



# TRANSFORMED HEARTS

GENEROSITY • REPENTANCE • FORGIVENESS

LEADERS NOTES

**small**  
**groups**  
LIFE TOGETHER

# A NOTE TO LEADERS

We are deeply thankful for you and the vital ministry you lead. Small Groups are central to who we are as a church and how we live out God's calling for each of our lives.

In Small Groups we have the opportunity to open and explore God's word together, to serve and care for each other in prayer and practice, and to live out gospel-shaped community.

As you do this, you come to know your group deeply and personally. Please treat these studies as a starting point, not a finished product. Feel encouraged to edit the questions, tailor them to your group and approach each week in the way that best serves your members. Each group may take a slightly different path to the same key teaching point.

The leaders notes after each question are not there to provide answers that end the group's discussion, but to support you as you guide the conversation.

**Leaders' notes become detrimental to group engagement and growth if they are read out as answers.**

If at any point you would like support or prayer, please feel free to contact your Small Group Coach. If you need support from the staff team, contact Pat Jones for pastoral care or Emma Wynn-Jones for Small Group coordination and administration. We will be happy to serve however we can.

# PRAYER

Prayer is one of the ways we express our dependence on God and participate in the life of a small group. At St Paul's we want all small groups to be praying for each other, their adopted mission partner(s), for the church and for all the ministries happening each week. To support this, we've included a "what's on this week" at the end of each study. This helps keep everyone informed and shapes what we pray for together.

**In this series we will also have a 'Serving Spot' to reflect on during prayer time. These are designed to help groups consider practical ways transformed hearts overflow into love and service of others.**

# SERVING FOCUS

## 'TRANSFORMED HEARTS' SERIES



We believe that small groups are a crucial avenue for realising our church-wide vision. We want to resource and equip our small groups to explore each of the five Vision circles across the year, So we might see every member connected on **Sundays**; in **discipleship**; in **service**; in their **giving**; and in support of our **missionaries and mission partners** nationally and globally.

To support you in this, we will have a relevant focus in each of our series across the year. In our 'God of Goodness' Mission series and our 'God of Transforming Grace' Deuteronomy series, we have focused on Mission. Now, in our 'Transformed Hearts' series, our focus shifts to Serving.



There are a few key ways that small groups can support the vision of every member serving. We will unpack one of these at the end of each study.

- 1. Create a culture and posture of serving within your small group.**
- 2. Encourage members to assess their gifts, passions, and availability for serving individually.**
- 3. Consider whether once a year, your small group could serve together to bless a church or community event.**

Together, these three practices can help foster a healthy culture of service within your small group and across our church community. As we encourage one another, discern how God has equipped us, and look for opportunities to serve together, we help create a church where every member is actively using their gifts to build up the body of Christ and reach our community with the gospel.

# TERM 2 SCHEDULE

## Week #1

- June 14<sup>th</sup> Step Into Serving Fair
- June 16<sup>th</sup> Christianity Explained Course week 2/8
- June 17<sup>th</sup> Women's Night
- June 20<sup>th</sup> Help at Home

## Week #2

- June 21<sup>st</sup> The Commons
- June 23<sup>rd</sup> Christianity Explained Course week 3/8
- June 26<sup>th</sup> Hills Chillz

## Week #3

- School Holidays

## WHATS AHEAD

- July 5<sup>th</sup> Kids Partner in Church
- July 19<sup>th</sup> The Commons

## HIGHLIGHT EVENTS:

**Dr Darrell L. Bock** will be joining us at St Paul's Castle Hill in July. He is a Senior Research Professor of New Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary and Executive Director of Cultural Engagement at the Hendricks Center. He has authored or edited more than 45 books and has written for major outlets including the Los Angeles Times. He will be speaking at the following events:

### **Recharge Breakfast – July 25<sup>th</sup>**

A training morning for small group leaders as we prepare to begin our series in Galatians. All are welcome.

