**TEACHING SET UP**

Let Go(d) – Week C

MAIN POINT GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

**Forgiveness and healing aren’t an event, they are a process.**

To encourage students to keep choosing forgiveness and realize healing takes time

MAIN SCRIPTURES

*Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.****13****Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.****14****And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. (Colossians 3:12-14 NIV)*

HOPE: MULTIPLE CAMPUSES, 1 CHURCH.

At Hope we have multiple campuses so each week there are different speakers delivering the message to different sets of students. We want to balance giving each speaker and each campus freedom to tailor the message to fit them while uniting as one church in the same direction we teach our students.

**We ask that all speakers teach the provided main point and main Scripture**. We have provided a detailed message outline, but there is freedom in how much of that you use and how much you’d like to tailor to either fit you or your campus better. Talk to your campus staff about how to best go about this for your specific week.

**We also want to unite in pointing to Jesus’ saving grace each message** – a Cross Connection segment is written in the message outline.

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

* Recap: We’ve been in this series Let Go, Let God about forgiveness.
	+ So far we’ve learned that forgiveness sets us free.
	+ And how the more you hold onto a grudge, the more the grudge has a hold on you.
* Have you ever thought you forgave someone, maybe you even said a prayer to forgive them, only to boil over with anger the next time you saw them? Sometimes forgiving someone isn’t as easy as it sounds.
* *Speaker note: Share a personal story about a time you had to wait or go through a process for something (bonus points if it was while you were in middle or high school)*

TENSION

* Sometimes, actually a lot of times, things take time. They take a process.
	+ Maybe you call the girl you want to take to the dance, but she doesn’t answer.
	+ Maybe you decide to join the soccer team, only to realize there is an intense try out process.
	+ Maybe you decide you are going to get your grades up, only to realize you’re going to spend most of your weekends on extra assignments.
* In all these cases, there is something you want to go after, but reality strikes and it isn’t so easy as just deciding you want it. There is a process involved. You have to decide if you want to go through the process to go after what you want.
* Forgiveness and healing can work like that too.
* **Forgiveness and healing aren’t an event, they are a process.**
	+ Maybe you decide to forgive the girl that told a rumor about you, only to have those hurt feelings resurface when you see her.
	+ Maybe you decide to forgive your dad for missing your game, but the second he asks you to clean your room you through it in his face again.
* You see, we can want to forgive others, and for our hearts to heal, but sometimes it isn’t as simple as just deciding that is what we want. Sometimes it’s a process.
* And it’s a process we need to keeping choosing and keeping leaning on God to get us through.

TRUTH

* We’ve talked about how God wants you embrace forgiveness because He knows:
	+ **The more you hold onto a grudge, the more it has a hold on you.**
	+ **Forgiveness sets YOU free.**
* But if healing takes time, how do we move past the pain?
* Well, we are going to talk about my man Joseph today whose life is FULL of drama and could probably be one of the best revenge stories of all time – except for the fact he was a really cool dude who chose to lean on God and forgive his brothers in big ways.
* RECAP Genesis 37-45:
	+ Joseph’s brothers get jealous of him and sell him into slavery.
	+ They tell their dad he is dead.
	+ Joseph is a slave, who ends up in jail, who ends up becoming the second most powerful person in all of Egypt. (It’s a crazy story and you should read it).
	+ There is a huge famine where Joseph’s bros and dad live, so they come to Egypt in hopes for food to survive.
	+ They have to stand in front of Joseph to ask for food. They don’t even recognize him, but he recognizes them.
	+ This is the PERFECT opportunity for revenge. Surely God set this all up to vindicate Joseph and help him get revenge on his horrible brothers, right?
	+ Let’s read what Joseph does: ***4****Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come close to me.” When they had done so, he said, “I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt!****5****And now,* ***do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here****,****because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you****. (Genesis 45:4-5 NIV)*
	+ We can see how Joseph has ALREADY been on a healing journey with God. I imagine at some point Joseph asked God WHY he had to be a slave and then in jail, but he realized it was so that God could eventually place him in a spot where he could save lives, including the lives of his family.
* How could Joseph forgive his brothers? Ultimately, he wasn’t looking at their actions – he was looking at God’s actions. He saw how God used this bad thing for good. In fact, that is a promise we all have:
* *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28 NIV)*
	+ Notice this verse doesn’t say that all things are good. It says God will use all things for good. That is a really big thing to understand.
	+ Because of this verse I know everything that happens in your life, even the horrible things, God can bring good out of them.
	+ God took Joseph’s brothers selling him into slavery, and used it so Joseph could eventually save his family and many lives in his high position in Egypt.
* Pain can consume us so easily. It would’ve been easy for Joseph to focus on his pain.
* We can’t fully heal and get past our pain until we decide to keep pursuing God, pursuing forgiveness, pursuing healing – even in the pain. Even in the hard.
* You can let your pain define you, consume you. Or you can let God’s word define you and consume you.
* What will you choose?
* And let me be clear, I’m not asking you to deny or ignore your pain. I’m asking you to give it to God to heal.
* **Cross Connection:** Don’t forget, Jesus went through a most painful death because He loved you. He did it to save you. **Jesus went through pain to offer us forgiveness and saving grace.**
* **God cares about your pain and He is a God of healing, of redemption.**
* *Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.****13****Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.****14****And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. (Colossians 3:12-14 NIV)*
	+ We forgive because we are God’s chosen people – and we want to let His word define us more than our bitterness or our pain.
	+ We forgive because God forgave us.
	+ We forgive because we loved and we are called to love.
* **HIGH SCHOOL +:**
	+ I want to pause here and give you all time to get together in groups of 2-3 to talk about a really important idea here that we are going to keep unpacking in our next series.
	+ **What does it mean to let God’s word define us?**
	+ I’m going to give you two minutes to talk through these three questions: *(give students 2 minutes to talk through each, then ask to have a few people share their answers with everyone)*
		- What kind of things do people usually let define them?
		- How do these verses in Colossians define God’s people?
		- What does it mean to let God’s word define us?

APPLICATION

* Will you keep choosing to forgive, even when it’s hard?
* Who have you decided to forgive? How can you keep choosing the process of healing and forgiveness?
* If you were here when we wrote down names to forgive – keep that list. Keep praying and asking God to help you forgive the people on the list until your hurt is healed.

LANDING

* **Forgiveness and healing aren’t an event, they are a process.**
* Keep choosing forgiveness. Even in the hard. Even in the pain.
	+ Chose forgiveness because that is what God asks of you.
	+ **Chose forgiveness because forgiveness sets you free.**