



Worship-at-home—15th Sunday after Pentecost
September 13, 2020

God's love for us is never ending!

Welcome to worship-at-home on the 15th Sunday after Pentecost. In the gospel Jesus tells his disciples forgiving others reveals God's boundless mercy.

Our outdoor services are on Sunday at **9 am** and Wednesday, **6:30 pm**, weather permitting. Sign up through the church office. We **will** gather for Zoom Coffee Hour Sunday this Sunday morning at 10 am. Email me at kmullestad@hotmail.com to request an invitation. We are pleased to welcome back to Zion Bill and Kathy LaFrenz. We included them in our prayers during our Zoom Coffee Hour last week. Oct., Nov., Dec. *Christ in our Home* devotionals are available by calling or emailing the church office.

We ask God's blessings on all students, teachers and staff as they begin a new year of learning. Thank you for your offerings and continued support of Zion's ministry. We give thanks for all in our community who work to keep us safe, healthy and informed. Pr. Karen 594-9315

This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

Prayer of the Day *O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.*

Readings **Genesis 50:15-21**
Psalm 103:1-13
Matthew 18: 21-35

Thank you Kalkwarfs

Reflection “You want to know how much you should forgive a church member who sins against you? Really?” We can almost hear Jesus' frustration in the gospel reading this morning. Peter's question and the parable Jesus tells is in the context of last week's discussion about working through conflict in the church. Jesus outlined a process- name the sin, listen to the wrong, bring other folks from the church to witness the process, and if there is no resolution, keep trying. Then Peter asks Jesus, “how often should I forgive, seven times?”

Duke University professor, Charles Campbell, reminds us that Jesus' answer and the parable were written to shock the reader out of the status quo. We humans like to keep track, to limit our practice of forgiveness.

Jesus' answer shakes us up. Actually scholars call it hyperbole, “exaggerated statements not meant to be taken literally.” Whether we translate Jesus' number as seventy times seven, or seventy-seven times, that number would not have been possible for anyone to accomplish. Seven is the perfect number, and adding to that means beyond perfection!

Then in the parable Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to a king who is owed 10,000 talents. A talent was worth more than fifteen years' wages. Let's see, 15 x 10,000 equals 150,000 years of wages. Do you see the exaggeration? Jesus was trying to let Peter know how absurd his question was. To point out that there is no amount we can pay for the grace and mercy of God.

The servant in the parable didn't return the king's forgiveness that was shown him. That resulted in suffering. Because we don't read the parable literally, we also remember that the Jesus in Matthew uses strong, shocking words about the servant's punishment. He wanted to wake Peter up, though. Living in community without constant forgiveness is not the community God intends. Living in community without life long patterns of forgiveness does not acknowledge the forgiveness we have received in Jesus Christ. Jesus describes that harshly, as torture.

When we understand how much God has forgiven us, we are to live God's forgiveness towards others. As the body of Christ in the world, we continue Jesus' work, to reveal the kingdom heaven. According to Jesus the world will know the church by its compassion, grace and forgiveness.

“So, no, Peter! Don't keep track of forgiving others.” Instead, give thanks for God's grace and mercy **that we do not earn**. *The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord*. Be the church, Peter, that has been founded on the love of God known through Jesus, who healed Gentiles, ate at tax collectors' tables, who forgave criminals on the cross, and who gave himself so that the world could know God's mercy, grace and abounding steadfast love. Show the world that church!

Song *Make me a Channel of your Peace* Thank you Nathan Bates

Prayers of the People *Drawn together in your compassion O God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.*

For the church. Make your church a people of forgiveness...

For creation. Heal, renew and redeem all that you have created...

For the nations. Bless our leaders with patience and wisdom...

For this country. Bring about your justice in the world...

For healing. Shelter under your wings all who are vulnerable...

For our congregation. Guide our congregation in the ways of mercy...

For those who have died. We thank you for the faithfulness of all the saints...

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Blessing May God, Father, +Son and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. Amen.

+ **Go in peace. Serve the Lord. Thanks be to God.** +