**Forgiveness and Reconciliation**

Lifegroup Study (PM) – 26 Aug 2018

**INTRODUCTION**

We have been reconciled to God through Jesus’ death and resurrection, and now get to enjoy an intimate relationship with God, what an incredible gift! The gospel really is the best news!

When we understand that we have been reconciled to God, we can tell others about God’s incredible grace, so that they too can be reconciled to God.

As we recognise how much we have been forgiven, Jesus calls us to extend that same forgiveness to others. There’s no room for bitterness, resentment or unforgiveness in the Kingdom of God. We have been forgiven an extraordinary amount and now we are called to love greatly in response. Forgiveness is costly, but the Holy Spirit empowers us to live as ministers of reconciliation, and show the same forgiveness that we’ve received from God, to those around us.

**KEY SCRIPTURES**

**READ John 8:3-11** 3The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” 6They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. 7When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” 8Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. 10Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” 11“No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

**2 Corinthians 5:18-20** 18All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.

**Matthew 22:35-40** 35Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, 36“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” 37Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38This is the first and great commandment. 39And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ 40On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

**KEY POINTS FROM SERMON**

***Note for leaders:*** *Allow the text to speak for itself and use these points to focus the conversation or clarify anything that comes up from the discussion questions. You do not need to retell the sermon using these points.*

* Repentance is not the condition for forgiveness, it is the result of it
* Jesus has drawn us to himself (John 12:32). We submit to his relentless passion for us in order to receive his reconciliation.
* From that place of reconciliation to God we are called to be ministers of reconciliation. Those who have been forgiven much love much (See the parable Jesus told in Luke 7:39-50)
* God was the wronged party and yet he was the initiator of reconciliation, he chose not to count our sins against us
* Forgiveness is costly. “The essence of forgiveness is the absorbing of pain instead of giving it.” – Tim Keller Forgiveness is a costly sacrifice but it’s an act of worship, to love the Lord our God with all our heart soul and mind, and love our neighbour as ourselves.
* Forgiveness is the key to reconciliation and reconciliation is the heart of the gospel
* Holy Spirit empowers us to forgive and be reconciled - he specialises in overcoming impossible circumstances

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. If you heard the sermon, was there anything God spoke to you about personally from this message?
2. Within this passage, what insights into God’s character do you find?
3. What does this passage teach us about God's purposes for His people?
4. In light of God’s forgiveness, what did that cost him? What does it cost you?
5. Is there anyone God is leading you to forgive and be reconciled to?
6. **James 1:22** says “*Don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves*.” Is there anything that God is asking you to stop, start or continue in this passage? What is the next step you need to take in response to God’s word? (i.e. obedience)

**PRAYER POINTS**

* For us to receive God’s gift of grace, and live in the reality that we have been reconciled to Him
* Ask Holy Spirit to highlight any unforgiveness, bitterness or resentment we may be holding on to, towards God or people, and lay it down at the cross.
* For God to fill us with his Spirit and enable us to forgive others and be reconciled

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Sam Alberry Event: CANCELLED** The combined churches event with Sam Alberry has been postponed due to his father falling ill. Please pray for his family.

**FLOOD DUNEDIN Sat 15th Sept:** An afternoon ofsweeping through our city demonstrating the love of God in creative ways. Talk Esther Holt or Dion Fasi for more info.

**BAPTISM Sun 16th Sept PM Service**: Does anyone in your Lifegroup want to be baptised. Contact Lois Little 0211723537 by 10th Sept.