

# Sermon Discussion Guide




## “Forgiveness”

Matthew 18:21-35

Rev. Ray Cortese, March 14 & 15, 2015

### Step 1: Reflect on the Text

Why do we do this first? We always want to start with the Bible. The goal is to meditate on the Word and read it with an ear sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s promptings. Look for words or phrases that stand out through logic, repetition, layout, etc.

-  Read Matthew 18:21-35. What stood out to you? What did you find interesting and/or important? What was challenging or caused you to have questions?

### Step 2: Reflect on the Sermon

#### INTRODUCTION

- 1 What would you have told Simon Wiesenthal, the Jew who stood before a confessing Nazi, to do? We love grace when we’re the object, but we do not like grace when it is extended to other people. Who is someone that the thought of them receiving grace pains you?
- 2 Summarize the *Big Idea* of the sermon in *one phrase or sentence* (Note: this is not the same as listing the main points). In other words, if someone woke you up at 3am on Monday morning and asked, “What was the sermon about on Sunday?” what would you say in the midst of your sleepy haze?

#### FORGIVENESS EMPHASIZED

- 3 What did Jesus mean when he said we are to forgive someone “seventy-seven times”? Is forgiveness really unlimited? Does forgiveness mean there are no consequences? Does forgiveness mean forgetting the wrong done?
- 4 Read and discuss Matthew 5:23-24 and 6:14-15.

- 5 Read the following quote by Frederick Buechner.

Of the Seven Deadly Sins, anger is possibly the most fun. To lick your wounds, to smack your lips over grievances long past, to roll over your tongue the prospect of bitter confrontations still to come, to savor to the last toothsome morsel both the pain you are given and the pain you are giving back – in so many ways is a feast fit for a king. The chief drawback is that what you are wolfing down is yourself. The skeleton at the feast is you.

Who is the true prisoner of unforgiveness? Is there someone you need to forgive?

### FORGIVENESS EXPERIENCED

- 6 Explain in your own words the meaning of the parable of the unforgiving servant. How are the servant's words, "Be patient with me and I will pay you back" indicative of much of North American Christianity? How does the gospel of grace contradict such an attitude?
- 7 When you say, "I will never forgive," you're looking at the wrong debt. Whose debt should you be looking at instead? Ray said, "No one's forgiveness should be more shocking than yours." Is that statement true of your heart?

### FORGIVENESS EXTENDED

- 8 Read Matthew 18:35. Is Jesus saying you have to merit forgiveness? What is he saying?
- 9 What is the remedy for unforgiveness? In other words, where can you find the power to forgive someone who has sinned against you? Can you recall a time when God enabled you to forgive someone, even though what they did was sin?

## Step 3: Final Reflections

- ✠ How has your understanding, appreciation, and love for Jesus and the gospel grown as a result of this study?
- ♥ In what areas of faith and practice are you feeling convicted by the Holy Spirit to act as a result of this study?