Week 7 Study Questions

Remember, you need only choose 2 from either level 1 or 2, or one question from each level. It's up to you!

Level 1

a. What one thing have I learned from this lesson and/or class discussion that caught my attention and has the potential to impact my **personal or spiritual development?** As I speak honestly with the Lord, I share with him what it is about these insights that touches me so deeply and/or challenges how I am living my life. Do I learn something about the Lord I never saw before, about myself, about my life circumstances that need to be addressed? As I listen to the Lord without judgment, I let His Spirit draw me closer to Him. I thank Him for this gift of insight and Presence.

b. What concept or teaching am I still **unsure about**? What makes this concept or teaching difficult for me (Lack of confidence in what I know or believe about this subject? Doesn't fit the way I have understood this topic? Doesn't align with my practical experience?) What new questions come to mind that I would like answered?

> *Important Note:*
> *Learning to ask thoughtful questions is more important than the answers at first. Why? In a search for truth, nothing is more important than asking questions. It helps us to recognize what we do and do not know. Humans do not know everything and as created beings we need God's wisdom. Every thoughtful question you ask will enable you to grow in wisdom and knowledge of God, a prayer Paul prayed so powerfully for the Ephesians (1:16b-18):*
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> > *"I pray for you constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called-- his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance,"* (NLT).
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> > The irony that Jesus told the disciples and many he healed, to keep the secret he was the son of God, and who had healed them. This falls in line with him not defending himself when he was on trial, allowing himself to be scorged crucified. It would seem the reason was so he could fulfill his mission to be the human sacrifice, to replace all sacrifices. But it still is hard to imagine, how someone who could have fought back did not.

c. What have I changed my mind about because of this week's lesson and/or discussion? What is the basis or reason for this change of mind? What impact do I anticipate this change of mind could have on my spiritual life or the way I study Scripture

d. An idea for **personal action** based on this week's lesson and/or class discussion is … (complete this thought). Be sure to include a couple of sentences laying out steps you might take to complete this action.

Level 2 Study Questions

Re-read the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:21-35. Answer the following questions.

1. How do we see "sins" or "offenses" as being similar to debts? [For example, what has been borrowed, or how has the debt been acquired? To whom is the debt owed? How does someone repay the kind of debt it is? Etc.] How is sin and debt different? Are some sins or offenses more like debts than others? Which ones? What difference might our answer make for how we understand this story?

   Not paying back money can be equated to other wrongs someone may have do to use like lying, making up false stories, stealing, gossip. The logic is still the same – we must forgive, especially when we have and are doing the same. Christians must avoid being hypocrytes. Especially because that is what non believers always mock Christians for being hypocrites.

   The irony is that some crimes/sins do deserve punishment to act as deterrent and/or re hab. For example if someone murders someone they must go to prison if proven guilty. Hopefully they can be rehabilitated. We can't simply forgive serious crimes that are against the law unless there is a proven rehabilitation.

2. Which of the characters in the story of the unforgiving servant have more power? Which have less power? How do we know this? Does the power the characters have make a difference in how they act? In how they are supposed to act? What is it about our expectations of power that affect how we interpret this story? What if anything is shocking about this story? Can you think of a modern-day example of the characters in this parable?

   Most Power----------? Least Power

   Master-> Servant-> Servant who owed servant

   Rich ->Middle Class-> Poverty

There are a lot of similarity of Government and Corporate Corruption where these leaders try to point out the wrongs of others when they are breaking the law ang getting away with it.

3. What kinds of “sins” do you imagine Peter had in mind in v. 21? Are they the same as, or different from, the ones Jesus has in mind when he tells the story? What makes us think this? When we hear this story about the unforgiving servant, what examples come to our minds? How do those specific examples affect the way we understand the parable? If we had different examples in mind, how might our understanding change? Why?

   I would believe Peter is talking about lesser sins such as lying, stealing, gossip, talking behind your back for the most part. While you can forgive someone who might have killed your wife or relative, had an affair, that does not mean the person should not be disciplined or fined by a punishment of some kind. Our laws need to be enforced and people punished for crimes or we will have no deterrence.

4. Have we ever been in the position of the “fellow slaves” in v. 31? What happened, and what did we do? What did we learn from that experience? How does that learning affect the way we understand what this passage means? Were the “fellow slaves” in v. 31 unforgiving? Why, or why not? Was the 2nd slave in the parable unforgiving? Why or why not? Does this suggest anything to us about what the story means for us? Summarize what you have learned in a couple of sentences.

