

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

March 30-31

“Forgiving as We’ve Been Forgiven”

By Rev. Eric Moeller

What Is This?

This brief guide is intended for use individually, or in small groups. It’s your chance to dive deeper into the issues raised in the weekend sermon and to connect a Biblical story with your daily life.

Revisit the Text: Luke 7: 36-50

Big Ideas Raised

- The Biblical story offers 3 perspectives that we occupy at different moments in our lives. Each, however, has something to teach us about being good neighbors and creating a healthy community through forgiveness
- Sometimes we might be the Pharisee that Jesus admonishes for his judgment of the nameless woman, and even Jesus himself. In this character we are reminded that none of us are as righteous as we’d like to think, and therefore we have no right to judge anyone else.
- Sometimes we might be the woman, whose sinful actions, whatever they are, have been the subject of gossip, judgment, and shame. Like her, at times we need to know we are accepted, embraced, loved, and forgiven. Knowing this acceptance enables us to move forward in new ways.
- Sometimes, hopefully mostly, we occupy Jesus’ place in the story. We do this through holding each other accountable and having conversations when we have disagreements, our communal values are not being upheld, or harm is being done. We do it through setting aside our judgments of others. We do it through accepting others, and giving each other grace and forgiveness when necessary. We will mess up with one another from time to time, but offering acceptance, grace, and forgiveness allows us to move forward together in new ways rooted in love.

Questions Meant to Dig Deeper

- Pastor Eric proposes that we occupy each character in the story at different points in our experience. Let’s examine that more closely, knowing that being in community with one another requires some risk and vulnerability. So be as honest as you can, both with yourself and your conversation partners.
 - Do you recall a time of being judgmental and graceless like Simon the Pharisee?
 - Was there someone that was able to speak to you, and shift your perspective?
 - Do you recall a time when you were like the woman, in great need of acceptance, love, grace and forgiveness? Or a time you were the subject of public judgment, gossip, and rejection?
 - Was there someone that offered you the love and grace you needed? Or was there a moment when you knew you were forgiven and accepted by God?
 - Do you recall a time you were like Jesus, able to offer acceptance, love, and grace to someone else who was in great need of it?
 - Now, specifically in your relationships at church, have you ever experienced judgment, needed forgiveness, or been the messenger of love and grace?

Revisit the Sermon

For a recording or a manuscript of this weekend’s sermon, please visit:

<https://www.stlucasucc.org/sermons-resources>