### **Whole Church Teaching Night – July 28<sup>th</sup>**

An opportunity for our whole church to gather, be encouraged, and be challenged from God's word.



## **TRANSFORMED HEARTS – MINI-SERIES** **GENEROSITY, REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS**

# **SERIES INTRODUCTION**

As a church, throughout 2026 we are praying that God’s grace will transform our whole lives. The Spirit transforms our hearts by grace, forming in us three life-changing qualities: generosity, repentance and forgiveness. Together, they are foundational to the Christian life and the heartbeat of our community.

When the Spirit transforms our hearts by grace, we stop living for ourselves and are empowered to live for others with joyful generosity, pursuing restored relationships with God and one another through repentance, and offering others the forgiveness so freely given to us.

Generosity, repentance and forgiveness shape how we live, how we relate, and how we respond to God and one another, building unity, healing hurt and giving credibility to our testimony of the gospel of grace and mercy the world truly needs.

In these studies, we explore what the Bible teaches and what a practical response looks like as grace leads us to generosity, grace calls us home in repentance, and grace gives us freedom to forgive and restore.

# SERIES INTRODUCTION

## CONTINUED

**Our hope is that we would see a familiar pattern: we receive grace from God, grace transforms our hearts, and transformed hearts lead to transformed lives.**

Our prayer is that we will be both informed and transformed: empowered by grace to generously serve, readily repent and freely forgive, so that as a church we might embody the transforming grace of Christ in every household, every community and every generation.

### ***Leaders note:***

*The pattern described above is the key to understanding and leading through this series: we receive grace from God, grace transforms our hearts, and transformed hearts lead to transformed lives.*

*Our goal is not simply to produce the appearance of generosity, repentance and forgiveness. We want people to see the glory of the grace they have received, so that as the Spirit transforms their hearts, they will grow into people whose generosity, repentance and forgiveness are the genuine overflow of hearts transformed by grace.*

*As leaders we must consciously fight against lowering the goal of a study from transformation to compliance.*

## GOD OF GOODNESS - STUDY #1

# GENEROSITY

## LUKE 6:27-38 + 2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-11

**Leader's note:** As we begin this series of studies on topics that can easily be treated like a checklist, our challenge as leaders will be to consistently press people toward heart transformation that flows into action. The core teaching goal of this study is to understand the generous heart of God toward us and allow His grace to form that same generosity within us. As God transforms our hearts, generosity becomes a defining characteristic that shows itself in all our interactions and relationships.

## WELCOME

What do you think is the difference between someone who does generous things and someone who is genuinely a generous person?

*The aim here is not to get stuck in semantics but to explore the difference between generosity as an action we perform and generosity as a heart that shapes us. This should help broaden our understanding beyond what we give to others, toward the kind of people God is forming us to be.*

## REFLECT

*Leader's note:* For the sake of time, you may want to move through the first two REFLECT questions quickly to give space for more reflection in the following questions.

### Read Luke 6:27-38

1. Verses 27-28 address our attitude toward “your enemies”, “those who hate you” and “those who mistreat you”. We may not describe anyone this way, but who are the kinds of people we should have in mind as we listen to Jesus’ teaching?

*In this passage, Jesus contrasts the ease of being generous toward those we naturally love with the difficulty of showing generosity toward those we struggle to love. The challenge remains even if we do not naturally use categories like “enemies” or “those who hate us”. Help people consider those they may find difficult to show generosity toward: frustrating people, people who inconvenience us, people we avoid, people we disagree with, people who have hurt us, or people from different demographics, political views, or backgrounds.*

2. What assumptions, desires, or instincts do we need to let go of to follow what Jesus teaches in verses 27–30? What makes that difficult?

