

Advent Parables

The Unmerciful Servant

TALK IT OVER

Key Scripture

"and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." - Matthew 6:12 (ESV)

"Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you." - Matthew 7:1-2 (ESV)

"9 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." - Matthew 16:19 (ESV)

"21 Then Peter came up and said to him, 'Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?' 22 Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times. 23 'Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. 24 When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' 27 And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. 28 But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' 29 So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' 30 He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. 31 When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. 32 Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' 34 And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. 35 So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.'" - Matthew 18:21-35 (ESV)

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Start Talking: Find a conversation starter for your group. (15 Min)

- Share a petty grudge you just can't let go of. Why can't you let it go?

Head: Start Thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking. (10 Min)

- Read Matthew 18:21-27. What did the master do for the servant? What would have happened to him if the master wasn't merciful? Do you think the servant was grateful?
- Read Matthew 18:28-35. Did the forgiven servant react as expected? Why do you think he did what he did?
- Read Matthew 18:21-35. What is Jesus' point in telling this?

Heart: Start Sharing. Choose a question to create openness. (10 Min)

- Have you ever noticed that the Lord's prayer almost implies that the forgiveness of our sins is conditional on us forgiving others? How are we to understand Matthew 6:12?
- We are all unmerciful servants when we retain judgment of others in our hearts. Is there someone you're struggling to let off the hook?
- When we struggle to forgive, we show that we do not fully understand the Gospel. But how can we do better? Chicken or the egg? Do we learn from God to forgive or do we learn of God by forgiving?

Hands: Start Doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week. (10 Min)

- Take inventory: what guilt or shame have you been wanting someone to feel? What amends or restitution have you been desiring? What "I wouldn't have done it that ways" or mistakes do you hold over your spouse, co-worker, or neighbor? What past hurts do you continue to think of or bring up? How have you been nagging others? What feelings of anger, injustice, or superiority have you clung to? What might happen if you gave those up? In your daily prayers, as much as you don't want to, ask God to help you give them up!

Start Praying. Be bold and pray with power. (15 Min)

- For suggestions on structuring prayer time, see the *Group Prayer Ideas* page in this packet.

Trios: Split into same-gender groups of three. (15 Min)

1. What's a passage of scripture that has impacted you this week? Read it to the group and explain why.
2. Is there anything God is leading you to repent of?
3. How's your weekly 3-2-1 challenge going? (*3 Conversations with New People, Learn 2 Names, Make 1 Meaningful Connection*)
4. Who is one non-believer that you need to reach out to this week?
5. What's something you'd like someone else to check in with you about this week?
6. Pray for one another.