

ALLEY Rundown – March 18-20, 2023

Today's Bible Story: Mercy Mercy Me (The Story of the Unmerciful Servant) • *Matthew 18:21-35*

Today's Key Question: What keeps you from forgiving?

Today's Bottom Line: Forgive others because God forgives you.

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 (NIV)*

SLIDE: Theme

“What is going on, everyone! So great to see you today as we continue a Work in Progress. All month we're looking at the idea of forgiveness and how God can help us redo, rewrite, and restore some important relationships in our life. Today, we've got a great morning planned starting with a little game that highlights a work in progress that uses the power of words! And, you can all join in!

“How many of you were big Mad Libs™ fans growing up? Me too! So fun. Well, if you were a fan of Mad Libs™, you'll be a fan of this game. We call this, ReTELL It!

SLIDE: ReTELL It!

You're going to help me with this. I'm going to ask you 5 questions. (*Leader...pick one person to answer each and write the answers on a piece of paper.*) Just make sure your answer something you would read out loud in front of your Grandma!

1. First, tell me the name of a strange food.
2. Second paper tell me somewhere in the world. It can be a place, country, etc.
3. Third, pick an adjective. You know . . . those words that describe something!
4. For the fourth, let's go with something you yell!
5. And finally, fifth, tell me a plural noun.

“Now I will read some phrases using your answers.”

- Phrase 1: I was going to eat my sandwich for lunch, but I decided to eat (strange food) instead.
- Phrase 2: Most people think Santa Claus lives in the North Pole, but he is actually from (somewhere in the world).
- Phrase 3: I left the theater early because I found the show to be very (adjective).
- Phrase 4: When I saw the thief trying to steal her purse, I quickly stood up and yelled (something you yell).
- Phrase 5: I had the strangest dream last night! I dreamed I was surrounded by a large number of dancing (plural noun).

Those were some incredible edits. We're going to hear a Bible story in a bit about the power of words and how they can change somebody!

SLIDE: Theme

“As we continue learning more about forgiveness, I have a question for you. Do you ever think about people who owe you things? Do you ever keep track of those things? For example . . .

“. . . maybe there was that time somebody borrowed two bucks from you and they never paid you back.

“Or maybe there was that time that you were hanging out with your friend and they BROKE your favorite dance trophy . . . and then denied it!

“Maybe someone said they couldn’t hang out but then you found out that they were hanging out with someone else?

We can all think of a time when someone hurt us right? And maybe we’ve had a tough time letting go of it. I know there have been times when I’ve had a hard time forgiving or letting go of how people have hurt me—whether they meant to hurt me or not. Have you ever wondered about what happens to us when we choose not to forgive? Or beyond forgiveness, what if we’re not dealing with how we feel about what someone has done to frustrate us or hurt us?

“Think about this for a moment. What if holding on to these grudges is actually really, really bad for us? What do we do then? How do we untangle ourselves from how we feel about these sorts of situations in our lives?

“This is a very important question worth figuring out. God doesn’t want us to feel tangled up or weighed down by what happens to us or our lack of forgiveness. But maybe we just don’t know where to start. Well, if that’s the case for you, you’ve come to the right place. We love getting the chance to explore the Bible and discover how the writers of the Bible experienced God and what we can learn from them.”

“Our story for today is a perfect example of this. You might remember that years and years before Jesus was born, God promised to send a Savior to the Israelites. When the time was right, God sent Jesus to be born to Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem.

“Over the past few weeks, we’ve seen how Jesus grew from a small Boy who astounded adults in the temple . . . to a grown Man who was able to do things that seemed impossible! Jesus’ reputation grew as He performed miracles, healed people who were sick, and taught people a different way to understand their relationship with God.

“We’ve also seen how some people—the Pharisees and religious leaders—weren’t happy about what Jesus was doing. They didn’t believe that Jesus is the Son of God, so they looked for ways to trick Him, trap Him, or prove that He isn’t who He claimed to be.

“All month long we’ve been in the Gospels, watching as Jesus interacted with others and showed them what forgiveness is like. Today we get to hear Jesus tell a little story about forgiveness—a very important story. Take a look....

Video: The So and So Show 14:53

“Those are definitely some pretty strong words. But think about it like this: God is the king in the story. God has offered an incredible amount of forgiveness to us, more than we could ever repay or earn. The point is that we don’t have to—God freely gives it to us!

“Notice in the story that the king didn’t set his servant up on a monthly payment plan with easy installments. Instead, he cancelled the debt. Amazing! The same is true about what God does for us. And in our gratitude for all God has done for us, we should share God’s love and forgiveness with others. We get to reflect God’s love to others when we go and forgive them. Are the debts sometimes significant? Have people hurt us? Do we want to make them pay for it? Yes, yes, and yes. BUT because of God’s forgiveness towards us, we can now go and forgive others. Like we’ve said before, it doesn’t mean that what the other person did was okay, and it doesn’t mean that we have to put ourselves in the same situation again. But . . . it does mean we can experience FREEDOM of no longer holding onto the debt someone else owes you. And this is the kind of freedom God wants us to experience.”

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

SLIDE: Key Question

“[Key Question] What keeps you from forgiving? If you are holding out on forgiving someone, why has it been so difficult? Or where have you struggled before? This might be really hard to answer. Thankfully, you have an amazing Small Group Leader and friends who can help you think through this when you get to groups. Before you head out, let’s pray and thank God for forgiving us. Let’s ask God for the strength to help us forgive others as well. Let’s pray!”

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

OFFERING TIME:

Before we go to small groups, all this month, we have been bringing our money to support Vida Nueva Ministries in Piedras Negras, Mexico. Your offering helps people just like you to have the resources they need to experience a new life with Jesus! Here is a picture of our friends Eli and Mandy Garcia and their family...

SLIDE: Eli and Mandy

They are our friends and Parkview Global heroes that tell people about Jesus down in Mexico. So, if you brought your offering today, you can bring it up now while this video plays!

CG: Vida Nueva Ministries Video (Runtime: 2:00)

Head to small groups