



56A PENTECOST 15A LITURGY

Grace, Forgiveness and Love

Abstract

21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”

22 Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.
Matthew 18:21–22 (NIV)

56A Pentecost 15A Liturgy

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Grace, Forgiveness and Love

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2020 | AFTER PENTECOST | PROPER 19 | YEAR A

Old Testament & Psalm, Option I

Old Testament Exodus 14:19–31

Psalm Psalm 114 or Exodus 15:1b–11, 20–21

or

Old Testament & Psalm, Option II

Old Testament Genesis 50:15–21

Psalm (Psalm 103:1–7) 8–13

New Testament Romans 14:1–12

Gospel Matthew 18:21–35¹

Matthew 18.21-35

Peter asks Jesus about the extent of forgiveness. Jesus answers with a funny – and chilling – parable about a man, who is forgiven much but who forgives very little, and is punished by his master for this attitude.

This week's resources explore: what an attitude of forgiveness really looks like.

	<p>Pre-Service His mercy is more</p>
	<p>Introit</p>
	<p>Greeting</p> <p>May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all</p> <p>and also with us</p>
	<p>We Gather Come to the God who knows us, to the God who created our being, to the God who knows our frailty, to the God who loves and cherishes us beyond measure. Come as you are and worship God.</p>

¹ [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

	<p><i>Let us pray</i> Our desire, our need, our yearning draws us together to worship God. Unexplainable, unimaginable, unbelievable, incomprehensible love, pulls at our heart strings, tugs at our emotions, turns our eyes beyond the seeing. All-encompassing God, just as we are, we come. Amen.</p>
<p>Hymn/song TIS #152 - Joyful Joyful we adore Thee</p>	
<p>Welcome Today we celebrate the 15th Sunday after Pentecost year A Last week's gospel had much to say about problems amongst church members and how to solve them. And the theme continues with Peter's opening words in today's verses as he asks Jesus how often he should forgive someone who sins against him.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Monty Python "I'm not God, Just a really naughty boy."</i> • <i>Are you ever naughty? Are your friends ever angry with you? Then what happens? How many times have you been naughty in one day? Once a day? 10 times an hour?</i> • <i>Do your friends keep a list and add them all up, and tell you how many times you have been naughty?</i> • <i>Think about how many times you have forgiven or been forgiven,</i> • <i>is there is a balance.</i> • <p>In this short video, A modern day Peter discusses his naughtiness with a modern day Jesus</p>	
<p>Video Grace_Skit Guys-HD</p>	
	<p><i>Let us pray</i> Teach us, O God, how to treat you, how to know you, how to love you, how to learn of you, how to do as you would have us do. Teach us, above all, how to show those same things to those around us, and those whose lives meet ours, those who rub alongside us each day, and those who flit briefly by. Amen.</p>

	<p>Readings</p> <p><i>Matthew 18:21–35 (NIV)</i></p> <p>²¹ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”</p> <p>²² Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.</p> <p>²³ “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. ²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.</p> <p>²⁶ “At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ ²⁷ The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.</p> <p>²⁸ “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.</p> <p>²⁹ “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’</p> <p>³⁰ “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.</p> <p>³² “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³ Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ ³⁴ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.</p> <p>³⁵ “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.” ²</p> <p><i>respond</i> For the word of the Lord Thanks be to God</p>
	<p>Hymn/song/video</p> <p>TIS #635 - forgive our sins as we forgive</p>
	<p>We say Sorry Forgiving God,</p>

² [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

more willing to forgive than often we are to confess,
 help us to see our failings,
 to see where we fall short,
 to see where we deceive ourselves,
 where we close our eyes and ears
 to the ripples of our wrongdoing.
 May we breathe in the reality of our actions,
 the need to change, the depth of our unworthiness.
 We come before you, seeking forgiveness. (keep silence)
 Now let us breathe in the power of your forgiveness,
 and breathe out the need to live and love
 in the shadow of your forgiveness of us,
 that we may forgive as you have forgiven us. Amen.

Hymn/Song

Purify My Heart (Refiners fire)

Response

Joe was dying.

For years he'd been arguing with Bill,
 who used to be his best mate.

He wanted to straighten things out before it was too late.

Joe told Bill that he was afraid to die with such bad feelings between them.

Then,

very reluctantly and with great effort,
 Joe apologised for things he had said and done.
 He also assured Bill that he forgave him for his offences.

Everything seemed fine until Bill turned to go.

As he walked out of the room,
 Joe called out after him,

"Now, just remember,
 if I get better, this doesn't count. OK" (1)

In our lesson from the Gospel Simon Peter comes to Jesus and asks,
 "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me?
 Up to seven times?"

Jesus answered,

"I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times . . ."

This is an amazing teaching if you think about it.

Jesus seems to be saying that forgiveness should be an unlimited resource in our lives. Doesn't Jesus realise how difficult that is?

Well, yes he does.

Imagine how difficult it was for him as he hung on the cross
 to forgive those who were taunting him.

Imagine how difficult it is for him
 to forgive everyone who has ever betrayed him
 including you and me.

He taught unlimited forgiveness;
 he practiced unlimited forgiveness.
 And as he did that,
 he taught us three critical things about forgiveness.

He taught us that forgiveness is possible.

We don't have to be slaves to resentment and anger.
 Christ can deliver us.
 He can set us free.

