

LHCF Sermon Discussion Guide

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Connecting with God: The Lord's Prayer—Part 5A The Importance of Forgiveness

"Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors"
Matt. 6:12

1. Why should I forgive? Matt. 18

- Because I've been forgiven *"The servant's master took pity on him, canceled his debt, and let him go."* Matt. 18:27
"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as in Christ, God forgave you." Eph. 4:32
- Because Un-forgiveness only hurts me *"Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you? In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured..."* Matt. 18:33-34
"To worry yourself to death with resentment it would be a foolish, senseless thing to do." Job 5:2
- Because I need forgiveness everyday *"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."* Matt. 18:35

2. Barriers to forgiveness:

- My anger protects me
- It's not fair/just
- Forgiveness sends the wrong message...it's OK

3. Four steps of forgiveness Psalm 69:

- Hurt *"Save me, O God, for the floodwaters are up to my neck. Deeper and deeper I sink into the mire; I can't find a foothold. I am in deep water, and the floods overwhelm me. I am exhausted from crying... My eyes are swollen with weeping, waiting for my God to help me. Those who hate me without cause outnumber the hairs on my head. Many enemies try to destroy me with lies, demanding that I give back what I didn't steal."* Psalm 69:1-4
- Anger *"Pour out your fury on them; consume them with your burning anger. Let their homes become desolate and their tents be deserted. To the one you have punished, they add insult to injury; they add to the pain of those you have hurt. Pile their sins up high, and don't let them go free. Erase their names from the Book of Life..."* Psalm 69:24-28
- Healing *"The humble will see their God at work and be glad. Let all who seek God's help be encouraged. For the LORD hears the cries of the needy; he does not despise his imprisoned people."* Psalm 69:32-33
- Honoring *"Praise him, O heaven and earth, the seas and all that move in them. For God will save Jerusalem and rebuild the towns of Judah. His people will live there and settle in their own land. The descendants of those who obey him will inherit the land..."* Psalm 69:34-36

Small Group Life:

What are the misery twins? Guilt (over wronging others) and Resentment (being wronged by others)!

Remember the Bible's antidote to resentment is forgiving those who have wronged us...

Why should I forgive? Matt. 18:23-35

- Because I've been forgiven:
 - Canceled his debt = actual definition of forgiveness
 - Servant owed millions, 12 million, 10,000 talents, a debt that could never be paid.
 - Picture of the enormous debt we owed God, He took pity and canceled that debt Christ died in our place.
 - Would think the servant's response would be relief...I would be if I was forgiven a 12mill debt!
 - Why did he go after the fellow servant? Was he ungrateful, mean, or stupid? I think he didn't believe it; in fact that's the point of the story.
 - If you're not a forgiving person, you need to experience forgiveness.
 - Remember most forgiving people in the world are those who feel the most forgiven.
- Because Un-forgiveness only hurts me:
 - If we hang on to wounds and resentments, we torture ourselves.
 - Remember the one who wronged us is not affected at all by our hatred, they're sleeping like a baby, meanwhile we're experiencing:
 - Strokes
 - Heart attacks
 - High cholesterol
 - Migraines
 - Insomnia
 - Relationally un-forgiveness makes us critical, defensive, and un-trusting. In short we are not pleasant to be around.
- Because I need forgiveness everyday:
 - Bible has a clear principle that receiving is largely dependent on giving...what and how much you give determines how much comes back to you.
 - Remember we all make mistakes and therefore need lots of mercy and forgiveness. Does the Bible say most of us have sinned? NO all of us have sinned!
 - In Bible there are 2 kinds of sin:
 - Judicial
 - Relational

- Relational forgiveness mentioned in 1 John 1:8-9 *"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."*
- Jesus highlighted this in idea in Matt. 5:23-24 *"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift."*
- When we're not right with others? We're not right with God!

What are some of the barriers to forgiveness?

- My anger protects me:
 - People often use anger to repel others
 - Anger may keep you safe, but cost will be loneliness and un-fruitfulness
- It's not fair/just:
 - Often canceling a debt is not fair or just but we need to remember:
 - #1 Our debt forgiven was not fair either. Ro. 5:8 *"God demonstrated His love for us in this: while we were still sinners Christ died for us"*
 - When we mess up, we don't demand fairness, we seek pardon.
 - #2 Holding on to bitterness doesn't make the wrong right, it's still unfair and unjust, but now you're being hurt and kept under control by the offender..."they make me so mad"
- Forgiveness sends the wrong message...it's OK:
 - Forgiveness and acceptance of the other are non-negotiable.
 - Accepting however is not the same as "APPROVE"!
 - Remember forgiving and accepting isn't becoming a door-mat.

Mission or Ministry as appropriate – Who can you invite to your group or minister to that are having trouble trusting God...don't let them battle that alone, help them get in a small group and open up!