

Why This Pastor Chose to Forgive His Wife's White Supremacist Killer

On June 17, 2015, the Rev. Anthony Thompson received a phone call no one ever wants. There had been a shooting at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, during a Bible study. When he arrived, he learned his wife was not among the survivors.

The shooting was racially motivated, as it was later discovered that the killer, Dylann Storm Roof, was a white supremacist.

Of course, Thompson fully grieved his wife's death. But instead of becoming bitter and full of hatred himself toward Roof, Thompson chose to cling to God's Word and to forgive him both privately and publicly. His new book, *Called to Forgive*, casts a compelling vision of the power of forgiveness that can transform lives and inspire others to choose radical forgiveness, no matter what the circumstance.

"Forgiveness, even for the Christian, is extremely difficult and painful," Thompson told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. "You have to trust God to walk with you and guide you through something so horrific.

"What you have to do is trust the Lord, first of all, to forgive you for holding a grudge and for wanting to take revenge, to forgive you for whatever is stealing your peace. God indeed will forgive you. And then, when you ask God for forgiveness and you are forgiven, ask God to help you forgive the person that you cannot forgive.

"It's going to take God to intervene to make that happen. We

cannot do it on our own. I didn't do this on my own. God intervened. He told me what to do. What you need to do is what Jesus told the lawyer to do, the one who asked how he could get to heaven. Jesus told him to love Me with all your heart, mind and soul, loving everybody as you love yourself.

"That's the problem. We don't know who our neighbors are because we hate our neighbors. We hate black. We hate white. We hate this, we hate that. You must go to your neighbor, whoever it is, and talk to them. Let them tell you who they are. Then you'll see the true person, and then maybe we can stop the hate.

For the rest of the Rev. Thompson's incredible story of forgiveness, listen to this podcast.