*Reading this passage with an open heart will likely leave us challenged by the extreme nature of Jesus' words and wrestling with what they mean in practice. Avoid softening Jesus' teaching by adding caveats or exceptions that He does not give in this passage. Jesus speaks in intentionally broad and confronting terms, and we need to allow His words to challenge our hearts. We need to consider obvious barriers to generosity like greed, pride, and selfishness, but Jesus' teaching may also challenge some of our more accepted instincts, like our desire to determine justice for ourselves, our sense of what is fair, and our ideas of ownership.*

3. As verses 32–34 point out, most people show some form of generosity. When you reflect honestly on your own generosity, what influences who you are most and least generous toward?

*This question is designed for self-reflection. Encourage the group not to jump straight to what the passage is calling us to do, which will come later, but to honestly consider what currently shapes their generosity. What determines who they naturally find easier or harder to be generous toward?*

4. We naturally deem some people worthy of our generosity and others unworthy. How does God's character and His actions challenge the way we decide who deserves our generosity?

**IMPORTANT:** *This is the core movement in this study. Jesus is not simply expanding the list of people we should be generous toward; He is reshaping our hearts through the generosity God has shown us. God's extravagant generosity toward us, even though we are undeserving, works to transform our hearts and form in us that same generous posture toward others. This confronts some of our deepest instincts, especially toward those we believe would not be generous with us, may not use our generosity well, have proven themselves undeserving, or have even acted against us. However, Jesus calls us to reflect the generosity we have first received from Him.*

## READ 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

5. Throughout this series, we want to highlight a recurring pattern: we receive grace from God, grace transforms our hearts, and transformed hearts lead to transformed lives. How do we see each part of this pattern unfold in this passage?

**Leader's note:** *Luke 6 has exposed the kind of generosity Jesus calls us to and the ways our hearts resist it. 2 Corinthians 9 helps us see how God produces this generosity in us, not through guilt or pressure, but through hearts transformed by grace.*

**Grace from God:** *"God is able to bless you abundantly", "He who supplies seed to the sower", "will also increase your store of seed", "you will be enriched in every way".*

**Transformed Hearts:** *"what you have decided in your heart to give", "not reluctantly or under compulsion", "a cheerful giver", "God loves a cheerful giver", "enlarge the harvest of your righteousness".*

**Transformed Lives:** *"Each of you should give", "you will abound in every good work", "enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion", "They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor", "your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God".*

6. Why do you think Paul connects generosity with joy rather than simply duty?

*Giving with joy rather than obligation shows that our heart has been transformed to the point that we not only believe generosity is the right thing to do, but that it is truly good. Paul wants to see generous actions flow from a transformed heart, not external obedience masking an unchanged heart.*

## RESPOND

7. We often think about generosity in terms of what we give to people. What would it look like for generosity to shape our whole posture toward others, including the way we view and interact with the people around us?

*The aim here is to help people see generosity not simply as something we occasionally do, but as a posture we carry into every relationship. A heart transformed by God's generosity will shape the way we interpret people's actions, listen, assume the best, handle disagreement, extend grace, and interact with people who think or act differently from us. This is especially important in a church family where different generations, backgrounds, and experiences are called to reflect the same grace toward one another.*

8. These passages paint a challenging and beautiful picture of a generous heart. Looking at this list, what attitudes, desires, or instincts in your own heart resist the generosity Jesus is calling you to?

*("give to everyone who asks you", "do to others as you would have them do to you", "love your enemies", "do good to them", "lend to them without expecting anything back", "be merciful", "do not judge", "do not condemn", "forgive", "sows generously", "cheerful giver", "abound in every good work", "freely scattered gifts to the poor", "generous on every occasion", "generosity that results in thanksgiving to God").*

*Encourage your group to spend significant time here. The things that resist generosity may look different for each person, so give people time to honestly reflect on where God's Spirit may be challenging them.*

9. As you reflect on generosity, where do you sense God's Spirit at work in you? Is He reshaping something in your heart by His grace, or calling you to act on what He has already been forming in you?

