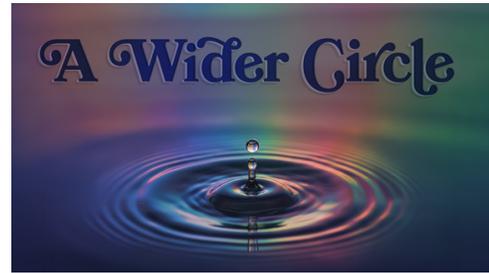


CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Week 3 - What is Mercy?



GETTING STARTED

What's something small you once got in trouble for that felt like a big deal at the time?

THIS WEEK'S THEME

The sermon distinguishes between mercy (not getting what you deserve) and grace (getting what you don't deserve). How would you explain the difference in your own words? Why does the distinction matter?

The Hebrew word *racham* connects mercy to the image of a womb – protective, nurturing, unbreakable love. How does that image expand or challenge your understanding of God's mercy?

Read Acts 16:16-34. When the earthquake opens the prison doors, Paul and Silas stay. Why do you think they didn't run? What would you have been tempted to do?

In the story, Paul says to the jailer – "Do not harm yourself. We are all here." What makes this moment such a powerful picture of mercy? Do you think the greater miracle was the earthquake – or their choice to stay? Why?

The sermon names how easy it is to want mercy for ourselves but justice for others. Where do you see that tension in your own life or in our culture?

Mercy comes at a cost. What might it cost you to extend mercy in a current relationship or unresolved situation?

Micah 6:8 calls us to "act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly." Why do you think loving mercy – not just showing it – is emphasized?

Where in your life do you need God's mercy right now? And inversely, who might need yours?

TAKING IT HOME

Then look for one small, concrete way to extend mercy – a kind word, a withheld criticism, a prayer for someone who frustrates you.

PRAY

Merciful God, you hold us with a love that is protective, patient, and unbreakable. Teach us to receive your mercy deeply – and to extend it courageously, even when it costs us. Amen.