

Questions for reflection, application, and discussion

1. In his message Pastor Mike taught that our ability to understand and accept God's forgiveness begins with our understanding of our sin and our sinfulness. We will never know Jesus as our savior until we realize we are sinners who need to be saved.
  - a. What do you think he meant by these statements? What was your initial reaction when you heard him say this?
  - b. Our modern culture is offended by the idea of sin, and even liberal churches will say that calling a behavior a sin and/or someone a sinner is judgmental and hateful, and inconsistent with God's love. How would you respond from the Bible to someone who argued this?
  - c. At it's core, what is sin?
  - d. Can a person who denies or justifies their sin receive Jesus' forgiveness and/or have a relationship with God? Explain your answer.
  - e. Pastor Mike said that denying the reality of our sin impacts not only our relationship with God, but also with other people. How does it impact our relationship with other people?
  
2. When a person accepts Christ, he or she confesses and repents from their sins, and God forgives all their sins; past, present, and future. Yet, in the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches that those who have a relationship with God should still come to God regularly in prayer, asking him to "*forgive our debts.*"
  - a. Why is it important for Christians who have been forgiven by Jesus to still daily ask God to forgive us our sins? How does our relationship with God and our spiritual health suffer if we don't do this?
  - b. Do you think that Jesus is teaching that we should offer a general prayer of confession for our recent sins, or that we should confess our sins by name? Explain your answer?
  - c. Is the confession of sin and asking for God's forgiveness a part of your daily prayer life? If not, why do you think it isn't?
  
3. To confess means to agree with God. When we confess our sins, how important is it to not only confess that we are guilty, but also to agree with God about the seriousness and offensiveness of our sin?
  
4. In the Lord's Prayer Jesus teaches us to pray, "*forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*"
  - a. What do you think Jesus is teaching us about the correlation between our forgiving others who have sinned against us and our being forgiven by God?
  - b. Do you think it is possible for a believer who has been forgiven of their sins by God to be consistently unforgiving towards others? Why or why not?
  
5. Who is it in your life that is the hardest to really forgive? What is keeping you from forgiving them?
  - a. How does your lack of forgiveness of those who have wronged you impact your relationship with God? What does your unwillingness to forgive that person reveal about your relationship with God?
  - b. If you feel you cannot forgive someone who has wronged are you willing to ask God to give you the desire and the ability to forgive them?