

## Small Group Discussion Guide — November 7, 2021

- Series: Forgiveness
  - Sermon: Let the Cross Do Its Work
  - Scripture: Matthew 27: 32-50, Colossians 1: 19-22
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### FOLLOW-UP FROM LAST WEEK

How did the knowledge that *Christ has fully paid the debt for your sin* impact the way you lived this week?

### CONNECT

1. What stood out to you from this past week's service, and why?
2. What's a time you remember having to say, "I'm sorry" as a child? How was your apology received?

### ENGAGE

1. Read Matthew 27:32-50
  - Think about what it might have been like to be at the crucifixion of Jesus. How might you have reacted when "darkness fell upon all the land" in the middle of the day?
  - As you're standing there, people who are passing by are hurling abuse at the dying man on the cross. How might that have affected you? Why do you think there sometimes seems to be a human impulse to pile on when people are already down or hurting, especially in crowds?
  - What part of this section of Scripture is most painful to you? Why?
2. Read Colossians 1:19-22.
  - According to verse 20, how was our full reconciliation to God accomplished? What does Jesus' blood shed on the cross bring to us?
  - How comfortable are you with the description of yourself in verse 21? How do you see yourself in it?
  - Considering that, how comfortable are you with the description of yourself at the end of verse 22? What does it mean to you that these words are written about you and included in scripture?

### APPLY

1. David called Christianity the "Forgiveness Religion." (For the basis of this definition, read Acts 13: 38-39.) What do you think about this description? How do you think and feel about the fact that you literally cannot fix your problem of sin? How much do you still try to earn forgiveness and approval of God? What are some examples in your life that illustrate your struggle?
2. Forgiveness isn't easy. There probably have been and will continue to be situations in life and relationships in which you just can't find the ability to offer forgiveness within yourself, no matter how much you sweat and strain to do so. As a believer, where does this leave you? What do you think David meant by saying these times are opportunities to "catch up to Jesus' forgiveness"? What practical steps can you take to do this?
3. David reminded us that forgiveness is an act of faith. What do you think this means? In what ways does it take real faith to genuinely forgive someone?

## **PRAYER**

Father, the mercy and grace you extend to us is overwhelming, maybe most of all because it goes so strongly against our human nature to demand repayment — plus interest — or even revenge when we are wronged. Help us to grasp, just a little bit more than we have before, how generous and unmerited your forgiveness really is, and how amazingly gracious you are to us. Help us, too, to soak in it, refuse to take it for granted, and learn to extend it to others. Amen.

## **GOING DEEPER**

David said that forgiveness is something, a very big something, that sets the Christian faith apart from all other religions. Read Luke 7:47. Discuss the following:

- What's the relationship between being a Christian and being able to truly forgive those who sin against you?
- Do you think an unbeliever can really forgive? Why or why not?
- How does a heart of revenge or condemnation of others set itself against God? Alternatively, how does your acceptance of Jesus's gift of forgiveness for your sin practically affect your ability to forgive others?

## **ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE**

Acts 13: 38-39

Luke 23:34

Luke 7:47

## **QUOTES**

"Forgiveness is about setting both of us free. Me from the beastly prison of emotional pain that I harbor; you from the prison I have constructed for you. Forgiveness cuts the chains off both of us - because my heart is in a prison and you are in a prison in my heart."

*David Dwight*

"Forgiveness has power both for the forgiver and for the forgiven. Experiencing forgiveness in either direction provides a wonderful release from bondage — whether that bondage is to bitterness or guilt."

*John Perkins*

"How can a righteous God look at me a sinner and see a precious child? Simple: The Son gets in his eyes. How can a forgiven person look at God who is Love, and see a fearful figure? Simple, the sin gets in my eyes."

*David Dwight*

"...It should not surprise us when God says, 'The only way I can forgive the sins of the human race is to suffer — either you will have to pay the penalty for sin or I will.' Sin always entails a penalty. Guilt can't be dealt with unless someone pays. The only way God can pardon us and not judge us is to go to the cross and absorb it into himself. 'I must suffer,' Jesus said."

*Timothy Keller*

"Our sin separates us from God and now through Christ, God intends to separate us from our sins."

*Simon Tugwell*