

## ALLEY Rundown – March 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>

**Today's Bible Story:** Life Changes (Zacchaeus) • *Luke 19:1-10*

**Today's Key Question:** When has someone forgiven you?

**Today's Bottom Line:** When you forgive others, it can change them.

**Monthly Memory Verse:** *Put up with one another. Forgive one another if you are holding something against someone. Forgive, just as the Lord forgave you.* Colossians 3:13 (NIRV)

### SLIDE: Theme

“Hey, everyone! Great to be with you all again today! Welcome back to Work in Progress as we discover more about forgiveness and learn how God can help us redo, rewrite, and restore relationships in our lives.

I have a question for you as we get started. Since we're talking about forgiveness this month, I'm wondering: Have you ever had someone ask *you* for forgiveness, but it was COMPLETELY unexpected? Like it seemed to come out of the blue? Maybe something like this.

*Tell a personal story that's similar to the example below. Or use the following as an 'Imagine with me' scenario.*

“When I was in high school, there was a kid on my soccer team who was not really a great teammate. He was not a great friend. He was . . . well, just not very nice. He'd make fun of me in front of the other players. He would blame losses on me, and no matter how hard I tried, he'd criticize the way I played. Like I said . . . not very nice. I learned to avoid this guy because usually I'd end up feeling horrible when our paths crossed. Then, out of the blue, about TEN YEARS after high school, he found me on the internet. When I saw his name pop up, my stomach sank. I wondered if he would tell me again how I lost the game for our team way back in high school! Hadn't it been long enough?! But as I opened the message, I soon realized that it was an apology. He said that he was thinking about the way he treated me in high school, and he knew that it wasn't right. He was asking for me to forgive him. That was honestly the last thing I expected to find when I opened that message!”

“But as shocked as I was to get that message, I knew that I had to let go of what he had done to me. I needed to forgive this person. Of course, I don't know exactly how offering my forgiveness made him feel, but I'm sure he must have felt better when I told him I was willing to forgive him. That's the thing about forgiveness—it's a two-way street. Offering forgiveness isn't just about the person offering forgiveness. Think about it: what if forgiveness doesn't just lift the weight off of your own shoulders but actually impacts the person you're forgiving? And if that's true, what should we do about that? How does that impact when and how we choose to forgive people in our lives?”

“That's a big question, right? When we have big questions, we need to look for big answers. The first place we should check out is the Bible. Not only did the writers of the Bible experience God first hand, but God inspired them to write down those experiences for people like us to learn from. They had a whole lot to say about the power of forgiveness. Let's see if they can help us with these big questions.

“Today, we're headed back to Luke in the Gospels of the New Testament. Before we turn to Luke, let's remember where we are in God's Big Story.

“All the way back in the beginning, with Adam and Eve, God has had a good plan for the world. God promised to bless the world through the family of Abraham. When the time was right, God sent Jesus to be born in Bethlehem.

“Now we're looking at Jesus' life, the way Jesus taught people about God and the way Jesus treated people with love and compassion. (**Hold up Bible.**) Today we will hear about one person whose life was changed by Jesus' forgiveness in a BIG way. Let's watch...

**Video: The So and So Show 14:56**

“You know, a lot of people had probably already decided what they thought about Zacchaeus. Chances are they would never have predicted the outcome of this story. And maybe rightly so. Zacchaeus wasn’t a good guy. He had hurt a lot of people. But here’s the thing: when someone experiences God’s love and forgiveness, it can change even the hardest of hearts. Nobody is beyond the reach of God’s love. There is no one who God can’t forgive. And when that forgiveness happens, it can be absolutely lifechanging!

Forgiveness can bring people together that you would never have expected. You know, many of you might be familiar with another tax collector besides Zacchaeus. His name was Matthew. You might have heard of him because he was one of Jesus’ twelve disciples AND he wrote the Gospel of Matthew, the first book of the New Testament. His life was changed the day Jesus called him away from his tax collecting booth. Forgiveness changes people!”

“As we follow Jesus, we get to go and offer forgiveness to others when they do us wrong. It doesn’t mean saying everything they do is fine or okay, and it doesn’t mean we will always trust that person again or can even spend time with them. But, offering forgiveness can have the ability to change people. Why? Because God is in the business of transforming people.”

“Today as you go to groups, think about this:

**SLIDE: Key Question**

**“[Key Question] When has someone forgiven you? How did you react? What was your response? Was it freeing? Why? Think about how you felt, and consider before you head out, let’s pray and ask God to help us be the kind of people who forgive easily, just like our heavenly Father. Let’s pray!”**

**SLIDE: Theme Background**

*Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard.*

**OFFERING:**

As some of you may already know, we are highlighting some of our Parkview Global Missionaries from the beautiful country of Mexico. Here is a picture of our Missionary Friends Eli and Mandy Garcia!

**CG: Eli and Mandy**

Parkview has spent many years developing a very important partnership with an organization called Vida Nueva Ministries in Mexico. This group has been working in many of the under-resourced areas to plant churches, start schools, and care for the amazing people of Mexico. Here’s a picture of some of the kids at the school down in Mexico.

**SLIDE: Kids at School (Image 6620)**

So if you brought an offering today, you can bring it up now knowing that it is going to help a lot of people just like you in the great country of Mexico!

Let’s head to small groups!