

Table Group Discussion Questions

Series: Words We Thought We Knew

Title: “Forgiveness” on June 28, 2026

Icebreaker / Getting Started (10-15 minutes)

1. Think of a time when you received an apology that actually landed — one that felt real and made a difference. What made it work? And think of a time you received one that didn't land at all. What was the difference?
2. On a scale of 1 to 10, how naturally does forgiveness come to you — and has that number changed at different seasons of your life? What moved it?

Digging into the Scripture & Sermon (15-20 minutes)

Read together: **Luke 23:33–34, Matthew 18:21–35, and Psalm 51:1–4**

3. In Luke 23:34 Jesus says "*Father, forgive them*" before anyone asked, before anyone repented, in the middle of being crucified. The sermon pointed out that God recognized the wrongdoing, bore the weight of it, released the wrongdoer, and removed the guilt — all at once, all before we knew to ask. What does it mean to you that forgiveness was extended in that direction and at that moment? How does that reframe the way you think about what God has done for you?
4. The unmerciful servant in Matthew 18 had a 7.5 billion dollar debt erased and then grabbed someone by the throat over \$25,000. Jesus uses the absurdity of that gap to make a point about us. Where in your life is there a gap between what you've been forgiven and what you're withholding from someone else? Be honest — even if the answer is uncomfortable.
5. David says in Psalm 51 "*against you and you only have I sinned*" — even though he clearly sinned against Bathsheba and Uriah. The sermon called this the sober connective tissue between what we do to one another and what we do to God. How does it change the weight of your own wrongdoing when you see it as not just horizontal but vertical — not just against a person but against God?
6. The sermon described the heart as a two-function organ — it receives blood in and pumps blood out — and said Jesus uses that image on purpose: the same heart that receives his forgiveness is meant to let it flow out. What happens to a heart that can only receive and never release? Have you seen that in yourself or someone else?

Personal Reflection (15-20 minutes)

7. The sermon described three dimensions of forgiveness: **recognizing the wrongdoing** (naming it, not minimizing it), **releasing the wrongdoer** (letting go of resentment without necessarily releasing consequences), and **removing the guilt** (which only God can do). Which of those three is hardest for you personally right now — and why?

8. The door metaphor: *"you can't close the door to someone else without inadvertently closing the door to God."* Is there a door you've closed — a person you've locked out through unforgiveness — that you're aware might be affecting your relationship with God? You don't have to name the person out loud, but sit with the question honestly.
9. The Marcus and David story showed that forgiveness and restoration are two different journeys — Marcus forgave quickly but trust took two years of quiet, faithful showing up to rebuild. Is there a relationship in your life right now where you've extended forgiveness but restoration is still in process? What does the long, faithful walk look like for you in that situation?

Action & Follow-Up (15-20 minutes)

10. The sermon gave five specific practices. Before the group meets again, try at least one of them in a real situation this week — even a small one. Come back ready to report which one you used, what happened, and what was hardest about it:
 - **Practice 1:** *"Can I share with you how your words or actions impacted me?"*
 - **Practice 2:** *"I was wrong. I'm sorry. Please forgive me."*
 - **Practice 3:** *"Thank you for your apology. I forgive you."*
 - **Practice 4:** *"Thank you for being gracious to me. I'm going to work on being more aware of how my words or actions impact you."*
 - **Practice 5:** *"What would it take to earn your trust?"*
11. The sermon said the power to forgive doesn't start with you — it starts with what's already been done for you. This week, spend five minutes sitting with the scapegoat image: picture every specific thing you've done that you carry guilt or shame about, and then picture the goat walking out of the camp carrying it. Gone. As far as the east is from the west. Then ask God: *"Is there someone I need to release this week because of what you've released me from?"* Write down whatever comes to mind and bring it back to the group.
12. The sermon ended with the word **freedom** — forgiveness is freedom from guilt, shame, bitterness, and resentment. As a group, take a moment and ask each person: *"What would feel most like freedom for you right now — freedom from guilt over something you've done, freedom from bitterness toward someone who hurt you, or freedom to begin restoring a broken relationship?"* Then pray specifically for each person's answer.

Close in Prayer

Before you close, take a moment to open your hands and bring whatever you're carrying to God. Let each person in the group silently identify which weight they're holding:

- **The weight of a wound** — resentment or bitterness toward someone who hurt you
- **The weight of your own failure** — guilt or shame over something you've done
- **The weight of a broken relationship** — something that needs the long walk of restoration

Then pray together — not generically, but specifically. If the group has built enough trust, let people name what they're carrying out loud and pray over each person by name.

Close by reading **Matthew 18:35** and **Luke 23:34** back to back — first the warning, then the cross — and let the cross have the last word: *Father, forgive them."*

That's the forgiveness you've been given. It's the forgiveness you can give.