

Uncaged: Living in the Freedom of Grace

Forgiveness from the Heart (April 11th, 2021)

PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- You can 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.

Welcome: *Icebreaker* – What’s the biggest risk you have ever taken in your life?

Study Tip: In Luke 17:1-10, Jesus spends time addressing the radical nature of forgiveness. Much like today, the traditional Jewish approach places the burden of proof on the one seeking forgiveness to demonstrate that their desire to reconcile is genuine. In other words, if I can somehow prove that the perpetrator’s heart is in the right place, then I will extend forgiveness. *Not so in the Kingdom of God!* First, pay attention to the condemnation of anyone who leads someone to sin (particularly to the “little ones”) [see Matt. 18:6; Mark 9:42-50]. Each perpetrator of sin never escapes responsibility for their actions. Now, Jesus says **PAY ATTENTION TO YOURSELVES!** If your fellow brother sins, **rebuke** (ἐπιτιμάω) him, and if he **repents** (μετανοέω), you must forgive him! The word **rebuke** appears close to 30 times in the New Testament and would have simply meant correct or disapprove in a way that would prevent any further wrongdoing. If the person confronted **repents** (“changes their mind” and “turns to God”) then we are commanded to forgive as many times as it takes (see Matt. 18:15-22)! Jesus has just put a new burden on the hearts of those who have been wronged. We are no longer instructed to wait and see if the other party truly reflects genuine repentance! Instead, each time someone claims to repent, we are *commanded* to forgive. In the kingdom of God, the benefit of the doubt now rests with the perpetrator! Thus, forgiveness ought to flow freely and abundantly in the midst of God’s people! Now you can imagine why the disciples ask for an increase of faith! In Matthew and Mark, a small amount of faith can uproot an entire mountain (Matt, 17:19-20, 21:21; Mark 11:22-23; 1 Cor. 13:2; Rev. 8:8). Luke intensifies the impossibility of this radical teaching on forgiveness by comparing it to faith that can make a tree stand firm rooted in nothing but water. However, this does not change that we are servants of Jesus bought at a price to please our master who commanded us to radically forgive in this way! In this study guide, reflect on how forgiveness is not only a pleasantry, but our duty to reflect what Jesus has done for us and is made possible through the Holy Spirit.

What’s Going on This Week

This week, Pastor Danny led us into the first week of our new series titled *Uncaged: Living in the Freedom of Grace*. Pastor Danny brought our attention to *Luke 17:1-10* in order to point out to the difficult teaching that Christian forgiveness is unlimited. As you read the scriptures below, recall how Pastor Danny compared forgiveness to eating vegetables; no one wants to, but we do it because we love, trust, and obey Jesus. We know that we have been forgiven by Jesus and we trust in his guidance that suggests it is the best way to live.

“As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn’t leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I’d still be in prison.” – Nelson Mandela

GROUP MEETING (60 – 90 minutes)

******* (NEW) Opening Time of Worship******* (10 – 15 minutes)

Take a moment with your group and prepare your hearts as you enter into the presence of God for this meeting.

<p>Option 1: Worship Music Have someone share their favorite worship song. Find it online, play it, and sing along! Have them explain why the lyrics mean so much to them!</p>	<p>Option 2: Scripture <i>Psalm 103</i> is a beautiful poem about forgiveness that flows out of the steadfast love of God! Take some time and allow this passage to speak to you!</p>	<p>Option 3: Meditation Take some time to meditate on the idea of forgiveness. Allow the Lord to reveal the specific areas of your life that need to be addressed today!</p>
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Objective #1: Identify any current attitudes or situations dealing with forgiveness (15 – 25 minutes)

Primary Texts: Luke 17:1-10 – Pastor Danny presents each of these texts as common scriptures to which Christians turn when thinking about the topic of forgiveness. **After reading the suggested text(s) and hearing a challenging sermon about the high standard Jesus has set for Christian forgiveness, how might the Holy Spirit be challenging you with regard to the topic of forgiveness? Prayer Tip:** Document any situations in your group that need to be infused with the forgiveness that only the Holy Spirit provides!

Other Forgiveness Teachings: Matthew 5:38-48, 18:15-21; John 8:1-11; Luke 23:32-33

Objective #2: Share how you would like to grow in forgiveness throughout this series (15 – 25 minutes)

Primary Texts: Exodus 34:6-7; 1 John 1:9; Psalm 103:11-12; Colossians 3:12-13 – Pastor Danny mentions that Christians forgive because the God we love, trust, and serve tells us to forgive! This ought to be done as an act of obedience, as a reflection of who God is, and a model for what his son has done for us on the cross! **As we move through this *Uncaged* series on forgiveness, what are some of the ways you would like to grow in the area of forgiveness? Prayer Tip:** Keep track of each member's response as they establish a goal to pursue throughout this series!

******* (NEW) Closing Time of Prayer******* (20 – 25 minutes)

In light of this week's discussion, here are some different ways that your group can pray!

- Pray for any situation mentioned in your group that need to be infused with God's forgiveness
- Pray for through each member's goal that was mentioned as we begin this series
- Pray for any individual prayer request that comes up in your group
- Pray for the entire group and how they might be able to contribute to future group meetings.
- Pray for an interaction with someone who you can invite into your next group meeting!

Pray Fast campaign this Tuesday (4/13) at the top of each hour from 8:00 – 5:00 pm at 3crosses.org/pray!

THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

-**Stay up to date with Coronavirus Ministry Opportunities:** Help us out by pointing the people in your Community Group to [3Crosses.org/coronavirus](https://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](https://3crosses.org/neighborhood)

-**Read Ahead:** *Matthew 18:21-35* – Next week, we will take a closer look at the parable of the servant who received forgiveness from the king and then would not extend that same forgiveness to those who owed him. This week, reflect on all of the things God has done to forgive you and how that ought to change the way we live as Christians!

-**Community Groups 2021:** For more information about joining a group, leading a group, or general inquiries, contact AJ at avanegas@3crosses.org