



ZIMZUM DISCIPLESHIP VIDEO LESSON #6: RECONCILIATION SMALL GROUP SESSION 2

GATHERING

Opening Prayer:

Almighty and everlasting God, who in the Paschal mystery established the new covenant of reconciliation: Grant that all who have been reborn into the fellowship of Christ's Body may show forth in their lives what they profess by their faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Begin with brief check-ins and the opening questions below:

Opening Questions:

How has it been practicing zimzum discipleship these past weeks? What has reconciliation meant for you in this time?

Reading: Matthew 18:21-35

Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. 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.' Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. 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. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Use *lectio divina* ("divine reading") for this passage.

- Read the text slowly aloud. Sit for a time and notice where your heart takes you.
- Meditate on a word or phrase that has caught your attention. Or imagine taking on a role in this narrative and playing it over again in your mind.
- Pray the passage aloud slowly again, or simply pray the word or phrase that has taken your attention.
- Quietly consider how this passage might lead you to live more faithfully as a disciple of Jesus, and let the Spirit guide you as to next steps for contemplative living.

Reflection Questions

- In the parable, Jesus describes a person owing a great deal and begging for mercy who then refuses to offer mercy to someone who owes them a little. Why do you think the person who is forgiven a large debt responds in this way? Why is it hard to forgive?
- In her book, *Speaking of Sin: The Lost Language of Salvation*, Barbara Brown Taylor writes: "Sin is our only hope, because the recognition that something is wrong is the first step toward setting it right again. There is no help for those who admit no need of help. There is no repair for those who insist that nothing is broken, and there is no hope of transformation for a world whose inhabitants accept that it is sadly but irreversibly wrecked." We don't often talk about sin even in the Church. Why do you think that is? Is Barbara Brown Taylor right in saying that sin is our only hope? And if she is, why do we avoid talking about it if it can lead to transformation?
- Barbara Brown Taylor also writes, "Contrary to the legal model, sin is not simply a set of behaviors to be avoided. Much more fundamentally, it is a way of life to be exposed and changed, and no one is innocent. But that fact need not paralyze anyone with fear, since the proper response to sin is not punishment but penance.... the essence of sin is not the violation of laws but the violation of relationships. Punishment is not paramount. Restoration of relationship is paramount, which means that the focus is not on paying debts but on recovering fullness of life." Why do you think for many the idea of

sin is in fact about punishment and penance? If you believed this way in the past, what helped you change your understanding — even if this is still a work in progress?

- Often when we face acknowledging wrongdoings, we feel very anxious or nervous, and it can lead to a feeling of shame. And yet, when we do seek reconciliation, there's often a flood of relief and an ability to let go of that thing we've been holding on to. Why do you think we respond in this way?
- Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg writes, "Sometimes the impetus to do repentance work can come from an accounting of the soul, as it's called in my tradition—the introspection that can help us face the ways in which we've missed the mark. Whether that introspection comes from beginning to sit meditation regularly or taking up another form of spiritual practice, hitting rock bottom with addiction, suffering hurt similar to the kind that we've caused, becoming more educated on issues when we had previously acted from places of harmful ignorance or from some other channel, sometimes we can begin to gain clarity, on our own or with help, about how our past actions have impacted others." What might you need to do to make time for that accounting of the soul? How have you engaged the work in the past? What would be a next step?

Final Reflections

- What has captured your heart or your imagination in today's discussion?
- Where have you seen God—or Love—recently?
- How might you intentionally make space in your life over the next 2-4 weeks to bring you closer to God?

Closing Prayer

Almighty and Eternal God, you sacrificially withdrew from a place within yourself in order to create the entirety of the cosmos so that you might be in relationship with us and all of creation. Help us to embrace zimzum discipleship and make space in our own lives, that we might more faithfully follow in the way of Jesus who gave of himself for the salvation and healing of the whole world. All this we ask in the name of the Risen Christ, who dwells endlessly with you and the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*