

[125] **TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME A**

FIRST READING

Forgive your neighbor's faults, and when you pray,
your sins will be forgiven.

A reading from the book of Sirach

28:2-5, 6b-7

If you forgive your friends when they mistreat you,
your prayers will be answered and your sins forgiven.
If you stay angry with someone,
don't expect the Lord to heal you.
Don't ask God to forgive you,
if you don't have pity on others.
God won't forgive you,
if you stay angry at someone.

So stop holding grudges and start obeying God.
Think about the commands and the promise of God Most High.
Then forget about the sins and the ignorance of others.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

103:1-2, 3-4, 11-12

R. (8a) The Lord is kind and merciful.

With all my heart
I praise the Lord,
and with all that I am
I praise his holy name!
With all my heart
I praise the Lord!
I will never forget
how kind he has been.

R. The Lord is kind and merciful.

The Lord forgives our sins,
heals us when we are sick,
and protects us from death.
His kindness and love

are a crown on our heads.

R. The Lord is kind and merciful.

How great is God's love for all
who worship him?
Greater than the distance
Between heaven and earth!
How far has the Lord taken
our sins from us?
Farther than the distance
from east to west!

R. The Lord is kind and merciful.

SECOND READING

Whether alive or dead, we belong to the Lord.

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans 14:7-9

Brothers and sisters:

Whether we live or die,
it must be for God, rather than for ourselves.
Whether we live or die,
it must be for the Lord.
Alive or dead,
we still belong to the Lord.
This is because Christ died and rose to life,
so that he would be the Lord of the dead and of the living.

The word of the Lord.

ALLELUIA

John 13:34

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

I give you a new commandment:
love one another as I have loved you.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

I did not say to you to forgive seven times,
but seventy-seven times.

† A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew 18:21-35

Peter came up to the Lord and asked,
“How many times should I forgive
someone who does something wrong to me?
Is seven times enough?”

Jesus answered:
“Not just seven times, but seventy-seven times!”
This story will show you what the kingdom of heaven is like:

“One day a king decided to call in his officials
and ask them to give an account of what they owed him.
As he was doing this,
one official was brought in
who owed him fifty million silver coins.
But he didn’t have any money to pay what he owed.
The king ordered him to be sold,
along with his wife and children and all he owned,
in order to pay the debt.”

“The official got down on his knees and began begging,
‘Have pity on me, and I will pay you every cent I owe!’
The king felt sorry for him and let him go free.
He even told the official that he did not have to pay back the money.”

“As the official was leaving,
he happened to meet another official,
who owed him a hundred silver coins.
So he grabbed the man by the throat.
He started choking him and said, ‘Pay me what you owe!’”

“The man got down on his knees and began begging,
‘Have pity on me, and I will pay you back.’
But the first official refused to have pity.
Instead, he went and had the other official put in jail
until he could pay what he owed.”
“When some other officials found out what had happened,
they felt sorry for the man who had been put in jail.”

“Then they told the king what had happened.

The king called the first official back in and said,
'You're an evil man!
When you begged for mercy,
I said you did not have to pay back a cent.
Don't you think you should show pity to someone else,
as I did to you?'

"The king was so angry that he ordered the official to be tortured
until he could pay back everything he owed.
That is how my Father in heaven will treat you,
if you don't forgive each of my followers
with all your heart."

The gospel of the Lord.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

Prayer:

Lord,
Please grant us the gift of forgiveness
to give to others and to ourselves.
In Jesus' name, we pray.
Amen

Readings:

Sirach 28:2-5,6b-7
Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 11-12
Romans 14:7-9
Matthew 18:21-35

Reflection:

Forgiveness seems to be such a nice, sweet, soft, easy word. It is very hard to do though. Many times when someone hurts us it seems to be so much easier to stay mad and hurt than to let it go and forgive them.

Think about the last time you had a scrape on your arm or leg. When the injury first occurred it hurt and it bled. After a while it started to heal and formed a scab but then it started to itch and bug you until you scratched at it and picked at it. Then it would start to bleed again and hurt again. Sometimes it might have even gotten infected. To prevent this our parents often will put some medicine on it and a band-aid. Have you ever noticed how much better it feels when it has been taken care of and how much faster it goes away?

The hurts that we receive from other people are the same way. We may not be able to see the scrape on our body but the wound is still there. Forgiveness is like the medicine and the band-aid. It helps the injury to feel better and heal faster. When we do not forgive, the hurt stays with us. It will itch and force us to pick at it which brings it back to our mind and makes us angry or hurt all over again. When we forgive, however, we feel so much better. The hurt begins to heal and eventually goes away.

Forgiveness is not only something that helps us. It is also a gift that we give to others.

Discussion

1. Think about a time when you hurt someone else. How did you feel about hurting them?
2. How does it feel to say, "I'm sorry" and then to hear the person say, "It's OK! I forgive you"?
3. When someone has hurt you, how do you think they will feel when you forgive them? How will you feel?
4. How do you think God feels when we do not forgive others? Are there any clues in today's readings?

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Activity

Preparation:

1. Create a picture of a gift-wrapped box with a tag on it. The tag should say, "To" and "From." There should be space for the children to write their name in the "From" spot and someone else's name in the "To" spot. Somewhere on the package it should say, "I forgive you for" and a space for the children to write something in.

Materials Needed:

1. Copies of the gift picture (see above), enough for the entire class.
2. Small band-aids, enough for the entire class.
3. Pencils, Markers, crayons, etc.

Instructions:

1. Ask the kids to think of someone that has hurt them. It doesn't have to be something major. It could be their sister who yelled at them this morning or their Mom who won't let them do something they want to do later in the day. It could be a friend who didn't ask them to eat lunch with them on Friday.
2. Have them write that person's name and their name on the gift tag and what they are forgiving that person for on the gift.
3. Have them color the gift and fold it so no one can see it.
4. Ask them to give it to that person after church or the next time they see them.

Put a small band-aid on each child to remind them that forgiveness is not only a gift to the other person but also a way to take care of and heal ourselves.