

Small Group Discussion Guide

Forgive: For the week of March 13 - 19, 2022

Main Thought and Scriptures:

(Break into groups of 3-4. Discuss for 30-40 minutes.)

An essential element for emotional healing and healthy relationships is forgiveness. We live in a fallen world where people hurt one another, making forgiveness necessary. Yet, Jesus explained the importance and necessity of forgiveness.

"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'" (Matthew 18:21-22 ESV)

Choose to forgive immediately and unconditionally.

- Jesus gave no preconditions for forgiveness. He just said to forgive an unlimited number of times. We don't need to wait for someone to apologize. We must choose to forgive regardless of how we feel.
- Jesus then elaborated with a parable.

*"Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and **forgave** him the debt.*

²⁸But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' ²⁹So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place.

³²Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. ³⁵So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.'" (Matthew 18:23-35 ESV)

This parable teaches us several important truths about forgiveness:

1. Forgive just as we have been forgiven through Christ.

- The king was upset at the servant because he did not forgive his fellow servant just as he had been forgiven.

2. If we don't forgive others, God will not forgive us.

- As a result, the king had the servant thrown in prison. Since we rely on God's mercy and forgiveness, refusing to forgive others contradicts the Gospel.

3. Unforgiveness imprisons us. Forgiveness frees us and puts the offender in the hands of God.

"Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'" (Romans 12:19 ESV)

Discussion Questions: *(Cluster into groups of 3-4 to discuss)*

- As you reflect on the main thought and scriptures above and the weekend sermon, what is the Lord highlighting to you and why? Explain.
- How have you experienced the effects of unforgiveness and the power of forgiveness in your life? What happened? What did you learn through that?
- How is God challenging you to apply this message and discussion to your life and relationships going forward? How can we pray for you as you do?

Prayer: *(Pair up and pray for one another)*

- Pray for one another to apply the lessons of this discussion to our lives.
- Pray for one unreached person to experience forgiveness in Christ. Pray that God would allow each of us an opportunity to share His love with them this week.