



The Story Church Discipleship Groups | Spring 2021

Introduction:

Christians believe salvation is all about God's grace, right? No amount of good works can get a person into heaven; only trusting in Jesus can do that. So what's the point of living a good life after deciding you believe in Jesus? Why should Christians subject themselves to discomfort, self-sacrifice, and self-discipline if simply believing in Jesus is enough to punch their tickets to heaven? Part of trusting Jesus means allowing him to shape our lives - not just in eternity - but in the here and now. In this series, we'll explore the ways God's saving grace can transform the believer's character in this life. From your love life to your priorities to your personality, God calls out and equips believers to live lives that are shaped by the cross of Jesus Christ.

Session 3: Cross-Shaped Forgiveness

[WATCH THE SERMON HERE](#)

Discussion Questions:

Why is forgiveness such a tender topic for so many of us?

Read [Matthew 9:1-8](#). What does this story say about Jesus' perspective on forgiveness?

If it's true that who you are under pressure is who you really are, who are you?

As he died on the cross, under an immense amount of pain and pressure, Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." What does this tell us about the true character of Christ?

Imagine if, instead of offering forgiveness, Jesus said something like, "Father, make them pay." How might that change the way we look at Jesus?

What are some of the key differences between the dominant social philosophy in our culture (oppressors/villains vs. oppressed/victims) and the way of Jesus Christ?

When Jesus said "...they don't know what they're doing", was he excusing the soldiers' bad behavior? What's the difference between forgiving sin and passively enabling sin?

What is the connection between being forgiven by God and forgiving others who've sinned against us? (See Ephesians 4:32, Matthew 6:14-15)

How has the past year been a time of testing for you and your faith? What has the stress, pressure, and pain of the pandemic, the shutdown, the election, etc., revealed about your character?

What's the relationship between forgiveness and empathy?

Can you think of someone (or a bunch of someones!) against whom you're still holding a grudge? What is that unforgiving resentment doing to your soul? What steps can you take to begin a process of true forgiveness?

For more on this important topic, check out this short episode of the Maybe God Podcast called "[Forgiving an Enemy](#)".