



WEEKLY STUDY

***Stepping Into Increase* - Week Two**

As we continue into this new year by stepping into the increase that God has for us, we take a look at the forgiveness that Jesus calls his disciples to. If your brother repents, *forgive him*. How many times? *As many times as he repents*. You'll notice that the main scripture from Luke is the same as last week. We'll focus on this call to forgiveness as we read, study and pray in the days to come.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: LUKE 17.1-6 (ESV)

And he said to his disciples, "Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! ² It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin. ³ Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, ⁴ and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."

⁵ The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" ⁶ And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you."

- How often are we willing to call our brothers and sisters to repentance? To do so well requires relationship and risk. What Jesus is inviting us to do is to put our own self-righteousness aside to create space for someone else to repent. When we call others to repent, we risk losing the comfortable narrative of *us/them* and *our right-ness/their wrong-ness*. The relationship that we should be most interested in restoring is their relationship with God. When that is in our heart, our

own relationship with God is strengthened. Who are you needing to have a difficult conversation with? Who has already repented and may be waiting on your forgiveness?

- **Prayer Prompt: Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. Luke 17.3.**
- *God, would you continue the work of transformation that you have begun in my heart. Soften my heart enough to offer forgiveness, even when doing so causes me to lose the upper hand. Humble me. Amen.*

TUESDAY: ISAIAH 43.18-19 (NIV)

*“Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.
¹⁹ See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland.*

- There is a new thing that God is doing in Jesus Christ. He has ushered in an era of forgiveness and restoration. He has ushered in the very presence of God. The fact is that if we are unwilling to participate in this era of forgiveness, we will miss out on the fullness of what Isaiah was prophesying about. Unforgiveness is a barrier to the life God desires for us, and is a barrier to faith itself. Can you think of some ways that a lack of forgiveness might be holding you back from a vibrant faith?

- **Prayer Prompt: See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? (Isaiah 43.19)**
- *Lord God, increase my perception of the new thing you are doing even now. The world sometimes looks bleak and scary, but I let go of my attachment to the ways of the world and look for your way in the wilderness. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: PHILIPPIANS 3.13-14 (NIV)

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

- In his letter to the Philippians, Paul expresses how focused he is on the ultimate goal. We can become satisfied with small goals and small rewards, but Paul says that he presses on. To press on can require a letting go (forgetting what is behind). If we hold on to a smaller thing, like a grudge against an enemy, we are unable to press on, unable to win the prize for which God has called us. Do you ever feel like you are running in two directions at once? How has that been working for you? What are the challenges to “forgetting what is behind”?
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- **Prayer Prompt:** *I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3.13-14)*
- *Jesus, Jesus, I want to find the focus and determination of Paul. For all that clamors for my attention, there is nothing as rewarding as eternity with God. Amen.*

THURSDAY: EPHESIANS 4.31-32 (NIV)

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

- God has demonstrated for us what true, full, undeserved forgiveness looks like. Therefore our forgiveness of others ought to be from a place of kindness and compassion. That means we can relate to the motives of others. We can understand what would lead our brother to fall. What does God’s forgiveness of you have to do with your forgiveness of others?
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- **Prayer Prompt:** *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4.32)*
- *Jesus, Out of your kindness and compassion towards me, teach me to offer the same to others. I pray for particular people who need a display of compassion.*

FRIDAY: COLOSSIANS 3.12-14 (NIV)

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

- This teaching comes in a series of Christian virtues that followers of Jesus ought to “put on”. Forgiveness is a way of life and something we wear around. When was the last time someone complimented you on something you were wearing? If you were to compliment someone on the forgiveness they are wearing, who would that be?

- **Prayer Prompt: *And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. (Colossians 3.14)***
- *God, I want to be fashioned in the Way of Jesus. Cloak me in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Amen.*

SATURDAY: 1 JOHN 1.8-9 (NIV)

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

- John was writing about the level-ground of humility that defines disciples of Jesus. As Pastor Jacob said, none of us are “done” becoming more like Jesus. Do you have someone in your life to whom you can confess your sins? When have you been keenly aware of the forgiveness Jesus offers to you?

- **Prayer Prompt: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1.9)***
- *God, I confess that I am subject to sin. Free me with your forgiveness, purify me from all unrighteousness. Amen.*

GROUP DISCUSSION

Pastor Jacob shared about the three barriers to forgiveness. Are any of these barriers preventing you from forgiveness currently? How do the “forgiveness is not” statements align or differ from your understanding of forgiveness? Which ones offer you grace?

1. Unreadiness.
 - Forgiveness is not rushing you to a place you aren't ready for.
2. Self-Protection
 - Forgiveness does not mean reconciliation or give license for more pain.
3. Perceived weakness and Injustice
 - Forgiveness is not a sign of weakness or a sign that justice doesn't matter.