SLIGO SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

# Discipleship 201

## Session 7: *The Power to Forgive*

### Matthew 18:23-29

**23** "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. **24** As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. **25** Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

**26** "At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' **27** The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

**28** "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.

**29** "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.'

**30** "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. **31** When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

**32** "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. **33** Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?'

### Matthew 6:14,15

**14** For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. **15** But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

### Colossians 3:13

Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

### Luke 23:34

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

## Summary:

Jesus admonition on forgiveness, much like his teaching on worry, is much easier said than done! Forgiveness sounds wonderful, that is, until you have been deeply wronged. And every person who walks on this planet will be wounded or wronged at some point in their life.

Jesus' teaching is very clear on this point: you should forgive. And while our human nature may protest and scream for justice, or even revenge, Jesus is trying to show us a better way. Forgiveness is indeed painful, but it's actually not as painful as not forgiving. Forgiveness can cost us a lot, but not as much as it costs to not forgive.

If we find ourselves upset that Jesus would ask us to forgive someone who has hurt and wounded us, let's recall what He Himself went through. He was beaten, he was betrayed, he was misrepresented, disrespected, despised, bullied, falsely accused, stripped naked, and hung on a cross. If Jesus could forgive us this outrageous grievance, maybe we can forgive others.

The secret to living in this Biblical paradigm of forgiveness is to recognize that you were forgiven first. God forgave you long before he asked you to forgive others. Jesus parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matthew 18:23-33) is a punch to our gut on how we often treat others. Even though we have been forgiven millions of dollars, we aggressively choke someone else for the $5 they owe us. In fact, our unforgiveness towards others suggests we may have never truly accepted God's forgiveness of us.

## Quotes:

"Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive."
—Lysa Terkhurst

"Some of us will wear ourselves out trying to change ourselves before we realize that spiritual growth is not about fixing; it is about *letting go*. —Ruth Haley Barton

"We can heal. We can forgive. We can trust God. And none of those beautiful realities can be held hostage by another person." —Lysa Terkhurst, *Forgiving What You Can't Forget*

""Forgiveness is the fragrance the violet sheds on the heel that has crushed it."
—Mark Twain

## Discussion Questions:

What are some reasons you could give for why forgiveness is a good idea?

What are some barriers we might have to actually forgiving?

Do you think we truly understand or accept how much God has forgiven us?

How much does forgiveness cost?

Should you forgive someone who hasn't asked for it? If so, why?

## Homework:

Your **practice** for this week is to set aside a minimum of 15 minutes each day to reflect on the following Scripture.

**Day 1:** Read Jesus' parable in Mathew 18:23-33. How does this parable help you live in an attitude of forgiveness?

**Day 2:** Reflect on Matthew 6:12-15. Is there any situation or any person you need to forgive?

**Day 3:** Meditate on Colossians 3:13. What does it mean for you to forgive as God has forgiven you?

**Day 4:** Read Luke 23:34 and more of the story if you wish. How much did it cost God to forgive us? How do you feel reflecting on this sacrifice?

**Day 5:** It's time to write a letter. Use your time today to write a letter forgiving someone, (maybe even yourself) for wounds they have caused you. You do not have to give them the letter, but read it back to yourself after you have written it. Pray about who you could share it with, to mark this spiritual moment of letting go. If this is bringing up a lot of emotions, make sure to seek out a counselor to help you process this experience.