*We want to recognise that God may already have been transforming people's hearts in this area, and their challenge may be to faithfully live out the convictions He has formed in them. For others, God's Spirit may be revealing attitudes, desires, or instincts that He wants to reshape by His grace. Encourage people to move beyond general answers like "I need a heart change" or "I need to take action", and consider specifically what God may be transforming and what faithful obedience looks like.*

## PRAYER

Spend some time sharing and praying for one another. As you pray, remember to include:

- The Serving Spot below
- Your group's link missionary
- What's ahead in the life of St Paul's

## SERVING SPOT

**Create a culture and posture of serving within your small group.**

Small groups are a great place to help develop a culture of servant-heartedness. This can happen in a number of ways, both organically and intentionally.

The foundation of Christian service is receiving and responding to God's abundant generosity towards us. Everything we have comes from God, and we are invited to share our gifts, time, encouragement, and resources generously with others for His glory and our joy. Our service does not earn God's love or approval. Through Jesus, we are already deeply loved and secure as God's children. From that place of rest, service becomes a joyful response to God's goodness - a grateful expression of His love that blesses others and brings joy to us as well.

What could you do as a small group to practically serve and care for one another?

*Choose one or more of the following to help cultivate a culture of service in your small group:*

- *Reflect on God's generosity and goodness to us. What has God entrusted to you that you might share with someone else?*
- *Reflect on ways you have seen God working through acts of service, whether through formal ministries or everyday opportunities. Share stories of encouragement or prayer points from these areas.*
- *Pray specifically for church ministries, volunteers and opportunities to serve.*
- *Consider rotating responsibilities like hosting, leading discussion, organising supper, or coordinating prayer requests so that everyone contributes within the group itself.*
- *Share practical needs within the group and encourage members to help one another with meals, transport, moving house, hospital visits, etc.*

## WHATS COMING UP

### **KEY DATE - Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June**

Our annual Step into Serving Fair takes place after all services. This is a great opportunity for all our church members to learn more about serving needs and volunteer roles in our community.

16<sup>th</sup> Christianity Explained Course week 2/8

17<sup>th</sup> Women's Night

20<sup>th</sup> Help at Home

## TRANSFORMED HEARTS - STUDY #2

# REPENTANCE

## 2 CORINTHIANS 7:2-13A

**Leader's Note:** *This study has a larger RESPONSE section than usual. Please allow time for this by moving through the REFLECT section at a good pace.*

*The key teaching point for this study is that repentance is not an attempt to earn our way back into God's favour, but the grace-enabled movement of people who are secure in Christ and able to stop hiding from correction, from God, and from one another.*

## WELCOME

When you hear the word repentance, what comes to mind?  
How would you define it?

Read the following three quotes. Which one do you find most helpful or challenging, and why?

**“Repentance is a definite turn from every thought, word, deed and habit which is known to be wrong.”**

**- John Stott, *Basic Christianity***

**“Repentance means turning from as much as you know of your sin to give as much as you know of yourself to as much as you know of your God.”**

**- J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit***

**“We all want progress, but if you're on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road.”**

**- C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity***

*The group may be tempted to spend a long time trying to create a perfect definition of repentance. The purpose of this question is to help the group begin reflecting on what they already associate with repentance, and to prepare them to see how Scripture deepens and reshapes our understanding.*

**Brief Context:** Piecing together Paul’s relationship with the Corinthian church requires some reconstruction, and the exact timeline is debated. Our best understanding is that Paul planted the Corinthian church, wrote them an earlier letter we no longer have (mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:9), and then wrote what we know as 1 Corinthians. After a painful visit with the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 2:1), Paul wrote another difficult letter “with many tears” (2 Corinthians 2:4), addressing the situation and calling them toward repentance. It is most likely this “tearful letter” Paul is referring to in 2 Corinthians 7.

