

Week Beginning: 1st September 2019

Worship Series: #4 in series



living sharing growing



Theme Verse

Our Father...And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Matthew 6:12

Remember This Week

Forgiveness is the ultimate miracle of God's grace and a gift that rehumanises us. It opens doors that we thought were closed forever, transforming relationships and making the kingdom of God visible for others to see. It builds community enabling us to offer comfort, tenderness, love, forgiveness and joy to each other.



**You do not stay angry forever
but delight to show mercy.**

You will again have compassion on us;

you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

Micah 7:18-19

Gracious and merciful Father, you have been merciful to us, and now you call us to be merciful to one another. Your divine mercy and inconceivable forgiveness cannot be comprehended; only felt, believed, and lived in every day. Make us authentic community for one another, a Christ-centered people whose experience of forgiveness is humbling, freeing, healing and restoring. Bless our time together that we may grow in walking in your forgiveness. We ask this in Jesus' name, 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. *What is the one memory/story of your Dad that you will never forget?*
4. *What was one thought/idea/theme that stuck with you from last week's sermon?*
5. *What do you find most difficult when it comes to forgiving others?*



You owe me! They will pay for that! Ever heard those words? Ever uttered those words? Ever wished that someone would pay for the hurt, the pain, the suffering that you have experienced? Jesus knows how exceptionally difficult forgiving those whose words or deeds have marked you deeply and painfully can be. That's why he invites us to ask the Father to forgive us; to give us freedom, freedom from the past, freedom for the future, a freedom that reconciles, builds community and brings life to all relationships. The Father specialises in removing any indebtedness so that we can truly embrace others with love. That's what we'll explore today as we experience the Father's forgiveness.

Read Matthew 6:12, 14-15

6. *What do we learn about forgiveness in this passage?*
7. *Two words are used in these verses to refer to sin. Debts and Trespasses. Every sin incurs a debt, and that debt has to be satisfied. Someone always pays when a debt is incurred. Trespass simply means to overstep prescribed limits or boundaries; a trespasser occupies a place or exercises a right that rightfully belongs to someone else. It seems that Jesus wanted his disciples (including us) to understand sin in both the sense of owing a debt and the sense of trespassing. Which word/image means speaks more to you and why?*
8. *Is Jesus laying out a "pre-condition" for forgiveness in these verses? Is he saying: "Before I forgive you, you must forgive others" or "I'll forgive you just as much as you forgive others"? Explain.*





9. What is the significance of Jesus inviting us to pray: "Forgive us our sins..."? How does sin always affect community?
10. Many Christians believe that Christians should simply "forgive and forget". However the Bible never says this. What dangers are possible when we forgive and forget?
11. In what ways is forgiveness the centre of the Christian faith?

Read Luke 15:11-32

12. What do we learn about the Father's forgiveness in this passage?
13. What is the significance of the Father waiting at the gate?
14. Read Colossians 3:12-13, Ephesians 4:32, and Matthew 18:21-35. What do we learn about forgiveness in these passages and how can we more readily extend grace and forgiveness to one another?

Luther says in the Small Catechism on this petition: **We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look upon our sins, nor on their account deny our prayer; for we are not worthy of anything we ask, neither have we deserved it. But we pray that he would give us everything by grace, for we daily sin much and deserve nothing but punishment; and we on our part will heartily forgive and readily do good to those who sin against us.**

Receiving forgiveness is one thing. Giving it is another. It's a hard work. It is always extremely costly. It is emotionally very expensive—it takes much blood, sweat, and tears. But only with God's help can we, as Connie Ten Boom once said, 'set the prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.' Only when we recognise that we have been forgiven a debt that we cannot ever repay, can we begin to offer forgiveness to those who have wronged us. In a book titled Confession and Forgiveness (page 128), Ted Kober says that in forgiving someone we are making four promises:

- a. I will not think about this incident
- b. I will not bring this up again and use it against you.
- c. I will not talk to others about this incident.
- d. I will not allow this to stand between us and hinder our relationship.

In other words, while I acknowledge that I was hurt, trespassed against, I refuse to let that incident/word/hurt turn into a grudge, bitterness or resentment. I refuse to let it close the gate on my present and future relationship with the other person.

15. Which of the four promises above do you personally most struggle with and why?
16. Forgiveness is the greatest gift offered through Christ, the very heart of the Christian faith. Unfortunately, we often take God's forgiveness for granted or are too stubborn to accept an apology from another. It's easy to justify our behaviour and allow ourselves to be guided by our sinful nature rather than by God's Spirit. Is there a situation in your life where you need to seek forgiveness and reconciliation with someone? If so, what steps can you make to restore the relationship with Christ's help?



- * Praise God for his persistent forgiveness. Thank Jesus for giving his life to forgive your sins and repay your debt. Ask the Holy Spirit to shape in you a heart of forgiveness for others.
- * Pray that we would be a community of forgiveness, a place where all people may be immersed in the grace and forgiveness of God.
- * Pray for each other and the areas of your life where you struggle with forgiveness.
- * Pray for the Amplify Conference this weekend in Newcastle, that God would reveal the fullness of his life in the hearts and lives of those who attend.



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, may you live daily in Christ's forgiving love. Amen.