

FORWARD

Centering Ourselves

Personal Ministry

Romans 5:6-8

You see, at just the right time when we were still powerless Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

What if God has already forgiven you for all your sins and is waiting for you to recognize and reconcile with Him?

Remember the story about the paralyzed man who was lowered through the roof to Jesus because there were so many people blocking access?

All kinds of people had gathered in and around the house to hear Jesus.

Jesus looks at his paralyzed man at his feet and says the most unusual thing.

“Friend, your sins are forgiven.” Luke 5:20

And he had not asked for forgiveness.

Later, Jesus is invited into the home of a Pharisee, Simon, to share a banquet with him.

Like previously, individuals are positioned in the doorways, peering through the windows, and eavesdropping on the conversations.

Then, a woman in that town who lived a sinful life takes a great risk.

As the guests eat and talk, she slips in unnoticed and begins cleaning Jesus' feet by pouring expensive perfume on them and drying them with her hair.

Simon had the confirmation he was looking for.

“If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is – that she is a sinner.” Luke 7:39

Jesus turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “...do you see this woman? She has been a better host than you have. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven.”

She hadn't even asked; she hadn't even repented.

The woman never said a word, but she left forgiven.

What if it is true that God forgives everybody regardless ahead of time?

What if it is true that he has done this for you? What if he has done this for your child? What if he does this for those who choose not to accept your child?

If people were to believe that God forgives everyone automatically, it would be a significant problem.

We will lose our ability to leverage the fear of God, judgment, and the absence of our loved ones on Resurrection Day.

But if it's true - what if what Jesus did for the women at Simon's house and the paralyzed man on the mat, he has done for you and for your child?

Then this would be Good News. It would be the best possible news.

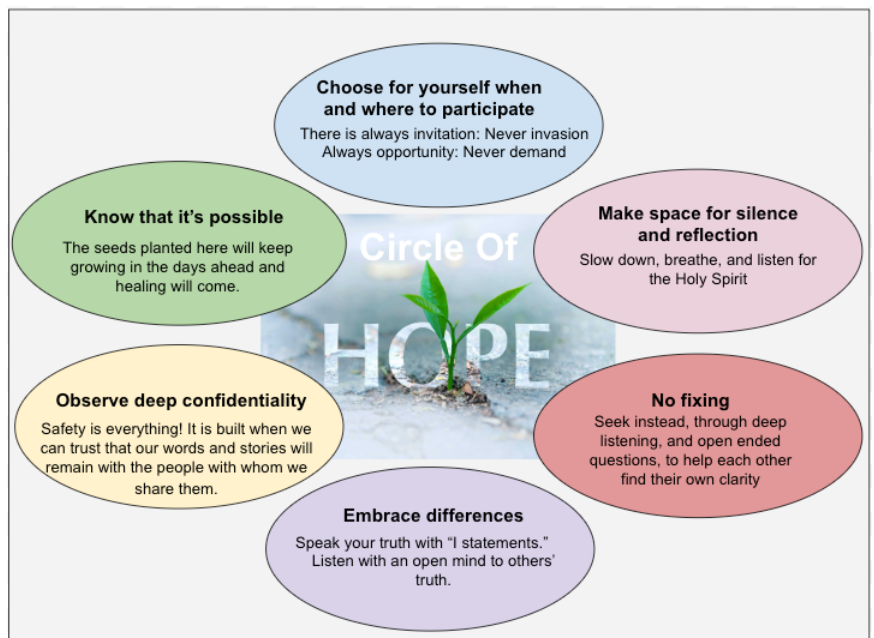
Fear of God would be replaced by gratitude and love for God, which is the point Jesus was making.

Reinforcing the Boundaries and Guiding Principles

Before we begin our Circles of Hope discussion, it's important for everyone to review the following guiding principles and boundaries. These are essential for creating a safe and restorative space for those dealing with spiritual trauma.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Play the "long game" and trust God with the outcome.
- Use love to build bridges to Jesus; don't lose the relationship.
- You can love well without losing your convictions of faith.



CIRCLE OF HOPE TOPIC

What if the Good News is really good news, and God loves us to the point where He has already forgiven sins? What does this mean for us loving well without losing our convictions of faith?