## READ 2 Corinthians 7:2-13a

### REFLECT

1. What different emotions do you see in verses 2–7? What does this tell us about the situation between Paul and the Corinthians?

*The aim of this question is to help the group understand the relational context behind Paul’s words. Encourage people to notice the mixture of emotions in this passage. There is real hurt and tension (“make room for us in your hearts”, “we have wronged no one”), but also deep love and affection (“you have such a place in our hearts”, “great confidence”, “great pride”, “greatly encouraged”). Recognising this tension helps us understand why Paul can speak honestly about the pain his letter caused while still rejoicing in what God produced through it.*

2. After writing the “tearful letter” rebuking the Corinthians, Paul sends Titus to Corinth and travels to Macedonia, where he anxiously waits for Titus’ report. What does Titus report back, and why does it bring Paul such comfort?

*Titus reports that the Corinthians responded not by rejecting Paul, but with longing, sorrow, and concern. Paul is comforted because his painful correction did not push them further away but moved them back toward him and showed that God was at work in their hearts. The aim is not simply to show that Paul’s feelings were no longer hurt, but that the Corinthians’ response revealed a genuine change of heart.*

3. In verses 8–10, Paul says his letter caused sorrow, yet he rejoiced in the outcome. How does Paul distinguish between worldly sorrow and godly sorrow? What does each produce?

*This question sits at the heart of the study. Paul shows that repentance is not measured by how bad someone feels, but by where that sorrow leads. Worldly sorrow turns inward, leading to shame, hiding, or despair. Godly sorrow turns us back toward God, producing repentance. The question is not simply “Do I feel bad about my sin?” but “Is my sorrow leading me back to God?”*

4. Paul is both remarkably frank with the Corinthians and deeply affectionate toward them. Why do we often struggle to hold these together, and how does Paul show us they belong together?

*Optional extra: Read Proverbs 27:6. What insight does this proverb add? Paul challenges our tendency to separate honesty and love. We can avoid difficult conversations in the name of kindness, or speak truth without genuine care. Paul’s frankness was an expression of love, aimed at repentance, restoration, and joy. Proverbs 27:6 reminds us that faithful correction can be a gift, even when it is painful.*

5. We often think about repentance primarily as something between us and God. How does this passage show repentance moving toward others, and how does the attitude of the Corinthians in verse 11 challenge the way you respond when confronted with sin?

*Repentance is ultimately before God, but genuine repentance also shapes the way we move toward others. In verse 11 we see a transformed attitude: eagerness, concern, longing, and a desire to make things right. Encourage the group to consider whether their response to sin is marked by this posture, or whether they are more likely to minimise, hide, defend, or withdraw.*

6. Assign each of the following passages to members of your group to read aloud. As you listen, consider what each passage reveals about how God views our relationships with one another.

- Matthew 5:23-24
- Luke 17:3-4
- 1 John 4:19-21
- 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

Optional:

- Matthew 6:14-15
- Matthew 18:21-22 (full reading 18:21-35)
- Colossians 3:12-14

7. What do these passages reveal about why God cares so deeply about how we respond when relationships are damaged?

*The foundation of our relationship with God is His gracious forgiveness and the reconciliation we receive through the loving sacrifice of Jesus. As people who have been reconciled to God by grace, we are transformed into people who extend grace and pursue restored relationships with others.*

***IMPORTANT Leader's note:*** Please make sure your group engages with the following pastoral reminder before moving into the RESPONSE section. While we do not normally encourage reading leaders' notes directly to the group, you may choose to read this note aloud if that best serves your group.

