

Week Beginning: 17th March 2019

Worship Series: #3 in series



lifegroups
live life abundantly

living sharing growing

Theme Verse

"I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love.

Luke 7:47 NLT

Remember This Week

Bring Jesus your worst. He can handle it. Confess your worst. He will forgive it. At the table of his mercy, you will find a life-transforming grace that will lead to nothing less than spontaneous, unguarded, unplanned, emotional, and joyful worship.



At the
TABLE

A place of
FORGIVENESS



**Show me your ways, Lord,
teach me your paths.**

**Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour,
and my hope is in you all day long.**

Remember, Lord, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old.

**Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways;
according to your love remember me, for you, Lord, are good.**

Psalms 25:4-7

Lord Jesus, you have forgiven us all things. Help us receive this news with joy, that our hearts may be filled with gratitude and our lives shaped by love. Grow us in this grace that we may daily live in that forgiveness with each other and the world. In your precious name we pray. Amen.



1. *Share your highs and lows since you last met with one another.*
2. *Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?*
3. *If you could gatecrash someone's party/dinner who would it be and why?*
4. *In the last month, what is one thing you have been so grateful for?*
5. *When has forgiveness felt really real for you?*

We've all been there. You're having a pleasant meal when, out of nowhere, you take a bite or have a drink and suddenly you start choking, gagging and gasping for air as the food goes down the wrong way. It can be a painful and uncomfortable experience. Today, in an unexpected encounter at the Table, an outpouring of emotion and gratitude goes down the wrong way as the host of the meal chokes on a bit of Lamb that he considers too hard to swallow. But Jesus' promise is that all who willingly receive this gift of grace will discover a place of forgiveness that is not only easy to swallow, but will restore, renew, and release to live fully and abundantly. For love is born from forgiveness and forgiveness makes love grow. And from great forgiveness, great love grows.

Read Luke 7:36-50



6. *In verses 36-39, how is the woman described? Look carefully at what she does. What different emotions does she express here?*
7. *Simon has an agenda in inviting Jesus over. What is it and what clues do we get from the text and from the context surrounding the text that this is his agenda?*
8. *In what ways are the woman's actions an embarrassment to Simon? Have you ever been embarrassed by someone's actions/words at a table? Share.*
9. *Why do you think that the woman is left unnamed while the Pharisee Simon is named? How does that further highlight the contrast Jesus makes?*



10. *Why did Simon respond to this woman the way that he did? In what situations have you found forgiveness hard to swallow?*
11. *How does Jesus see the woman? How do you tend to see people around you?*
12. *Which character do you identify with most? You may like to think about that as you reflect on the following: When you worship, are you more like the sinner (putting yourself out there) or the Pharisee (reserved, hesitant to embrace Jesus)? When you pray, are you more like the sinner (crying out, repentant) or the Pharisee (closed, stoic, calculating)? When you serve others, are you more like the sinner (humble, eager, willing to be rejected) or the Pharisee (a hidden agenda, expecting honour)? Why do you think this way?*

Forgiveness gives you back yourself. When you feel indebted, weighed down by your unworthiness, you can tend to look at yourself as being no more or less than what you have done or the mistakes that you have made or the debt that you owe. Jesus gives you so much more at his table. In this account, Jesus affirms this woman's dignity, accepts her sacred act of devotion, and treats her like a person who has made mistakes, but is not herself, a mistake. No-one is beyond redemption. No-one is beyond hope. No-one is beyond Jesus' forgiveness. Luther called the woman's tears **herzwasser** – heart water. Her “heart water” was flowing freely. The closer she is to Christ, the more she realizes her need for forgiveness. The point Jesus ultimately makes to Simon here is that whether you have a little sin or a lot of sin, you're in the same place as the next person – you're bankrupt and in desperate need of grace and forgiveness. But the good news as Luther reminds us is: **'All who call on God in true faith, earnestly from the heart, will certainly be heard, and will receive what they have asked and desired.'**

13. *In what ways does your life demonstrate that you are not only aware of your sinfulness but also of Jesus' forgiveness in your life? Are you moved towards adoration like the woman or are you unaffected like Simon?*

As we experience God's grace, we share grace to one other. As we receive the forgiveness of our sins, we extend forgiveness to each other. As we become the recipient of God's goodness, we find ourselves changed with a greater capacity to become an instrument of God's goodness.

14. *Would Jesus describe you as one who “loves much” or “loves little”? What needs to change in your life to help you to love Jesus more deeply?*
15. *In what ways is your Church, your Lifegroup a place of forgiveness for all?*
16. *How do you find yourself trying to extend forgiveness and grace to others? Read Colossians 3:12-15 as a reminder of who you are and how Christ has called you to live.*

Luther tells us: **"God gave us the Good News before we asked for it or even thought of it. But now it's a matter of knowing and accepting this forgiveness. For our sinful nature which is with us every day is such that it doesn't trust and believe God and is constantly stirred up by bad desires and ideas. So we sin every day in word and action, in what we do, and what we fail to do. As a result our conscience becomes restless, it's afraid of God's anger and disfavour, and so it lets go of the comfort and encouragement of the Good News"** (LC, Fifth Petition Lord's prayer, p154)

That's why Luther encourages us to daily remember who we are; to remember Christ's *herzwasser* that has splashed us and claimed us as his own in baptism, and to claim the good news Christ announces to us, for there is only forgiveness there!!

- * Praise God for making you his own in the waters of baptism and splashing you with forgiveness for all of our sins. Thank Jesus for 'seeing' you with love. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you respond to his great forgiveness with a life of worship and gratitude.
- * Pray for the individuals, families and communities affected by the tragedy in Christchurch NZ this past week, the fruit of forgiveness may be evident.
- * Pray for Weiquan (Wilkinson) Hu as he begins at LifeWay as Cross Cultural and Asian Ministry Chaplain that God's grace may flow through him.
- * Pray for your homes that they may be places of forgiveness for all who enter and are invited into your home.

Turn to the person next to you and make the sign of the cross on the palm of their hand or forehead as you say:

Name, never forget - Jesus has forgiven you. Amen.

