

Guided to the Cross Bible Study
Lent, 2024
Session 1 – Guided to Forgiveness

*¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness
and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,
¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Colossians 1:13-14
English Standard Version (ESV)

INTRODUCTION: We live in a world that is not very forgiving. Instead of remembering that the LORD said, “Vengeance is mine,” people more often than not feel that vengeance is theirs, and they must punish whoever has wronged them in some way. Our overabundance of lawsuits these days bears that out. But we as Christians are called by our Lord and Savior Jesus, to be first and foremost a forgiving people. Jesus at so many moments in his ministry explains that we should be as forgiving to others as he has been to us. How forgiving is that? Completely forgiving without conditions or amendments. No matter what we have done, Christ forgave us on the cross. Now it is our turn to be just as fully forgiving.

OPENING PRAYER

O Christ, guide us to your cross and to the forgiveness of sins we find there. Only through your sacrifice on the cross are our sins forgiven. Help us to remember to come to you confessing this Lent, so that we may be refreshed and renewed by your grace to forgive others as you have forgiven us. Amen.

REFLECTION – When was the last time you said, “I’m sorry” to someone? What does it feel like to receive forgiveness?

THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT

Read Matthew 18:21-35.

- Why do you think Peter was asking about how often to forgive someone? What does Jesus’ initial answer indicate?
- Why do you think Jesus chose to tell the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant at that particular moment?
- What is the servant’s plea to the king? How can we relate to that?
- Why is the king’s forgiveness toward the servant significant?
- What is the meaning behind the fellow servant’s debt?
- What is the fellow servant’s plea?
- Why do you think the unforgiving servant is so angry?
- What happens to those who do not forgive?
- What is Jesus’ overall point in this parable?

TURN THE OTHER CHEEK

Read Matthew 5:38-40.

- How are Jesus' suggestions here counter to human nature?
- What does forgiveness require of the forgiver?
- How do you think the wrongdoer in these scenarios would respond?
- How does forgiveness change relationships?

FATHER, FORGIVE THEM

Read Luke 23:32-38.

- What are Jesus' first words from the cross? Why is that important?
- Who were those in need of forgiving around the cross? What were they doing?

Read Romans 7:15-20.

- How do these verses help us understand what Jesus is talking about when he says, "They know not what they do" (Luke 23.34)?
- Why does it feel that Jesus is praying for us in this moment, too?

Read Romans 7:24-25a

- Are we wretched? Why or why not?
- Who can free us from our wretchedness?

RESPONSIVE READING – PSALM 51:7-12

⁷ Purify me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

⁹ Turn your face away from my sins
and blot out all my guilt.

¹⁰ God, create a clean heart for me
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

¹¹ Do not banish me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.

¹² Restore the joy of your salvation to me,
and sustain me by giving me a willing spirit.

Christian Standard Bible (CSB)

Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidst me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not to rid my soul of one dark blot,
to thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
sight, riches, healing of the mind,
yea, all I need in thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, thy love unknown
hath broken every barrier down;
now, to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

CLOSING PRAYER

Forgiving Jesus, thank you for remembering us from the cross and granting us pardon from our sins. Let us live a life of forgiveness in our interactions with others, and let us be humble in our receiving of forgiveness when we have wronged someone else. May the cross serve as a constant reminder to us this Lent that we receive forgiveness only through the blood of Christ. Amen.

VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Ephesians 4.32

Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

New Living Translation (NLT)