***As we talk about repentance and restored relationships, remember that pursuing reconciliation does not mean ignoring wisdom, removing boundaries, or placing ourselves or others back into unsafe situations. In situations involving abuse, manipulation, or ongoing harm, repentance and forgiveness should not be used to pressure someone to return to danger. God's desire for restored relationships is always consistent with His concern for justice, truth, and the protection of the vulnerable.***

***If this raises anything you would like to talk or pray through, please reach out to your Small Group Leader, a member of the staff team, or visit [stpauls.church/care](http://stpauls.church/care)***

## RESPOND

Throughout this study we have seen that repentance is more than feeling sorry or admitting we were wrong. God's grace transforms us into people who can rest in His forgiveness, receive correction, return to Him, and pursue restored relationships with others. Reflect on the following areas:

### Resting in grace

8. When we are confronted with our sin, we often want to hide, minimise, or defend ourselves. How does knowing God's response to us in Jesus give you the confidence to come to Him in repentance?

*Being reminded of God's grace, His loving forgiveness, and His work of reconciliation is vital here. In Christ, repentance is not met with rejection but with grace and forgiveness. This confidence allows us to honestly face our sin rather than hide from it.*

### Receiving correction

9. How do you normally respond when someone challenges, corrects, or confronts you? What might your response reveal about your heart?

*Encourage genuine reflection here. Often our external response to correction can look very different from what is happening internally. Consider what our reactions might reveal about whether we are resting in God's grace or protecting ourselves.*

### Repentance before God

10. Are there areas of your life where God is calling you to move beyond sorrow or regret and come to Him in genuine repentance?

*If your group is comfortable, a time of confession may be helpful in this moment. You may like to lead the group in a prayer of repentance, trusting in God's grace and forgiveness.*

### Repentance with others

11. Are there relationships where repentance may require you to move toward someone else with humility, honesty, or a desire for restoration?

*Encourage people to consider what a faithful next step might look like. Who might they need to speak with? What might need to be acknowledged or addressed? Remember that repentance moves us toward restoration, while recognising reconciliation may not always be immediate or entirely within our control.*

## PRAYER

Spend some time sharing and praying for one another. As you pray, remember to include:

- The Serving Spot below
- Your group's link missionary
- What's ahead in the life of St Paul's

## SERVING SPOT

**Encourage members to assess their gifts, passions, and availability for serving individually.**

Every member of our church has gifts, experiences, opportunities and resources that God can use to serve others. Small groups can play an important role in helping people recognise and use those gifts.

God has given each of us something to offer, not just for ourselves but for the good of others. Spend some time encouraging one another: What gifts, strengths, or life experiences do you see in others that God could use to serve those around them?

*Some questions that may serve your group in considering this:*

- *Encourage one another in your gifts and strengths. What gifts or life experiences do others see in you that could be used to serve?*
- *Frederick Buechner wrote, "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." Consider: what are you passionate about, and how could that passion meet an area of need around you?*
- *Pray that God would bring opportunities and needs forward, and that we would have open hearts to respond.*
- *Ask a member of the staff team to visit your small group to discuss different volunteer roles, current needs, or possible future ministry opportunities.*

## WHATS COMING UP

21<sup>st</sup> The Commons

23<sup>rd</sup> Christianity Explained Course week 3/8

26<sup>th</sup> Hills Chillz

## TRANSFORMED HEARTS - STUDY #3

# FORGIVENESS

## MATTHEW 18:15-35

### WELCOME

As we begin a study on forgiveness, a light-hearted question to start: what is something small that people do that you find surprisingly hard to let go of?

*This question is intended as a light-hearted start to a heavy topic.*

*Encourage the group away from deeper examples at this stage and lean into the humour of everyday frustrations.*

Last week we explored repentance; this week we turn to forgiveness. While they are different, both flow from the same foundation: the grace we have received from God. As his grace transforms our hearts, it changes how we respond to our own sin and how we respond to the sins of others.

### REFLECT

*Leader's note: This study covers a large section of Scripture. Move through the first half at a good pace to allow time to reflect on Jesus' parable and how God's forgiveness transforms our ability to forgive others.*

Read Matthew 18:15–20

1. In verse 15, Jesus begins with going directly to the person who has sinned against you. Why do you think this step is so often avoided? How do we distinguish wisdom from simply avoiding a difficult conversation?

