

10/3/18

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Peter didn't know what to think. He assumed he understood forgiveness. Then he watched and listened to Jesus. He became confused, just as confused as I can be.

Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." Matthew 18:21-22

Peter thought forgiving a person up to seven times was sufficient. That certainly appears to be more than generous. I may have a challenge forgiving a person just once. This is why Jesus' words are so important.

There are two ways to look at what Jesus taught. It could be seventy-seven times, or it could be seven times seventy—490 times. His point is clear, who's counting?

Jesus draws me to the forgiveness he secured and now freely offers. That forgiveness is complete, free, and knows no limits. I can live knowing I am always forgiven. This is a priceless truth because the devil is always trying to deceive me. He wants me to think, maybe God hasn't forgiven all my sins. I can answer his deception with the truth that I am forgiven through faith in Jesus my Savior. The best part of this forgiveness is it never runs out.

As I live in this forgiveness, I come to understand why I can be forgiving to others. It is because of what I have experienced from my Savior which makes me forgiving, and not

just seven, seventy-seven or 490 times! I can always be forgiving because I am always forgiven.

It is this understanding of forgiveness which changes me and the way I deal with others. Instead of keeping a running tally of sins, I keep on forgiving. Instead of demanding specific requirements to merit forgiveness, I rejoice to see a humble and repentant heart. Instead of withholding forgiveness, I can freely dispense it. I can do all of this because I know Jesus has done the same for me—first. As I live in his forgiveness, I joyfully adopt his mercy, his compassion, and his attitude which says—who's counting?

Prayer: *O gracious Savior, give me a grateful and merciful heart. Lead me to forgive others just as you have forgiven me. Amen.*

(WELS E-Devotion, adapted)

...See you in worship.

Keep looking up because the Lord is always looking down – Psalm 121

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