

THE LIVING
WORD
OF
THE SEASON AFTER
PENTECOST

A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

September 10 - September 16

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST

Proper 19

Last week we wrestled with how to handle the brother or sister who sins against us. Jesus urges us to go to great lengths to seek reconciliation. In this Sunday's Gospel reading, Matthew 18:21-35, Peter wants to test the limits of the forgiveness we show by asking, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?"

At first glance, that seems like a relatively generous offer. Have you ever had to forgive someone seven times for an offense against you? Peter is asking the Lord to define the limits of our forgiveness. Jesus flips the question by telling an audacious story.

A king had a servant who owed him 10,000 talents. One denarius was a day laborer's wage. One talent is roughly equivalent to 6,000 denarii. The debt is enormous. The servant owes about 60,000,000 denarii or 160,000 years of wages. The king demands that the servant's wife, children, and all his possessions be sold to repay the debt. You get the point: The debt is an unpayable debt that could never be repaid.

The servant begged the king for mercy. It must have been quite a display because the king took pity on the servant and canceled his debt. The slate was wiped clean. A freely unburdened forgiven man, the servant went out and found a fellow servant who owed him 100 denarii; that is, about 100 days' wages. Did he gladly show him mercy? No. He choked the servant, demanded repayment, and threw him in prison until the debt was repaid.

The king's servant witnessed the whole ordeal and informed the king. The king was furious: "You wicked servant," he said, "I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?" In anger, the king handed him over to the jailers to be tortured until he could pay back all he owed.



Jesus warns his disciples that this is the treatment they should expect from their heavenly Father unless they forgive their brothers and sisters—not seven times, but 77 times. In essence, Jesus is saying, “Stop limiting the grace you show. Get it out of your mind that there are limits to the forgiveness you offer.”

Jesus doesn’t want us to miss how much God has forgiven us. Not 100 days’ wages, but something more akin to 160,000 years of debt. When Jesus died on the cross for our sins, he paid an unpayable debt to clear the books.

It is not just that we are debtors to mercy—nothing we do can repay the debt. But one would expect that we run freely, unburdened, like the newly awakened Ebenezer Scrooge in Charles Dickens’ classic, *A Christmas Carol*, to go delight in showing love and mercy.

FOR *reflection*

“Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”

That’s the prayer Jesus taught to be our daily prayer. Are you aware of the magnitude of the debt you once owed to God? Do you understand what it cost Jesus to make you debt-free? To whom have you refused to offer the same radical grace?



SCRIPTURE

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Thursday	Psalm 114; Exodus 13:17-22; 1 John 3:11-16
Friday	Psalm 114; Exodus 14:1-18; Acts 7:9-16
Saturday	Psalm 114; Exodus 15:19-21; Matthew 6:7-15
Sunday	Psalm 114; Exodus 14:19-31; Genesis 50:15-21; Psalm 103:1-13; Romans 14:1-12; Matthew 18:21-35
Monday	Psalm 77; Joshua 3:1-17; Hebrews 11:23-29
Tuesday	Psalm 77; Nehemiah 9:9-15; Romans 14:13-15:2
Wednesday	Psalm 77; 2 Kings 2:1-18; Mark 11:20-25

Why do the daily readings begin on Thursday?

The daily readings for each week begin on Thursday and end on the following Wednesday. The Thursday through Saturday readings prepare the reader for the Sunday ahead. The Monday through Wednesday readings reflect on what was presented on Sunday.

The Morning Liturgy

Opening Scripture

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart,
be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my
redeemer.

Psalm 19:14

Opening Prayer *(based on Psalm 51)*

Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit
within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not
your Holy Spirit from me. Give me the joy of your saving help
again and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit. Glory to the
Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the
beginning, is now, and will be forever. *Amen.*

Scripture Reading *(read Psalm and Gospel text here)*

Period of Silence

Confessing Our Faith *(Apostles' Creed)*

The Lord's Prayer

The Collect *(Proper 19)*

*O God, because without you we are not able to please
you, mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all
things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our
Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.*

Amen.

A Midday Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles, "Peace I give to you; my own peace I leave with you." Regard not our sins, but the faith of your Church, and give to us the peace and unity of that heavenly City, where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, now and forever. *Amen.*

An Early Evening Prayer

Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. *Amen.*

A Bedtime Confession and Prayer

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against thy holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare thou those who confess their faults, restore thou those who are penitent, according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of thy holy name. *Amen.*

Visit this place, O Lord, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let Your holy angels dwell with us to preserve us in peace; and let Your blessing be upon us always; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.