*Jesus acknowledges that pursuing restoration can be difficult, but difficulty alone is not a reason to avoid this step. Fear that it may be awkward, uncomfortable, or poorly received is often the very reason we need to move toward others with grace and truth. However, situations involving abuse, power imbalance, or risk of harm require wisdom and may mean involving appropriate support rather than approaching someone alone. Consider also whether you are the right person to have the conversation, or whether someone else may be more appropriate.*

2. In verse 16, Jesus says to involve one or two others as witnesses, quoting Deuteronomy 19:15. What is the role of a witness, and how does this change our approach from simply gathering people to support our side?

*The goal of this step is not to gather people who already agree with us in order to strengthen our case. Jesus' reference to Deuteronomy 19:15 shows the importance of establishing truth. Those involved act as witnesses who can bring wisdom and accountability: helping discern whether the concern is fair, how each person responds, and how restoration can be pursued.*

3. In verses 17–18, Jesus shows that unrepentant sin is taken seriously, while the goal remains restoration. What does it mean to treat someone “as you would a pagan or a tax collector,” and how does Jesus’ own example shape our understanding of this?

*Jesus is not calling His people to hatred or rejection. Throughout Matthew, Jesus moves toward tax collectors and sinners with grace, while still calling them to repentance. “Binding and loosing” (v18) refers to the authority Jesus gives His church to make faithful judgments about sin, repentance, and restoration. The church is not making heaven’s decision on earth, but recognising and reflecting what God has revealed through the gospel. The goal is not punishment, but truth, repentance, and restored relationship.*

4. Verses 19–20 are often read on their own. How does the context of Jesus’ teaching on sin, forgiveness, and restoration shape the way we understand these verses?

*These verses are often applied to prayer generally, but in context Jesus is specifically reassuring His disciples as they navigate the difficult work of confronting sin and pursuing restoration. When His people gather under His authority seeking truth, repentance, and reconciliation, they do not do this alone. Jesus is present with them.*

5. Jesus has shown the importance of pursuing restoration when relationships are damaged. Peter now asks the question many of us naturally wonder: how far does this forgiveness go?

Read Matthew 18:21–35

6. Peter asks Jesus how many times he should forgive someone who sins against him. What assumption seems to sit behind Peter's question, and how does Jesus challenge that assumption? *Peter appears to assume that forgiveness has a reasonable limit. Jesus' answer is not about calculating a higher number, but revealing that those who have received limitless mercy from God are transformed into people marked by forgiveness.*

7. In the parable, what does Jesus want us to see through each of these details?

- The king who wanted to settle accounts
- The servant and his debt of ten thousand bags of gold (an impossibly large debt, with a single bag of gold representing around 20 years' wages)
- The servant begging for patience and the cancellation of his debt
- The other servant and his much smaller debt of a hundred silver coins (around 100 days' wages)
- The servant's refusal to forgive that debt and the master's response

*The goal of this question is not to find hidden meaning in every detail, but to feel the weight of the contrast Jesus is creating. The first servant is forgiven an impossible debt he could never repay, yet refuses to forgive a much smaller (but still real) debt owed to him. Jesus is showing the inconsistency of receiving extraordinary mercy from God while refusing to extend mercy to others.*

8. What does the servant ask for in verse 26, and what does the master give him in verse 27? What does this reveal about God's forgiveness toward us?

*The servant asks for patience and more time to repay the debt, but the master responds with compassion and cancels the debt completely. Jesus shows that God's forgiveness is not a payment plan where we slowly make things right, but an act of extraordinary grace.*

9. At the end of the parable, Jesus says we must forgive our brother or sister and specifically adds "from your heart." Why does this matter for how we understand forgiveness?

