

Small Group Discussion Guide — May 2, 2021

- Series: if/then
 - Sermon: Forgive Abundantly
 - Scripture: Isaiah 53: 3-11
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FOLLOW-UP FROM LAST WEEK:

What opportunities did you notice for generosity this week? Share with the group.

CONNECT:

1. What stood out to you from this past week's service, and why?
2. On the subject of forgiveness, do you find it easier to forgive others or yourself? Why do you think this is?

ENGAGE:

Read Isaiah 53: 3-11.

- What is your reaction to this dark description of Jesus?
- How does verse 6 stand out from the rest of the narrative? What do you think is the significance of this verse?
- In your own words, and according to this passage, what is the reason Jesus had to suffer so much and die?
- What do you think the "light of life" refers to in verse 11? What does this verse say is the result of Jesus' sacrificial death?

APPLY:

1. Think about a time you held onto a grudge against someone who had hurt you. Why was it easier to do so than to forgive that person? How did holding the grudge impact your own soul and life? Practically speaking, how do you release a grudge against someone when you've been wronged?
2. In your own words, how does Jesus' resurrection relate to forgiveness? Consider the idea that by forgiving others, we are essentially "catching up" to the forgiveness that Christ has already given them. What are your thoughts on this? How can this concept become a game changer for us in this area of forgiveness?
3. Describe a time when someone graciously forgave you for something you had done. How did it make you feel? Did it change your view of the forgiver, and if so, how?
4. Think about your story - painful parts and all. Where have you seen God's redemption in your life and story? How does acknowledging God's presence and work, even in the most difficult and painful places in our lives, help you claim your own story and trust Him with your future?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for the unmerited favor you granted us through the death of your son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. May we live lives that are full of grace, and be quick to forgive, slow to resentment. Help us to catch up to the forgiveness that Christ has offered to all mankind, especially to those who have wronged us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

GOING DEEPER

1. Think about someone in your life that you haven't forgiven. Consider the following steps, and honestly assess where you are in this particular situation. Pray and ask the Lord to gently lead you further in this area.
 - Consider that God does forgive.
 - Accept that God forgives.
 - Confess "I place my pain on Jesus and the cross."
 - Confess "I allow Jesus' forgiveness to be given to this person."
 - Confess "I grow to embrace Jesus' forgiveness to you as my own."
2. David said the scriptures teach that, based on how we interact with others (including the subject of forgiveness), we can either choose to kill a life, or to give it. Discuss what you think this means. In what ways does refusing to forgive someone figuratively kill that person? In what ways does forgiving another give them life? How have you seen this play out in your life? How does it change your view of forgiveness?

SCRIPTURE

- 1 Peter 1: 3
- Hebrews 14:10
- John 1: 29
- Matthew 26:28
- Luke 23: 34
- Luke 24:47

QUOTATIONS

"It is our birthright, as the followers of Jesus, to breathe in true divine forgiveness day by day, as the cool, clear air which our spiritual lungs need instead of the grimy, germ-laden air that is pumped at us from all sides. And, once we start inhaling God's fresh air, there is a good chance that we will start to breathe it out, too. As we learn what it is to be forgiven, we begin to discover that it is possible, and indeed joyful, to forgive others."

N.T. Wright

"As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison."

Nelson Mandela

"The forgiving heart comes about through long practice. It's the exact opposite of giving up. It's insisting that what happened will no longer define you."

Jake Morrill

"Our sin separates us from God and now through Christ, God intends to separate us from our sins... we cannot keep joyful company with him if our hearts are hardened against these whom he forgives."

Simon Tugwell