

The Complexity of Forgiveness The Complexity of Reconciliation (June 7th, 2020)

PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- If you missed it, watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
- You **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.
- Review the learning objective to focus the conversation, read the primary scriptures as a group, summarize the main points, ask the questions, and use supporting texts to enhance the concepts.

DISCUSSION Opening Prayer: (1-2 minutes) *In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's a suggestion of how your group can invite God into your time together.* Thank the Lord for His sovereignty over all things! Praise the Son for his ability to compassionately sympathize with our suffering in this world! Praise Jesus for resurrecting from the grave so that we can have a relationship with Him through the Holy Spirit! As we reflect on the past week, pray that we would continue to endure and learn to reconcile with others in the power the Holy Spirit! Finally, pray that the good news of Jesus would reach those who are suffering by sending us to represent your love!

Discussion: (45-60 minutes) What's Going on This Week This Sunday, Pastor Danny brought us into the fourth week of the series titled *The Complexity of Forgiveness*. Pastor Danny highlights Genesis 42 – 45 which describes the back-and-forth stalemate between Joseph and his brothers as well as the turning point that led to reconciliation. Pastor Danny challenges us to understand the complexity of the situation and adopt a humble and self-sacrificing posture with our actions so that we might turn the corner and become ministers of God's reconciliation found in Jesus Christ!

“If you want to see reconciliation happen in our world today, move into the conversation with a humble, self-sacrificial posture.” – Pastor Danny Strange

Suggested

Questions

Check-In: Icebreaker – Share a fun story about something that might have been broken (or formless) that you were able to put together or fix? What were the feelings that you experienced in this moment?

Study Tip: The key theme of this week’s sermon is the idea of **reconciliation**. In the NIV, you will find this key phrase used around 12 times in the New Testament with the majority of them coming from Paul! Paul’s favorite compound word to express reconciliation is the Greek phrase **καταλλάσσω**. This specific term uses the prefix *kata* (which can mean along, into, or concerning) and combines it with the root *allos* (which means other or another). Therefore *katallasso* can be taken literally to mean along with, into, or concerning another. So how does one become an agent of *katallasso*? In the ESV translation, there is one more instance of the word reconcile in the Old Testament (1 Sam 29:4). Here, the translators decide to use **reconcile** for the Hebrew root *ratsah* (רצה). In context, this term meaning “to become accepted/ pleasurable” has major implications because it is used most frequently when the author is speaking about YHWH’s acceptance of the Israelites, particularly within the sacrificial system (see Gen. 33:14; Lev. 1:4; 2 Sam. 24:23; Ps. 147:11; Is. 42:1; Jer. 14:12; Hos. 8:3; Mal. 1:8-13). As you reflect on this study guide in this cultural moment, consider the fact that just as it requires an act of genuine sacrifice to walk with God, humility and sacrifice will be required to walk along with others.

Objective #1: Reflect on our emotions in the current state of affairs in our world.

Primary Texts: Genesis 42 – 43 – Pastor Danny introduces his sermon by pointing to the protest and demonstrations that took place over the week. He points out that theoretically, forgiveness should be a simple task. However, even though we long for real justice and reconciliation in this world, we know that reconciliation is one of the hardest hills to climb because it involves real pain. How does this portion of the Joseph story reflect the way that you are feeling about what is going on in the world at this moment? If you had to speculate, what do you think God is accomplishing in all of this?

Objective #2: Commit to embracing the humble and selfless posture to which God is

calling us.

Primary Texts: Genesis 44 – 45 – Next, Pastor Danny challenges us to recognize Judah's act of humility and self-sacrifice as the way the Joseph story is able to turn from a stalemate between brothers to the beginning of true reconciliation. In comparison, Pastor Danny points to the responses of Reuben who does not feel like it is totally his fault. What are some of the things that stand out to you about Judah's response to Joseph? What are some tangible ways that you can move into the posture of humility and self-sacrifice this week?

Objective #3: Pray for our ministry of reconciliation!

Primary Texts: 2 Corinthians 5:16 - 6:10 – Finally, Pastor Danny reveals that the overall trajectory of scripture is a story that moves from brokenness to reconciliation. This story culminates at the humble act of self-sacrifice made by Jesus so that we too can adopt a humble and selfless posture toward others and reconcile with them. How do you think the world would look different if there was true reconciliation between all people? What truth in this scripture can you hold onto this week?

Supporting Texts: (Reconcile) Matt. 5:21-26; Acts 7:22-35; Eph. 2:11-22; Col. 1:15-23

Closing Prayer: (5-10 minutes)

In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's some suggestions of what your group could talk about with God in prayer.

Thank Jesus for becoming human and being a God who can sympathize with our pain! Ask that the Holy Spirit would give us the ability to trust you with our relationships while we seek reconciliation in this crucial moment in your story. Pray that we continue to shift our minds on what you may be doing in our community so that we can see how you are intimately working out good in heartbreaking moments! Finally, pray that the Holy Spirit would continue to transform us into becoming more like Jesus so we can display his forgiveness during this tumultuous season.

THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

-Further Reading and Exploration: *Read Genesis 37-50* For a few more weeks, we will be camped out in the story of Joseph. As you read the entire story, write down some of the major themes you notice and reflect on why the author may have decided to end the book of Genesis by presenting the story of Joseph!

-Stay up to date with Coronavirus Ministry Opportunities: Help us out by pointing the people in your Community Group to 3Crosses.org/coronavirus . If you or anyone in your group is looking to serve food in our pantry, access spiritual care, or seek financial assistance, you can find all you need at 3Crosses.org/neighborhood

-Participate in a Rooted Group! Over the Summer, our community group ministry will be featuring the 3Crosses Grow Discipleship Experience. This will include daily devotional, weekly pastor-led teaching, and 3 workshops to share how the experience is going! You can register to lead a new group by filling out our [Community Group Registration Form](#) or let us know you want to switch by filling out the [my3Crosses Edits Form](#)!

- Find out how to pray for two people in your group this week! Pray that the members of your group would trust in the Lord's hand of reconciliation as they engage with others this week!