

## **Forgive** **Luke 6:36-42**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

What is the common theme running through all three of our text? If you are thinking that it is forgiveness, that is absolutely correct!

As we consider our Old Testament lesson, it is easy to understand why Joseph's brothers were concerned. Joseph had every right to be angry with his brothers after what they did to him. It was because they sold him into slavery that he endured all the troubles in his life before coming to the position of authority he finally held as they were before him that day. Vengeance would have been so sweet! But instead, he forgave!

Our Epistle tells us some things that are truly about forgiveness.

Bless those who persecute you. Do not curse them.

On your part, you are to live in harmony with everyone. Yeah, I know what someone is thinking, "But God, do you know Sherman and Sheila Schmedlap? There is no harmony with them!"

How are you to treat your enemies? Feed them – give them something to drink – and I might add, for Jesus says we are to do this – clothe them – befriend them -overcome his/her evil with good – AND – forgive them!

Before we even look at the Gospel lesson, we should consider what Jesus says in another place about forgiveness. In His sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches what we have come to call the Lord's Prayer, and after it says, "If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

That is a tall order! Do you understand what Jesus is saying? If you cannot forgive, if you cannot be reconciled, if you cannot – as much as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all – then your heavenly Father will not forgive you.

As we look at our text, notice that after Jesus speaks what has become the most often misquoted and misused statement in all of Scripture, "Judge not, and you will not be judged," that He does not end there. Jesus continues speaking, "Condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."

Jesus is talking about forgiveness. He is telling people that they are not supposed to stand in a condemnatory manner. You and I are not to be judgmental of others, as if somehow we are better than others, as if their behavior is more sinful than we are.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, you and I are to forgive! We are to forgive, for we know the very forgiveness that God has for us in the suffering and death of Christ. When we fail to

forgive, it declares to others that we do not believe and trust that we are forgiven. Our unwillingness to forgive is a proclamation that we do not believe what Christ accomplished on the cross for us.

But Jesus does not stop there either, He continues with the parable in our text. "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye."

What are you to do first? Take the log out of your own eye. You are to acknowledge your sin. To repent is to have sorrow and contrition for your sin. To repent is to turn from your sin. Some people teach that to turn from your sin is to go away from it, to stop doing it – and that is all they teach that repentance is – it ends there.

Yes, repentance is to turn away from sin, to acknowledge that it is evil, to know sorrow over it, to desire never to do it again. But in turning away from sin, what do you turn to? If repentance is only turning away from sin and trying harder not to do it, what is truly happening? Isn't that turning away from your own works in order to turn to your own works?

That is exactly what it is. It is like turning three hundred and sixty degrees and going back in the same direction in which you were headed before repentance.

If you are like I am, you have failed every time you trusted yourself to do better and not sin. To do that same thing, trusting in your own works again, is a recipe for failure.

Repentance is confessing sin in true sorrow and turning to the forgiveness purchased upon the cross by Christ, and delivered to you in Word and Sacrament. Repentance trusts the work of God in Christ Jesus, not the work of Todd. Instead of doing it yourself, repentance ends with the belief that I am forgiven.

In true repentance that trusts the work of Christ for forgiveness, I am now log free. In the same way, the forgiveness of Christ so overcomes you that you also are log free – free to see clearly the love of God in Christ Jesus.

As we bask in that forgiveness, trusting that we are forgiven, how do you treat others?

Now comes that time when you help someone remove the speck in their eye. What a wonderful opportunity it is! You and I can lead someone to see and acknowledge their sinfulness in repentance – just as you and I have repented. And then, joy of joys, we are blessed to proclaim to them the Gospel, that Christ died for our sinfulness **AND** theirs.

We are to remove the log from our own eye so that we can see clearly to remove the speck that is in our brother's eye. Our faith life is not static. We are not simply to be concerned solely with

ourselves, we are to be concerned about the well-being of our neighbor. We are to live in the forgiveness we receive from God in Christ Jesus, so that we can forgive others as we have been forgiven.

We are to live in Christ, in order that we can bring Christ to others – in order that we can bring the Gospel to them so that they too might have a new life in Christ.

Do you fully comprehend what takes place as you gather together this morning? You come into God's house. You acknowledge that God claimed you and called you by His name in the waters of baptism (in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit). Then you confess your sins and hear Christ proclaim that they have been forgiven – by the voice of your pastor.

Rejoicing in that forgiveness, you extoll the mighty works of God's grace to save you in song. Then, you again hear God's Word speak forgiveness into your ears in the sermon. You offer God your thanks, asking that He would change your life according to the word you have just heard. You then offer to God your praise in your prayers and offerings.

As you come to the table Christ sets before, you are again acknowledging your sinfulness, but expecting great things from God. You do this, celebrating the Lord's death until He comes! Yes! You celebrate the Lord's Supper, for this meal of Christ's body and blood fills you with Christ. It is a meal that fills you with forgiveness, life, and salvation – it is the blood of the new testament, shed upon the cross for you! For the forgiveness of your sins!

Dearly beloved of God, you forgive because God, in Christ Jesus, forgives you.

Go, as the forgiven and redeemed of God! Live in Christ! Amen.