

WALK DUSTY

As we journey through Lent let us remember that it is a long and dusty road. It is on this journey that we reflect on those who have gone before and those who will come after. We identify with the hurt and the pain. We live in the messiness that comes with the often dirty road that we must travel. Let us also remember that it is this dust we call life that shapes and forms us into resurrection people. Just as we walk wet in recognition of our baptism and the promise that it holds we encourage you this year to Walk Dusty. Remember that in the brokenness, we are healed. While the journey is long and tiresome, resurrection promises are greater. In our dusty walk we claim the promise of new sandals and clean garments. As we walk dusty we remember that we have come from dust and to dust we shall return.

WEEK SIX – WALK IN FORGIVENESS

It is on this journey that we reflect on those who have gone before and those who will come after.

Small Group Bible Study Time:

CHECK IN:

Joy, Junk, and Jesus (where you have seen God at work this week)

SHARE:

-Is it easier to forgive or ask for forgiveness?

-Why?

READ: Matthew 18:21-35 (NRSV-CE)

Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' [22] Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. [23] 'For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. [24] When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; [25] and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. [26] So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." [27] And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. [28] But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe." [29] Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." [30] But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. [31] When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. [32] Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. [33] Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?" [34] And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. [35] So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'

TEACHING

SHARE:

- Why do we hold on to grudges?
- How does holding a grudge affect our relationships with others?
- How does forgiveness impact our relationships with others?

ACTIVITY: *Lectio Divina (Optional if there is time)*

Read the following verses 3 times and pause between each reading for a time of reflection. It may help to have different people read it aloud each time. The first time you read it, listen for a phrase that sticks out to you. The second time listen for a word that sticks out to you. The last time, listen for what God is asking you to do in the passage. Share your thoughts at the end if you feel comfortable doing so.

READ:

Matthew 6:9-15 (NRSV-CE)

'Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. [10] Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. [11] Give us this day our daily bread. [12] And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. [13] And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. [14] For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; [15] but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

SHARE:

- How does it make you feel that Jesus makes your forgiveness conditional on you forgiving others?
- What would happen if we gave forgiveness freely?
- What would our community look like if everyone practiced forgiveness?

BONUS SECTION

This section may be used if there is enough time, or can be read and reflected on individually at another time. If you choose not to cover this section in small group time, finish with the closing prayer and blessing at the bottom.

MARKS OF DISCIPLESHIP

Strive for justice and peace in all the earth

READ:

Micah 6:6-8 (NRSV-CE) 'With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? [7] Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with tens of thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' [8] He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Mark 11:15-19 (NRSV-CE)

Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold doves; [16] and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. [17] He was teaching and saying, 'Is it not written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations"? But you have made it a den of robbers.' [18] And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching. [19] And when evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.

REFLECT:

Though innocent, Jesus was sentenced to a violent death. Where is the justice and peace in this? On our behalf, Jesus encountered injustice, violence, and death itself in order to bring a new order—one in which the lion and lamb might lie down together. Until that time comes, we continue to strive for justice and peace in all the earth. We press on.

We do this because it is what a disciple or follower of Jesus is to do. We work for peace and justice, knowing it is not easy work. Because at its core, this is work of change in our world. The work of God breaking into our world so that all might have life and live abundantly. The work of God to lift up the lowly and restore the

brokenhearted. The work of repairing broken systems and institutions so that they might be bearers of restoration rather than conduits of hard lives of suffering and pain. The work too of confronting the lies of scarcity that society often tells us with the truth of abundance and that there is enough for everyone through God.

SHARE:

- What does it mean to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?
- What examples of this have you seen or witnessed in your community and world this past year?
- In what ways might you be called today and in the days ahead to “strive for justice and peace in all the earth” yourself?

CLOSING PRAYER AND BLESSING:

Throughout our dusty walk may we remember we are not alone. It is on this journey that we reflect on those who have gone before and those who will come after. Grant us the strength to show grace and give us the courage to admit when we are wrong. Help us to walk in forgiveness. Amen!

Share this blessing with one another.

May you know the God of all creation is with you always
and surrounds you in love.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

AMEN.