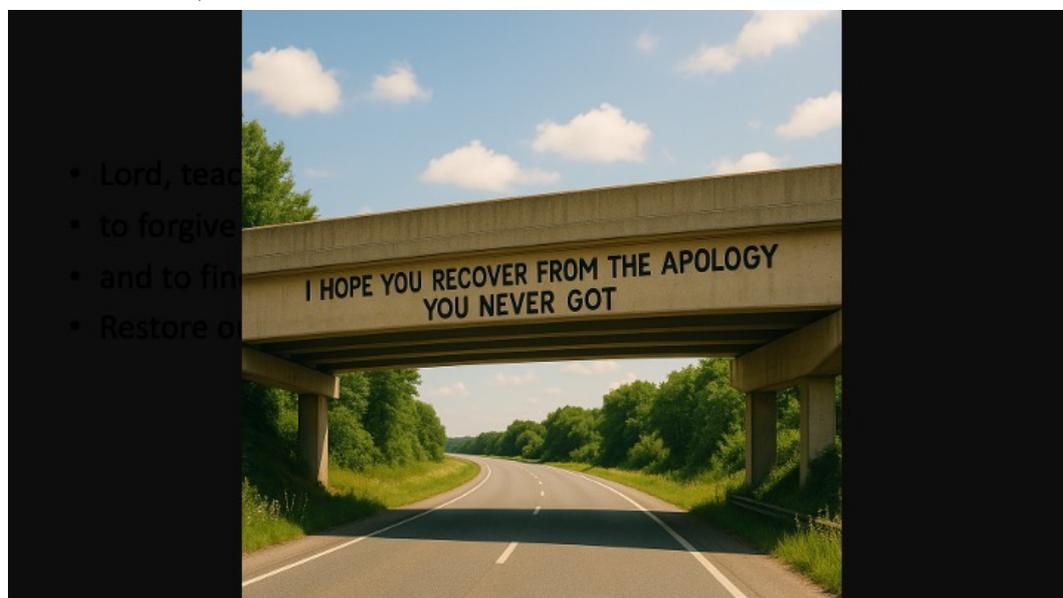
Where grief has lingered, grow joy.

Where stories feel unfinished, breathe Your grace into the gaps.

Help us fix our eyes not on the crash site, but on the road ahead — the path You're still writing.

May we become living proof that restoration is possible, even when justice never came.

In Jesus' name, amen."



- Lord, teach
- to forgive
- and to find
- Restore o