   Jesus in his parables often showed hypocrisy in very simple examples everyone could understand. But often our hypocrisy may not be exposed, or no one calls us out. It is good for us to use our own examples/testimony to other to prevent other from repeating our mistakes. Hopefully we can learn from our own mistake and others as well

Re-read the story of the request of James and John’s mother in Matthew 20:20-28. Choose 2 different characters in the episode and tell the story from each of those character’s point of view. Imagine that you are the person and see yourself going through the experience. We will then compare the different characters and their impact on the story:

1. What did you learn about the character’s relation to the other characters?
2. Did you identify with the character? What emotions were involved?

3. How did this telling from your character's perspective change the emphasis of the story? Did this telling give you a deeper insight into why Matthew told this story at this point in the Gospel? Did it give you a deeper understanding of what Jesus was trying to teach his disciples?
4. Which character did you identify with most? Why?
5. Compare the impact on the story of the different characters and summarize what you have learned from this exercise in a couple of sentences.

A mother always wants the best for their children, often to the point of ridiculousness. To ask Jesus to give such a high rank in heaven, was because she did not understand that Jesus was God.

Jesus always emphasized Christians are supposed to SERVE other not be rulers that have slave waiting on then

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Discussion

Chapter 18 provides some important teaching for the Church the disciples had no idea was about to be formed. Imagine what it must have been like to be with Jesus throughout His ministry, but being told He would be betrayed, killed, but resurrected. In Greek, the term used for resurrection was "rise up." The Greeks considered this teaching of Christians as nonsense, because it brought up images of the "up-standing of corpses." I often wonder just what the disciples thought about resurrection. Even when Jesus raised the little girl up, she lived only to face death later at another time. Did they think He would live on earth in the same way?

Even though the disciples had seen Lazarus and the little girl raised from the dead, they didn't think about the fact that he also had the power to overcome his own death, as he predicted would happen. Also as previously discussed, it must have also seen confusing that Jesus told the disciples, and many that he healed, NOT to explain that Jesus was the Messiah/Son of God, (keep it a secret). The irony of this secret was how quickly (within a few days) the crowds went from praising Jesus to yelling to "crucify him". I am trying to imagine if I had personally seen all the miracles with my own eyes, I could doubt who Jesus was. But I would also be confused knowing the power he had, that he did not defend himself, let himself be scourged and crucified. Only after he was raised and eventually ascended into heaven, did the whole story make more sense. But without understanding the 400 prophecies and the historical significance of prior animal sacrifices, and Jesus sheading his blood for us, would Jesus's horrific death be understood as the greatest reset in history.

It will take resurrection faith and power for the Church to live out the teaching of chapter 18. Choose one of the insights about the Church from chapter 18 and discuss what you think it means for our life together. For example, the parable of the lost sheep is set within the extended teaching of the Church...but is it referring only to unbelievers? Could it be referring to those who have been broken by the Church and have wandered away? Do we have a responsibility to search lovingly to restore those who have become disillusioned? What about how we approach children's ministry? Or do the "little ones" refer to the vulnerable in our churches? Let's try and work out together how we could implement the teachings of Jesus in our own ministries and faith in practical ways. Offer suggestions, examples, steps, etc. that we could think about together as we "re-set" Church.

These two scripture certainly have lead to a lot of confusion in terms of sexuality

"Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning "made them male and female,' and said,

(OT Quote)"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? [Genesis 2:24]

So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate."

"All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given: For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it."

On one hand it is clear Jesus defines the sacredness of marriage is only between a man and a woman, and that adultery is wrong.

But he also sites the Eunuch can exist from birth, be made by man, or be marriageless by choice. This would seem to open the door that some people’s interpretation that some people are born or choose a non-sexual lifestyle, and this is OK. Some would say these scriptures mean some are born homosexual, and we must accept it.

The irony is that the Old Testament, and later in Paul’s teachings, homosexuality was a sin/immorality and God even destroyed Sodom and Gomora for their wicked ways

Today this argument is destroying churches, especially now in the Methodist denomination.

I really believe in the that God’s plan was that of a marriage between one man and one woman. Clearly Satan thru history has been trying to destroy God’s plan on marriage. But clearly these verses about Eunuchs could mean a lot of things to many people. Leading many to question how the Church should consider Homosexuality/Transgender , etc. going forward.

Improving

Misfortune (by)

Faith

Kindness