

Class Discussion Notes – January 20, 2016

Why forgive?

Why is it so hard to forgive?

He came to pay a debt He didn't owe



because we owed a debt we couldn't pay.

What Christmas is all about...

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53: 4-6

...it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2: 8-10

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Colossians 1:20

God... has saved us and called us to a holy life – not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

II Timothy 1: 8-10

He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. Hebrews 7:27

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God' but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

I John 4:10-12

WEAK

To the right is part of a dictionary page with definitions of the word, weak.

1. Count how many times the word

lacking, is mentioned: _____

2. Does weak seem like a desirable or undesirable state? _____

3. Why?

4. Paul (II Corinthians 12: 7-10) asserts there is strength in weakness. That seems like an oxymoron. Explain why could be true.

5. Go to the next page and research an Old Testament example.

weak (wèk), *adj.* [ME. *weik*; ON. *veikr*; akin to AS. *wac*, feeble, which the ON. word replaced; IE. base **weig-*, to bend, yield, as also in G. *weich*, tender, L. *vicis*, change, etc. (cf. VICISSITUDE)], 1. lacking in strength of body or muscle; not physically strong. 2. lacking in fighting strength or skill; not strong in combat or competition: as, a *weak* team. 3. lacking in moral strength or firmness of character; lacking will power. 4. lacking in mental power, or intelligence; deficient in the ability to think, judge, decide, etc. 5. lacking ruling power, or authority; incapable of issuing orders and seeing that they are carried out: as, a *weak* monarch. 6. lacking in force or effectiveness: as, *weak* authority. 7. lacking in strength of material; unable to resist strain, pressure, etc.; easily torn, broken, bent, etc.: as, a *weak* rail, a *weak* spot in a fabric. 8. not sound or secure; unable to stand up to an attack, etc.: as, a *weak* fortification. 9. lacking physical vitality; feeble by reason of age, illness, etc.; infirm. 10. not performing well or in a normal manner: said of a body organ or part, as, *weak* eyes, *weak* ears. 11. indicating or suggesting moral or physical weakness: as, *weak* features. 12. lacking in volume, intensity, etc.; faint: as, a *weak* voice, a *weak* current. 13. lacking in the full or proper strength of some ingredient; diluted: as, *weak* tea. 14. lacking, poor, or deficient in something specified: as, *weak* in grammar, a baseball team *weak* in pitchers. 15. a) ineffective; unconvincing: as, a *weak* argument. b) faulty: as, *weak* logic. 16. having a relatively low gluten content: said of a flour or wheat. 17. in finance, tending toward lower prices: said of a stock or stock market. 18. in grammar, a) inflected by the addition of a suffix such as *-ed* or *-d* rather than by an internal vowel change: said of verbs popularly called *regular*. b) inflected by the addition of a suffix originally belonging to a stem ending in *-n*: said of Germanic adjectives and nouns. 19. in phonetics, unstressed or lightly stressed. 20. in photography, lacking contrast; thin: said of a negative. 21. in prosody, designating or of a verse ending in which the stress falls on a word or syllable that is normally unstressed, often a preposition whose object occurs in the following line.

SYN.—*weak*, the broadest in application of these words, basically implies a *lack* or inferiority of physical, mental, or moral strength (a *weak* muscle, mind, character, foundation, excuse, etc.); *feeble* suggests a pitiable weakness or ineffectiveness (a *feeble* old man, a *feeble* joke); *frail* suggests an inherent or constitutional delicacy or weakness, so as to be easily broken or shattered (her *frail* body, conscience, etc.); *infirm* suggests a loss of strength or soundness, as through illness or age (his *infirm*, old grandfather); *decrepit* implies a being broken down, worn out, or decayed, as by old age or long use (a *decrepit* old pensioner, a *decrepit* sofa). —*ANT.* strong, sturdy, robust.

weak-en (wē'kən), *v.t. & v.i.* to make or become weak or weaker.

SYN.—*weaken*, the most general of these words, implies a lessening of strength, power, soundness, etc. (*weakened* by disease, to *weaken* an argument); *debilitate* suggests a partial or temporary weakening, as by disease or dissipation (*debilitated* by alcoholic excesses); *enervate* implies a lessening of force, vigor, energy, etc., as through indulgence in luxury (*enervated* by idleness); *undermine*

Old Testament Example of Weakness

Read II Chronicles 20:1-23 and answer the following questions.

1. Who is the main character and what was his position (II Chron. 19:1)?

2. What was the danger? (verse 2)
3. What was Jehoshaphat's first emotion in verse 3? _____
4. How did he set about coping with it? (verse 3)
5. From verses 3-13, list five or six specific things he and/or his people did to seek the Lord:
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
 - D.
 - E.
 - F.
 - G.
6. What was God's response in verses 15 and 17?
7. How do verses 20-21 indicate Jehoshaphat and his people spent their time waiting?
8. How did God work out the problem? (verse 23)
9. Take verse 12 b and fill in the blank with your own pressing need in the area forgiving or being forgiven. I am "powerless against this _____ that is coming against me. " I "do not know what to do, but my eyes are upon thee."
10. How does it feel to acknowledge helplessness, weakness,, need?

