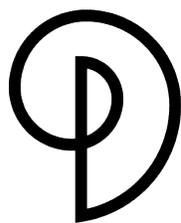


SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



Extraordinary Forgiveness

January 7 & 8, 2023

The experience of forgiveness is challenging, emotional work. Think of it like this: You have a boatload of frustration, anger, and hurt, not to mention the grudges you're nursing. You're holding onto the rope that connects you to the boatload of all of that. Wouldn't it be great to just let it go? The answer to that, of course, is yes. Let's learn how to do that.

SCRIPTURE TEXT: MATTHEW 18:21-33

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

Grace is receiving what we don't deserve. Mercy is not receiving what we do deserve. By rights the king should have thrown the debtor in jail. That's what he deserved. But instead, the king mercifully and fully canceled the man's debt. That's also how we've been forgiven - mercifully and fully. And such extraordinary mercy should compel us to show mercy to others, forgiving them even when they don't deserve it. As we've been forgiven, so we forgive.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Share a story about one (or more) of the following: a time you were forgiven, a time you forgave, something you currently need to forgive but are struggling to do so.
- From Paul's sermon: "The point of this story is that forgiveness is part of God's vision for how we live our lives in community." As a group, discuss some issues/situations ripe for forgiveness in various communities you are aware of or are part of. Then, pick one or two examples and brainstorm the best first step toward forgiveness in those issues/situations.
- From Paul's sermon, forgiveness is: a deliberate decision, a release of negative feelings, more about the forgiver than the forgiven, a long process, a hard process, worth it, liberating.
 - Tell about a time forgiveness was one of these things for you.
 - Brainstorm other words or phrases that define forgiveness for you.
- How does remembering how much you've been forgiven by God help you forgive?

CHALLENGE: Identify a person or situation that you need to forgive, and spend some intentional time working through the 4-step method toward forgiveness that Paul described in this week's sermon: identify the hurt, embrace the apology, choose forgiveness, welcome a new day.