*Jesus is not calling for the appearance of forgiveness while bitterness remains unchanged underneath. The forgiveness we have received from God transforms our hearts, shaping us into people who genuinely desire to extend mercy to others.*

## RESPOND

*IMPORTANT Leader's note: As we discuss forgiveness, remember that forgiving someone does not mean excusing sin, removing consequences, or automatically restoring trust. In situations involving abuse, manipulation, or ongoing harm, forgiveness should never be used to pressure someone to remain in an unsafe situation. God's call to forgive is always consistent with His concern for truth, justice, wisdom, and the protection of the vulnerable.*

Throughout this study we have seen that forgiveness is not ignoring sin or pretending hurt does not matter. Instead, Jesus points us to the extraordinary forgiveness we have received from God. His grace transforms our hearts so that forgiven people become forgiving people.

10. Jesus uses an enormous contrast between the debt we have been forgiven and the debts others owe us. Do you see your own need for forgiveness as deeply as Jesus presents it, and the sins of others as something grace can overcome? *Help the group hold both sides together: we often minimise our need for grace and maximise the wrongs done against us. God's grace transforms both.*

11. Forgiveness can feel risky because it may require us to move toward people who have hurt us. How do we pursue forgiveness while also acting with wisdom about trust, boundaries, and reconciliation? *Forgiveness does not mean pretending sin did not happen, removing consequences, or automatically restoring trust. Forgiveness means giving up vengeance and the desire to make someone pay, offering the same mercy we have received from God. Full reconciliation and restored trust involve repentance, wisdom and may take time.*

12. At the conclusion of the parable, Jesus gives a serious warning about receiving extraordinary mercy while refusing to extend mercy to others. Are there areas where God's grace needs to transform your heart toward someone, releasing unforgiveness, bitterness, or a desire for them to "pay back" what they owe? *Jesus is not teaching that we earn God's forgiveness by forgiving others. Rather, He warns that a heart unwilling to extend mercy is inconsistent with a heart that has truly received mercy.*

## PRAYER

Spend some time sharing and praying for one another. As you pray, remember to include:

- The Serving Spot below
- Your group's link missionary
- What's ahead in the life of St Paul's

## SERVING SPOT

**Consider whether once a year, your small group could serve together to bless a church or community event**

This may involve assisting with event set up or pack down, moving chairs and tables, manning a barbecue, cleaning or gardening to provide Help at Home, car parking at an Easter or Christmas service, laying out morning tea, welcoming people at a Newcomer's Lunch, etc.

You might choose an event in your demographic (e.g. a young adult small group helps welcome people at Pure Praise), or you might choose to bless another demographic in our church community (e.g. assist with set-up for Prime Time). Serving as a small group doesn't only bless our church community with an influx of volunteers at a larger-scale event, but it's also (hopefully!) a fun, community-building activity for your group and a great way to deepen friendships and bond together outside of the typical small group setting.

If you're interested in finding a way to serve together once a year, please reach out to Emma Wynn-Jones **[emma.wynn-jones@stpauls.church](mailto:emma.wynn-jones@stpauls.church)** to discuss what opportunities are coming up that your group may be well suited for.

# WHATS COMING UP

- July 5<sup>th</sup> Kids Partner in Church
- July 19<sup>th</sup> The Commons

## HIGHLIGHT EVENTS:

Dr Darrell L. Bock will be joining us at St Paul's Castle Hill in July. He is a Senior Research Professor of New Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary and Executive Director of Cultural Engagement at the Hendricks Center. He has authored or edited more than 45 books and has written for major outlets including the Los Angeles Times.

He will be speaking at the following events:

### **Recharge Breakfast – July 25<sup>th</sup>**

A training morning for small group leaders as we prepare to begin our series in Galatians. All are welcome.

### **Sunday Services – July 26<sup>th</sup>**

### **Whole Church Teaching Night – July 28<sup>th</sup>**

An opportunity for our whole church to gather, be encouraged, and be challenged from God's word

**small  
groups**  
LIFE TOGETHER