

Prayers of Reconciliation

Psalms 80, Romans 5:8-11, Matthew 6:12

November 11, 2018

WARM-UP QUESTIONS:

1. What's the difference between reconciliation and forgiveness? Is one more difficult than the other?
2. Is reconciliation always possible? Always necessary?
3. Can reconciliation restore things exactly to the way they were before?
4. Lewis Smedes wrote in his book, *Forgive and Forget*: "To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover the prisoner was you." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Read Romans 5:8-11. On a personal level, how does this passage inform our understanding and experience of how God loves and forgives you?
2. What is the role of memories, pain, and confession in the process of forgiveness? What is needed in addition for reconciliation to take place?
3. What should we pray for when it comes to reconciliation?
4. Pastor Jonathan said: "To enter into prayers of reconciliation, we are given an anchor to hold onto: that Jesus is our peace." What does he mean by this, and how does it help us proceed?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. Lewis Smedes also said: "Forgiving does not erase the bitter past. A healed memory is not a deleted memory. Instead, forgiving what we cannot forget creates a new way to remember. We change the memory of our past into a hope for our future." Think of a painful memory and discuss how it might be healed.
2. In the movie, "Invictus", Nelson Mandela called forgiveness "the most powerful weapon". Why did he say that? In view of the history of South Africa, was it as effective as he said?
3. Reconciliation can encounter obstacles or setbacks. Sometimes attempting this can make things even worse. How can we stay committed to pursue it?
4. What relationships come to mind when you think of the need for reconciliation (it doesn't have to be involve you)? Take some time to pray over them.