



#5 What happens here doesn't stay here
SMALL GROUPS: FORGIVENESS
Rev. Dr. Jeremy Mahood
November 13, 2016

1. This week's study examines some of the most challenging verses in scripture. Read Matthew 6:12 and then verses 14-15. Why do you think Jesus repeats himself in these three verses?
2. Discuss the following statement: *"One of the chief signs of repentance in our own hearts and of our own experience of God's forgiveness is that we become forgivers. We do not forgive others so that God will forgive us, but because He has forgiven us."*
3. Why do you think many people are so slow to offer forgiveness to someone who has wronged them?
4. Read the story of the Two Debtors in Matthew 18:23-35. What do you think is the key message Jesus is trying to get across in this story?
5. Discuss this statement; *"The Lord's Prayer forces us to face the fact that we tend to minimize our own sin and exaggerate the sins of others."*
6. How are we tortured (Matt. 18:34) when we fail to grant forgiveness to those who have wronged us?
7. What did Jesus do for us in Luke 23:34?
8. Reflect on the following statement: *"No matter how we've been sinned against, even in the most vicious of ways, it pales in comparison to how we've sinned against God"*.
How does understanding the magnitude of our own sinfulness against God help us in forgiving others who have sinned against us?
9. Read Ephesians 4:32. What are we instructed to do, and why?
10. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement and why?
"When we hold fast to an unforgiving spirit we prove that we have never been indwelt by the Spirit of Christ"

WHAT DOES FORGIVENESS LOOK LIKE IN REAL LIFE?

1. The scripture has specific directives about how we deal with those who have wronged us. The first two are negatives (what we are not to do), and the other five are positives (what we are to do). See if you can encapsulate each idea in just a few words.

Romans 12:9 _____

1 Thessalonians 5:15a _____
(a means just the first part of the verse)

Luke 6:28a _____

Proverbs 24:17 _____

Matthew 5:44b _____

Romans 12:18 _____

Exodus 23:4 _____

Here is how Thomas Watson (c. 1620—1686) in his book *Body of Divinity*, answered the questions above. Compare your answers and see how you did. Remember he wrote in the Puritan era of the early 1600's so his language is a bit different.

Answer: "*When we strive against all thoughts of revenge; when we will not do our enemies' mischief, but wish well to them, grieve at their calamities, pray for them, seek reconciliation with them, and show ourselves ready on all occasions to relieve them.*" (Thomas Watson, *Body of Divinity*, p. 581)

2. People have various reasons why they hold on to their pain and hurt and refuse to grant forgiveness. Read the following two statements and discuss the ideas in them.

"Forgiveness is not the absence of anger at sin. It is not feeling good about what was bad."

"Forgiveness is not the absence of serious consequences for sin."

3. What are we instructed to do in Matthew 18:17? (this is interesting to read in the Message version).

4. What are we instructed to do by Jesus in Luke 17:3-4?

FINAL COMMENTS:

Please read over and discuss.

Forgiveness of an unrepentant person doesn't look the same as forgiveness of a repentant person. The difference is that when a person who wronged us **does not repent** with contrition and confession and conversion (turning from sin to righteousness), he/she cuts off the full work of forgiveness.

We can still lay down our ill will;

We can hand over our anger to God;

We can seek to do him/her good;

But we *cannot carry through reconciliation or intimacy.*

"We are not bound to trust an enemy; but we are bound to forgive him."

(Thomas Watson Body of Divinity, p. 581)

HOW TO PRAY THIS WEEK:

- Ask God to forgive you.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas in your life that are not pleasing to God.
- Confess your sin. Ask God to help you hate your sin and deliver you from its dominion.
- Praise God for He is your Jehovah-M'Kaddesh, the God who sanctifies. (makes you pure)
- Do not allow condemnation. You are complete in Christ. (Romans 8:1)
- Forgive as often as YOU want to be forgiven.
- Meditate on the great gift of salvation God has given to you in Jesus Christ
- Set your will to forgive anyone who sins against you this day.
- Make a faith declaration:"I will love my enemies. I will bless those that curse me and do good to them that hate me. I will pray for them that persecute me". (Matthew 5:44)
- Pray that you will begin to experience the fruit of the Spirit each day in your life: love , joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, self-control (Galatians 5:22,23)

CHRISTMAS AT ALL NATIONS CHURCH

YOU CAN HELP SOMEONE IN NEED THIS CHRISTMAS!

1. Warm Hats and Mittens are needed for the students at Queen Elizabeth II Public School. There are 194 students there, JK – Grade 6. Please bring gently used or new items to church.

LAST WEEK WE RECEIVED 46 PAIRS; ONLY 148 pairs left to go!

2. BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS: we have a number of teenagers that need our help this Christmas. Their names are on the Gift Tree in the Courtyard. You may brighten a teenager's life this Christmas. Your gifts can come in back packs, gift bags, shoe boxes or purses. Please also enclose something of an inspirational nature. These must be returned by Sunday Dec. 4th. **THERE ARE ONLY 17 LEFT!**

THE GREAT CHRISTMAS OFFERING

Here is advanced notice of our Christmas offering. You will receive a letter in the mail shortly. We have a new and exciting project to help the homeless in the downtown core. We are partnering with three other churches and the Social Planning Council to help fund The NOAH Community Hub, a safe place for vulnerable people.

CONCERTS

Wednesday NOVEMBER 30th 7 p.m., **THE ENNIS SISTERS** national Christmas Tour comes to ANC. Down East folk and Celtic music at its best. Tickets at the Giving Centre or Church Office \$25.00 (cash only)

Sunday DECEMBER 5th 7:30 p.m. the **HEART AND SOUL** 21st Annual Christmas Concert. Whether singing accompanied or a capella, this fourteen member vocal group has a song repertoire ranging from sacred to secular, classical to contemporary, including jazz, pop, rock & folk. They will be joined this year by guest musicians Iona Reed (piano) and Jack Broumpton (percussion) plus other special guests. Heart & Soul has raised funds to help a variety of outreach and non-profit organizations in this community and around the world. General admission \$15.

Sunday DECEMBER 18th 10 am **THE CHRISTMAS GALA**: invite your friends, a free gift to our community with a reception to follow.

DECEMBER 20-24th 7:30 each night **LIVING NATIVITY** outside at Science North

Sunday DECEMBER 25th 10 am Our Annual **FAMILY CHRISTMAS SERVICE**.