

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides

July 24th

Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)

1. Would you rather mow your yard with a power lawn trimmer of a flock of sheep? Why?

Bible Study Questions

1. Read Matthew 18:21-35
 - What do you notice about Jesus teachings? What point is Jesus trying to make?
2. Peter's question expressed a frustration with forgiving someone who never seems to learn from their mistakes. How can you relate to that frustration? Are you generally quick to forgive or is it difficult for you?
3. In the story, the servant was forgiven a ridiculously large sum by the king. In the same way, God has done the same for us. How does it impact your view of God when you think about the debt that you paid for you?
4. Read Matthew 6:14-15. Why does God care so deeply about our forgiving others?
5. Pastor Michael talked about the danger of victimhood and how it becomes a part of our identity. Do agree or disagree with that statement? How have you seen victimhood impact people?
6. How does knowing that you are forgiven by God enable us to forgive others who have hurt us?
7. The church is to be a forgiving community. Describe what it would look like if we were to really take that command seriously?

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The Debt Has Been Paid

Peter asks Jesus a question about how many times he needs to forgive his brother. During that time, the rabbis taught that you only needed to forgive someone a few times and then you would be good. Jesus' response is to give a large number of which they would soon lose count. Jesus then goes on to tell a story to illustrate his point.

I. God has forgiven us a debt far greater than what we could ever

pay: Jesus tells the story of a servant who owed a king an astronomical debt. The king has compassion on the servant and forgives him. The point is that each of us is guilty for bringing evil into God's creation and we owe God a debt that we never could pay. But God forgave us, paying that debt with the life of Jesus. Being forgiven by God therefore becomes a key part of our identity.

II. God expects that those he forgives will forgive others:

The servant goes out and encounters another servant who owes him money. The 1st servant demands payment and throws the man into prison. The king responds by rescinding his act of forgiveness and arresting the 1st servant. Jesus brings us to the point of the story in verse 35 in which he warns that anyone who doesn't forgive will experience the same treatment from the father. The point is that if we have been forgiven, then God expects us to do the same.

This is a command that can be very difficult to live out. Many of us have been deeply hurt by someone and when someone hurts us, victimhood quickly becomes a part of our identity. When we place our identity in God's forgiveness, it gives us the freedom to live this out.

III. The community of God is to be a forgiving community: Jesus is teaching this in the context of his followers. He isn't just addressing individuals, but the group as a whole. They were to be a community who forgave without limits. It should be one of the first things that people think of when they think of the church.

Conclusion

We live in a culture that is deeply polarized between political and racial lines. Jesus' teaching here reminds us that the answer is not a government program. The answer is when his community lives out this command to be a forgiving community. We are to model this for the world and it should be regular practice within the church.