Maybe there is an incident from your past –
 some hurt,

 some slight done to you;
 maybe it is still reverberating in your heart
 but if you continue to ask God's help
 forgiveness is possible.
 You don't have to let it haunt you forever.

Forgiveness is possible.

 You do not have to be a slave to your emotions.

But Forgiveness is not only possible, but also highly desirable.

The damage that we do to ourselves through unresolved anger and resentment
 is far more deadly
 than any damage we are likely to inflict on one who has hurt us.

Why keep hammering away at yourself?

Our hating anyone is like burning down our house to get rid of rats.

One of the most famous short stories ever written

Lack of forgiveness can tear us apart.

I read this week that a rattlesnake,
 will sometimes become so angry it will bite itself if it feels cornered.
 That is exactly what the harbouring of hate and resentment against others is
 a biting of yourself.

We think that we are harming others in holding these negative feelings,
 but the deeper harm is to ourselves.

Forgiveness is the key to a healthy mind and heart.

Forgive someone who has done you a great wrong
 and you will sleep better at night.

Forgive yourself and you will sleep better at night.

Forgiveness is the best thing you can do for your body and your soul.

The Bible says,

“Bear with each other and forgive one another
 if any of you has a grievance against someone.

Forgive as the Lord forgave you” (Col. 3:13).

Of course,

 the key is to remember that God has forgiven you.

Forgiveness is possible.
 And it is highly desirable.
 But even beyond that, from the New Testament standpoint,
forgiveness is essential.

We dare not ask God's forgiveness for our sins
 if we are not willing to forgive others.

After cautioning Simon Peter
 to forgive one who has done him wrong seventy-seven times,
 Jesus told a parable quite a humorous parable really,
 because of the level of exaggeration involved.

Jesus told a parable about a man who owed his king ten thousand bags of gold.
 This is a staggering sum of money approximately \$8 trillion dollars!
 Someone has estimated that if this man were to work 365 days per year
 it would require between 164,000 and 274,000 years
 to earn the money needed to repay such a debt!
 The king was ready to have the man, his wife, their children and all their possessions sold
 to satisfy the debt.

The man begged on his knees for more time.
 The Scriptures tells us that the king was moved with compassion
 and completely forgave the man his debt.
 What relief! What joy! But wait . . . You know the rest of the story.

That same man had someone who owed him a debt a hundred silver coins.
 He seized his debtor by the throat and told him to pay up.
 And when the fellow did not, he had him thrown into prison.
 When the king heard about this, he called this unforgiving man in again.
 "Here I forgave your debt," he exclaimed with rage,
 "shouldn't you have forgiven the debt that was owed to you?"

And Jesus asks the same question of us today.
 You have been forgiven of every sin you have ever committed.
 You live under the amazing grace which Christ made possible on the cross of Calvary.
 Can you not find it in your heart to forgive others?

"Forgive us our debts," he taught us to pray,
 "as we forgive our debtors."

Forgiveness is essential not only that we may be forgiven
 but because forgiveness is a redemptive act.
 When we forgive,
 we not only turn an enemy into a friend,
 but we witness to the faith we profess.

If someone has sinned against you,
 the most Christian thing in this world you can do
 is to go to that person in forgiveness and love.

Forgiveness is possible.
 It is highly desirable because it is for our own good,
 as well as for those who have offended us.
 But even more importantly,
 forgiveness is essential to our relationship with others and with God.

“How many times may my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?” asked Simon Peter.
 “As many as seven times?”

Jesus answered him,
 “Not seven times, but as much as God has forgiven us.”

Hymn/song

Freely Freely - Carol Owens

Offering

Gracious and loving God,
 we come offering these gifts
 in response to your great gifts of grace and mercy.

Bless us as we proclaim that grace and mercy
 through the service of our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ our Lord,
 to whom every knee shall indeed bow.

This we pray in his name.

Amen

Notices

Prayers for all people

Do you write your name inside books?

If so, why? Is it so that no one steals them?

Or that, if lost, they will find their way home?

Or because it says, ‘This is mine, keep off’?

*Or that people who pick them up know what you like to read and keep –
 and aspire to their message?*

We are told that our names are written on the hand of God.

What does that mean to you, as you ponder God’s forgiveness?

We are not worthy, yet you love us, God.

We do not deserve so much and yet we have it.

We have many needs and before you we acknowledge them;

fill our lives with your presence,

 that others too may come to know your healing balm.

Jesus’ parables inspire us to pray for those who forgive us,
 for big things and small...

 for those who do not forgive, no matter what...

 for those who do not know how to forgive...

 for those who do not want to forgive...

 for those who have not been forgiven.

God of forgiveness, for them all, we pray.

Amen.

	<p>Lord's Prayer</p> <p>Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. AMEN</p>
	<p>Hymn/song AHB #525 O love that will not let me go</p>
	<p>We are sent out</p> <p>Into a world of noise and confusion; into a world that bewilders and even bemuses us at times; into a world of delight and regret; into a world of hope and fear; into a world that is ever changing, we go with the message of an unchanging God who gave his all that we might live life to the best of our ability. God of all, go with us and within us, this and every day. Amen.</p> <p>May the Lord bless us and keep us May His face shine upon us and be gracious to us May he lift up His countenance upon us and give us peace</p>
	<p>Benediction</p>
	<p>Thank you</p>