**Table Talk**

**Sermon Series: God Selfie – Forgiving Sin, Iniquity, and Transgressions**

**September 15, 2019**

**Introduction (10 min)**

Welcome everyone to your Table Talk small group. Watch the introductory video and share the story below, then open up the discussion with the questions provided.

**Table Talk Video: God Selfie – Forgiving Sin, Iniquity, and Transgressions**

The sermon this week mentioned several miracles in Southside Church’s past – moments of God’s divine intervention that piloted the direction of our church forward in critical moments. Key leaders, both pastors and volunteers, seized the opportunity to take God’s portrait of forgiveness to the world in bold, faithful ways. Since we didn’t have time in the sermon to expound on each one of those miracles, I will take the time to share the details of one of them now.

In 1986 Southside’s pastor, Charles Thompson, was elected as District Superintendent of the Virginia District. As such, he could no longer serve as the pastor and was in the unusual position to help select his replacement. Over the course of a few months, several candidates were contacted but after much prayer and conversation, none of the candidates were called to fill the role.

One pastor that Reverend Thompson had called turned him down cold, not willing to even submit a résumé. That pastor was Jerome Hancock. After several weeks had passed, Jerome confessed that he couldn’t get Southside off his mind. He spoke to his father, John, who was also a District Superintendent, about it. He talked to his wife, Brenda, and told her how troubled he was. They went to prayer and cried out to God. As they did, they felt as though God specifically said, “Wait until 4 o’clock.” So they patiently waited for what God was going to do next.

At 4pm, the phone rang. It was Rev. Thompson again asking Jerome to submit a resume! He was stunned and asked Rev. Thompson if anyone had talked to him, such as his father John. "No," replied the Superintendent, "Only Jesus." What a miracle! Pastor Jerome then knew for sure that this was God’s will. He said, "Reverend Thompson, if you knew what I have been through these past few weeks then you’d know that I’ll send you whatever you want!" He came to Richmond for the interview, received a near-unanimous vote, and became our pastor from 1987 to 2015.

-Pastor Reggie

1. What miracle story from the sermon most peaked your interest?

**Prayer (3 minutes)**

Pray that the God of forgiveness would lead and direct your conversations through this time of study and devotion.

**Digging In (18 minutes)**

**Read Exodus 34:5-7**

1. Have you ever thought about forgiveness as an essential part of God’s nature, not just an action he performs?
2. Why do you think God line itemed the things he forgives: wickedness, rebellion, and sin?
3. Does it comfort you to know that it is God’s desire to forgive?
4. In the act of offering forgiveness is the implicit acknowledgment of an injustice that needs forgiving. Do you ever try to ask for and receive forgiveness without really dealing with your sin?
5. Think for a moment. How would life as we know it be different if God was not both forgiving and just by nature?
6. If God has given us a beautiful portrait of forgiveness that reflects his own character and has called us as his people, what are we doing to reflect that portrait of forgiveness to the world?

**Digging Out (12 minutes)**

**Read Exodus 19:5-6**

1. Israel had a history of a tepid relationship with God in the wilderness. God always called them to more but Israel struggled to live up to that calling. What promises does God make if they are willing to obey him?
2. Not long after this encounter is when God reveals his selfie to Moses and paints the portrait of a forgiving God. Why was this image so important to Israel?
3. Is this still an important part of the Image of God in your own life?
4. This passage includes a calling to go out and serve as, “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” Who is this kingdom of priests supposed to serve and set an example for?
5. Is our service today as the Body of Christ still setting an example of God’s portrait of forgiveness for the world, ministering God’s presence to others?

**Taking It Home (7 minutes)**

After discussing the Bible verses above, consider the following personal challenge.

1. We have been called to take God’s portrait of forgiveness to the world. Give a few examples of how you or your small group can do that this week. Work together and come up with a list of 5 personal and 5 group actions that could help you do just that.
2. Take a few minutes as a group and allow people to share their own stories of how God has miraculously directed their circumstances in order to help them serve as ministers and missionaries who carried God’s message of forgiveness to others.

**Wrapping Up (2 minutes)**

To the best of your ability, summarize the main points of your group’s discussion and help them make meaningful connections with the scriptures.

**Scripture Challenge (5 minutes)**

Take time to practice memorizing 1 Peter 2:9 Write the verse down and recite it a few times out loud as a group. You are God’s chosen people, called to carry God’s portrait of forgiveness to the world!

**Prayer (3 minutes)**

Pray that God would allow you to feel the great depth of his forgiveness, while equipping you to be a minister and a missionary who shares his forgiveness with the world.