11. Did Jehoshaphat always have perfect dependence?

Chapter 19:1-3

Chapter 20:31-32, 35

We need to come back to God every day, every moment for strength. It is not a one time deal. Read Lamentations 3:19-26. How does it feel to realize you need to come back for help every day?

Like Paul, we need to realize it is NORMAL; it is OK; it is REALITY; it is HEALTHY to be weak and to acknowledge our NEED for God's power in our lives.

12. We have a tendency to depend only when we are totally helpless. How can we avoid using God as a last resort? Don't just be theoretical in your answer; be specific and practical.

Beth Mellema, 2016

The Holy Spirit

How familiar are you with the source of power Jesus told would come to live in His disciples and followers after He returned to Heaven? Do you know that the Holy Spirit was present and active in Old Testament times as well? The difference was that He was external to a person as opposed to living in a believer after Pentecost. We come from many backgrounds and have had various kinds of teaching about the Holy Spirit. Sometimes people have become focused on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and have become divided over things such as speaking in tongues. Often we are very limited in our understanding of His role in our Christian walk. Christianity teaches, based on Scripture, the concept of the Trinity: that God has three parts (persons) or manifestations (God the Father and Creator, Jesus Christ the Savior, and the Holy Spirit who indwells and guides the believer) that they are unified and aspects of the One true God; and that they describe different functions/ provisions. Whatever our individual backgrounds, we can all go to God's word to read more about the Holy Spirit. Who is He? What does He do? What does He ask of us? As we study forgiveness, we need to acknowledge and access the power He provides to enable us to live as Christ asks.

Look up the following verses and jot down beside each a characteristic, role, provision of the Holy Spirit. Single words are adequate.

1. **Genesis 1:1-2**
2. **Isaiah 63:14**
3. **Ezekiel 36:26-28**
4. **Haggai 2:4-5**
5. **Matthew 28:19**
6. **Luke 1:26-38**
7. **Luke 2:25-32**
8. **John 14:15-21**

9. John 14: 25-27

10. John 16:5-15

11. Acts 1:2

12. Acts 1:8

13. Acts 13:2

14. Acts 20:22-23

15. Acts 21:4

16. Romans 8:9-11

17. Romans 8:26-27

18. Romans 15:13

19. I Corinthians, chapter 2

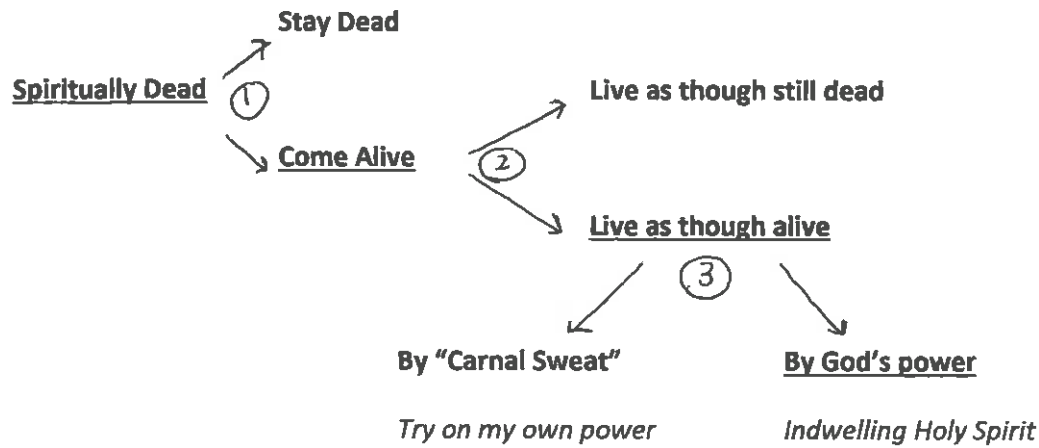
20. I Corinthians 12:3

21. I Corinthians 12:4-11

22. II Corinthians 3:17-1

23. Ephesians 3:16

Four Choices We Make in Response to God's Outreach to Us



(Carnal sweat is futile in

both Justification

(being made alive)

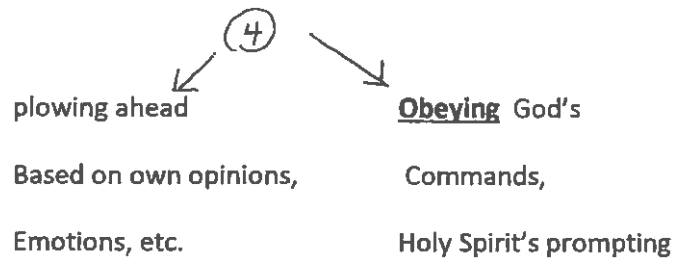
AND

Sanctification

(growing in Christ likeness;

Christian walk)

Specific situation



From the Inside Out: A Study on Forgiveness

(Assignment 2 – for Class 3)

As we learn more about both our need to forgive and to be forgiven, we will look at many threads that help us make forgiveness real in our experience. We want to grow in applying what we know and believe. At times, it may seem that we are dissecting the topic in painstaking detail, but don't be discouraged or distracted from the central truth and purpose of our journey: if we have experienced the love and forgiveness of Christ, we are called on the extend it to others. The details will fit together like pieces of a puzzle and help us experience God's truth in this area of our Christian walk.

