



The Way Forward Series Guide

Nov. 08: Through Forbearance

Welcome for the group and Check-in

"I am feeling..."

Psalm 23 Rhythm

- Slowly read as a group twice.
- Make observations about your experience of the meditative reading of Psalm 23
- What part resonates or creates an allergic reaction within you as we read the Psalm today?

Group Prayer:

"Good Shepherd, thank you for pursuing us, providing for us, and protecting us. Continue to refine our thoughts of you and your ways. We open our lives to receive your goodness and mercy and correction. Remind us of your love as we engage in reflection and see both virtue and vice, healing and brokenness, love and apathy. Amen."

Group Discussion about The Way Forward: Through Forbearance

Overview of ideas the sermon explores:

1. Forbearance is a refraining from enforcement (debt, right or obligation). It has the quality of leniency and patience.
2. Godly forbearance is a great opportunity to show contrast between a gospel-centered church and the world. If we practice this the world will see what grace does and what the gospel looks like!
3. Paul's command to 'patiently put up with' comes to new Christ followers who were loaded with long engrained differences: ethnically, socially, economically, morally.
4. Forbearance is nuanced. It isn't a free for all morally, you can't act however you want. It doesn't mean all beliefs are equally valid.
5. Even though Christ followers are exclusive in our truth claims, the gospel gives us the basis for real inclusiveness, real tolerance, real forbearance. Our relationship with God is based entirely on His grace. So, we know, *we are convinced that we are no better than anyone else!*
6. He forbears us even now to lead us to repentance. He did that for us, and for that reason, we're able to do that for others.

Reading of passages from the sermon: Eph. 4:1-6, Col 3:5-13; Ro. 2:4; 3:25

Group Discussion:

“Echo chamber: an environment in which a person encounters only beliefs or opinions that coincide with their own, so that their existing views are reinforced and alternative ideas are not considered.”

(New Oxford American Dictionary)

1. How does “Echo chamber” describe our current political climate?
2. How has “Echo chamber” been used to describe factions at Union Center?
3. What can we do to change this practice? Please share a positive example of a relationship where you challenged one another’s viewpoints, opinions, beliefs and continued in good relationship.

Pastor Dave offered the opinion that godly tolerance, forbearance is an opportunity to show contrast between a grace-filled church and the world.

1. Why should we be showing a contrast between the church and the world?
2. Offer an example of how your relationship with non-believers is filled with forbearance.

We forbear with one another because God forbears us.

1. How has God practiced forbearance with humanity? (Ro 2:4, 3:25)
2. In what ways should we overlook faults, sins? In what ways shouldn’t we overlook sin?
3. When do we put up with, and be patient with, false beliefs? When do we correct false beliefs?
4. Christians believe in exclusive truth claims (John 14:6). How is it possible to claim to be tolerant and yet believe in exclusive truth claims at the same time?

Practice for this week:

Have a conversation with one non-church-attending person. Share with them the definition of “Echo chamber” and let them know that you’re interested talking to someone who has different beliefs and opinions from your own. Be curious in your conversation about how they formed their opinion, beliefs and of course *practice being gentle, patient, humble and forbear*.

Closing Prayer:

From William Laud (1573 - 1645)

Most gracious Father, we most humbly beseech you for your holy church. Fill it with all truth; in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purge it; where it is in error, direct it; where anything is amiss, reform it; where it is right, strengthen and confirm it; where it is in need, furnish it; where it is divided and torn apart, make up its breaches, O holy One of Israel.

Amen.