

1. Connect

Question of the Day. Highs and Lows. Share how last week's message influenced your week.

We are in our fourth and final week of our "Praying Big Prayers" series. How did God meet you last Sunday in "naming" what the Spirit revealed to you? How did "naming" impact your walk with God this week?

2. Engage: Sermon Review + Discussion

As we turn our attention this week to opposing injustice, read Matthew 6: 9-13 together as a LifeGroup. As you read this passage of Scripture, what words, images, or sentences stand out to you? Spend a couple of minutes making your own observations about the Scripture, then share those observations together as a group.

Jesus teaches his disciples how to pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." The forgiveness we receive from God is predicated on our ability to forgive others. Pastor Albert exhorted us to extend forgiveness as a fruit of spiritual maturity.

- Forgiveness is powerful.
 - Forgiveness is first vertical before it is anything else. It is core and essential to being a follower of Jesus Christ. Jesus canceled a debt we cannot pay, and we are all recipients of a canceled debt. As a group, go around and describe the first time you experienced the saving power and forgiveness of Jesus in your life.
 - Forgiveness is powerful when it's extended, but it's also powerful when it's withheld. Take some time to think of how integrated forgiveness is in your life. What would it mean for you to extend forgiveness to someone you've withheld it from? What is a recent moment that you've been on the receiving end of forgiveness? How did it feel?
- Forgiveness is surrendering.
 - As humans, we've all experienced the pain of someone violating, harming, or mistreating us. When this happens, we develop a vengeance and desire to take revenge. Romans 12 says, "Do not repay evil for evil" but "overcome evil with good." As you hear this, what comes to mind? What tensions come up for you?
 - Pastor Albert exhorted us to take our vengeance and give it to Jesus. If reconciliation (mutual forgiveness between two parties) is not possible, you can still forgive (my individual ability to release and surrender the injustice to God). How can the "vertical forgiveness" shape the way you extend "horizontal forgiveness" more fully?

- Pastor Albert said that the root of God takes fruit when go from wanting someone to be destroyed to wanting to see them restored. We see with God's eyes, seeing them for who God has made them to be, not what they did. We must lay down our self-righteous stones. How can we use our mouths to speak life rather than as a weapon to tear our offenders down?
- Forgiveness happens in God's presence.
 - Forgiveness is a lifelong, lifetime commitment. We have to choose not to remember in the same way Jesus does with us. What would it look like for you to choose not to remember in a genuine way?
- Unforgiveness creates a prison-- for the offender and for us. However oftentimes, we are in the prison by ourselves because we have not surrendered our vengeance and anger to God. Pastor Albert exhorted us that God has too much in purpose for us to be in a prison. Who and what are some circumstances and people you can forgive and release in God's presence in order to receive the fruit of God's peace this week?

3. Apply: Next Faithful Step

- The root of vengeance is bitterness. The bitterness of this root can only be overcome by the sweetness of God's presence. Oftentimes we are living in the scarcity of what our offenders created; but God invites us to into the abundance of He as our Creator has provided. How can you take time to intentionally be in the presence of God this week?
- Name what the Holy Spirit spoke within you during the sermon. What is one tangible step you can take this week to apply the message more deeply in your life?

4. Prayer

Take some time to hear prayer requests from each member of your LifeGroup. Pray for one another, for your families, communities, our church, and the world.

*If anyone needs additional pastoral support or prayers regarding this sermon or any other aspect of our Praying Big Prayers series, please don't hesitate to reach out to our pastoral staff. We would love to chat more deeply and pray with you.