Foundational to this study is a big **IF**: whether you have experienced God's forgiveness in your own life and have a relationship with Him. The material we study will be based on the hope that you have; if not, please pursue that need before you try to apply the concepts we will explore. Your group leader or others would be so willing to help you.

Next week we will explore what the Bible has to say about the way God created us to have a body, a soul, and a spirit. So many times, we concentrate so much on our **PHYSICAL BODIES** – the active, visible outer shell that we present to the world. When our bodies are compromised or damaged through deprivation, accidents, aging, or illness, we become acutely aware of their function and limitations. Other times we take them for granted and use or abuse them in our daily tasks and interactions. Though this is often the focus of our attention, we are also aware of hidden parts within us that others see only if we reveal them through our attitudes, words, or actions. Our minds, our wills, and our emotions make up the **SOUL** and drive our outward behavior. And there is a precious, inner core where Christ wants to reside and direct our lives from the inside out; that is called the **SPIRIT**.

In preparation for that discussion, please focus on the diagram on the next page and refer to it when commenting on the assigned verses.

Write out I Thessalonians 5:23:

We agree on what the word **body** refers to, but sometimes different terms are used for the **soul** and the **spirit** such as heart, inner being, ego, and others. In this study, we will be referring to the three parts of our human make up as the body, the soul, and the spirit.

BODY

flesh and blood:
what the world sees on first impression

SOUL

- mind (cognition)
- will
- emotions

SPIRIT

- conscience
- intuition
- capacity to
communicate with
God

Read the following passages, jotting down phrases that seem to refer to the body, the soul, or the spirit (as defined in diagram). Some verses may address more than one. The goal is for you to become familiar with these divisions to help in the study of God's word and in our class discussion on forgiveness.

For example:

Genesis 2:7 "The Lord formed the man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

Phrases: physical body created by God out of dust; became living being when God breathed into him the breath of life.

Components addressed: the body and the inner parts – probably both the soul and the spirit

1. **Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Mark 12:30-31; and Luke 10:27**

2. **II Chronicles 15:12**

3. **II Chronicles 34:31**

4. **Psalms 73:26**

5. **Psalms 119:11**

6. **Proverbs 3:5-6**

Proverbs 14:30

7. **Proverbs 14: 30**

8. **Romans 6:11-14**

9. **Romans 7: 18-25**

10. **Romans 12: 1-2**

11. **I Corinthians 6: 18-20**

12. **I Corinthians 15:35- end of chapter**

13. **Galatians 2:20**

14. **Ephesians 1: 17-21**

15. **Ephesians 3:16-19**

16. Philippians 2:7

17. Philippians 4:4-9

18. Philippians 4:13

19. Colossians 3:1-4

20. Titus 1:16

21. Titus 3:3-8

22. Hebrews 4: 12-13

23. Hebrews 6:19

24. Hebrew 8:10

25. Hebrews 12: 1-3

26. James 2:12

27. James 3: 9-10

28. I Peter 1: 3-9

29. I Peter 3: 3-4

For more discussion:

1. Dr. James Dobson, years ago, wrote a book entitled *Emotions: Can You Trust Them?* How do you think he answered that question and why?
2. *IF* our outer actions reflect our inner self, what should we examine first when we see a real discrepancy in our lives? Look back to page 3 in last week's assignment – the If/Then from *Philippians 2: 2-8.* If you didn't already complete that, here's another opportunity!!

If you have,

1.

2.

3.

4.

Then

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Too often we focus on trying to drum up the energy to do what God says HE wants to produce in our hearts. We get the cart before the horse and risk falling into a form of legalism. If we find a deficit in the "thens," we each need to stop to examine whether the "ifs" are in place in our lives – and to seek God in these areas before we can expect to see genuine expression of what He seeks for us. This is not an excuse to be slow to obey but an invitation to grow so as we obey, we are tapping into the strength that can enable us to do so as a more regular outflow of our walk.

3. Who lives in the spirit of a believer?

a. Jesus promised to send: (Read John 16: 5-16) _____

What are some of the things He will do for us?

b. Paul reminds us that what is living within us (Romans 8:11 – read verses 9-11)

Do we realize how amazing that is? We are not left to flounder on our own. The Christian life can't be lived on our own power, but God is able and willing to give us the power to make it real, to obey what He asks. On our own, we are like a light bulb that isn't screwed into the socket, like a lamp that is not plugged in, like a branch ripped from a tree.