



BRANCHES

Use this curriculum to help you further engage with the sermon, the scriptures, and each other. Allow the Holy Spirit to bring things up to encourage and guide you so that you are always growing in your faith. If the Spirit leads you away from these questions and into conversation and prayer that encourages and points you to Jesus, go for it.

scripture

Read the following scriptures together: Hebrews 13:9, 2 Corinthians 5:21, and Romans 8:1.

overview

In this week of the series, we are looking at *Generosity of Forgiveness*. It's important to understand our own forgiveness and the grace of God before we can move to genuinely forgive others. We can go about Christianity on autopilot, but this kind of disengaged routine doesn't produce people who are fully alive with God's love. We need to have a regular rhythm of reflecting on what God has done for us to strengthen our hearts and minds to be more generous in our actions towards others. It is important for us to be reminded because we know as busy people going about all of our activities that we often forget or maybe even take for granted the grace given to us.

question 1

What influences or past voices in your life cause you to think that God is angry with you or condemning you? Do you ever doubt God's grace for you?

discussion

Read Psalm 103:12. Andrew said that considering these truths, we ought to be the freest people on earth. Paul wanted believers to grasp these truths too. Read Ephesians 3:16-18. One of Satan's schemes is to get us to head down that road of self-condemnation and wallow in pity, to take us away from believing in the free gift of our forgiveness and salvation. Satan's ways are subtle and can come at us out of nowhere, sometimes leaving us feeling blindsided. This is why we talk so often about incorporating the rhythms of prayer, bible reading, and remembering into our daily lives. When Jesus was tempted in the desert (Matt. 4:1-11), he had been so saturated in prayer, fasting, and scriptural truth that he was able to rebuke Satan and not fall for his schemes. We can equip ourselves too and not be led astray by lies. We have the Holy Spirit in us, and the Spirit will strengthen and empower us to walk in the understanding of grace – we just ask through prayer.

question 2

Have you have found freedom from self-pity? How were you able to get to that place? This can be a tangible example that will encourage someone else who is having a bit more difficulty getting there.

The logical outflow of grace in us is grace and forgiveness towards others. God's heart is reconciliation and so this ought to be our intention too. But when conflict arises, it's often easier to hide from the other person or stuff it down. Both of these methods don't actually clear anything up, causing the pain and frustration to stay inside of us where it will seep out on those around us. Therefore, we need to get our priorities in line with God's heart of reconciliation and forgiveness. We don't want to be like the wicked servant that Jesus spoke about in Matthew 18:21-35. For us to truly forgive another person, it is important for us to remember and apply what God has asked us to do because on our own, it isn't natural or easy. Jesus' instructions on how to pray directs us to both receive forgiveness and forgive others. Read Matthew 6:9-13.

question 3

Does someone have a testimony of forgiving another person? How did you get to this place and how did you feel afterwards? Does anyone want prayer for the courage to forgive someone or prayer to get to the place where you fully understand God's grace towards you?

final thoughts

This week, take time to consider the truth of Psalm 103:12 and what that means for your life and the people in it. If you identified someone in question 3 that needs your forgiveness, take the next step. This might just be in your heart, or it might be an invitation to take someone out for coffee. Whatever it means for you, let's be a people of generous forgiveness.