

Dear Grace Church Family and Friends,

Last week, I read an article in the New York Times on the subject of forgiveness, and one important point which the article made was to highlight the difference between an apology and asking for forgiveness.

An apology, of course, is to say, "I'm sorry." We do something that hurts another person, and we apologize. It is ingrained into us as children as the right thing to do.

But, an apology really only goes in one direction.

Asking for forgiveness, on the other hand, is something deeper. It actively involves both people in the process of healing.

The Rev. Dr. Amy Butler, Senior Pastor at the Riverside Church in New York City, puts it this way: "An apology is something one person says to another. It's a one-way street. Forgiveness is the next stage, where we are actually engaged in the unusual act of reconciliation. I can get up on the dance floor by myself and look really beautiful. But if what I really want is to dance with you, and you won't get up on the dance floor, then I will always be on my own."

In other words, you have to ask, and the other person has to say, "Yes."

Over the years, I have apologized many, many times to many, many people for many, many things, but I have rarely asked for forgiveness. In fact, I cannot remember the last time I said, "Will you forgive me?" And now, I am thinking I missed out on an important opportunity.

Is there someone in your life to whom you apologized when you should have asked for forgiveness?

If so, maybe it's time to change that.

See you in church,

Andrew