



Closer Than You Think 4 – Forgiveness is Closer Than You Think Spiritual Formation Guide

We hope you'll use this guide to take the teaching from Sunday's service and reflect on it with a few friends or with a group. If you have questions or want to talk more about how to take a next spiritual step, contact us at info@wschurch.org.

Scripture:

Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight!

Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty!

Psalm 32:1-2

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”

Matthew 7:21-23

“I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.”

1 Corinthians 4:3-4

Reflection Questions:

- Share one moment from your week where you experienced God's love. (Don't overthink it – just share the first thing that comes to your mind.)
- What stood out to you from Sunday's service? How did you sense God at work in you through the songs, the message, and being together with others as part of the church? (The message main points and scripture are listed below if it helps you think back.)
- Read Psalm 32. If you have time, read through the whole Psalm several times. Have someone in your group read it out loud and listen to it. What words or image stands out to you?
- Do any of the words or images from that Psalm describe you right now? Share or write down the details.
- Read Matthew 7:21-23. How do Jesus' words challenge you? How does it connect with the reminder that forgiveness is closer than you think?
- Jeremiah encouraged us to reflect and ask ourselves, what is the master narrative of our life? How would you describe your response to that question? He compared us to being in an endless court case where we're trying to gain enough evidence

for the desired verdict – all hoping to prove that “I am a person who counts. I’m a person of consequence. I’m okay. I’m a person of worth.” Do you relate to this? How so? (Take some time to be still and reflect.)

- Read 1 Corinthians 4:3-4. How do those words challenge you to understand that because of Jesus, we can leave the courtroom?
- Do you sense God calling you to do anything in response to this message?

Looking for some ways to grow and be stretched spiritually? Check out our highlighted resources at www.wschurch.org/resources. These resources can be purchased using the links or are available for a small donation at the Next Steps area on Sunday mornings.

Message Main Points and Scripture:

- **Forgiveness is closer than you think.**
- Psalm 32:1-2 - Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight!
Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty!
- **Are you the same person at home, work, and church?**
- Matthew 7:21-23, NIV - “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”
- Matthew 5:20 - “I warn you—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!”
- **There's nothing you can do to make up for you.**
- **Religion:** I obey; therefore, I’m accepted.
- **Gospel:** I’m accepted; therefore, I obey.
- **Endless Litigation**
- **The desired verdict?** *“I am a person who counts. I’m a person of consequence. I’m okay. I’m a person of worth.”*
- 1 Cor. 4:3-4, NIV - “I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.”
- **In Jesus, court is adjourned.**