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17<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost - September 27, 2020

### ***“Belonging to Him Includes Forgiving Like Him”***

The Church forgives as God forgives. Anytime we try to imitate God, we quickly realize our inadequacy. Yet today, God tells us to model our forgiveness on his: a boundless, free, and loving forgiveness based on the sacrifice of Christ. How could our sinful hearts ever forgive like that? The Prayer of the Day asks that the mercy and grace of God precede us and follow after us, that we might love God with undivided hearts— hearts always ready to forgive as God does: sins are forgiven, forgotten, forever.

### **We live-stream our 8:00am service.**

Go to our website [www.gracelutheran-church.com](http://www.gracelutheran-church.com) and click on the “Live Stream Video” link. Livestreaming will begin about 5 minutes prior to the start of worship. This recording will also be archived for future viewing.

### **SERVICE OF THE WORD** (page 38 in hymnal)

**HYMN #238: “Oh, Bless the Lord, My Soul”** *ALL sing*

M: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

### **CONFESSION OF SINS**

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

**C: Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

**C: Amen. ALL sing**

### **PRAYER AND PRAISE**

In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

**OH, TASTE AND SEE** *ALL sing*

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

M: Lord, we pray that your mercy and grace may always go before and follow after us that, loving you with undivided hearts, we may be ready for every good and useful work, and forgive as you forgive us; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen. ALL sing**

### **GOD’S WORD**

#### **FIRST LESSON: Genesis 50:15-21 (EHV)**

How hard it is to forgive like God! We may forgive someone who hurts us, but we never forget. We harbor that hurt deep inside of us for years—never understanding that we are locking ourselves in the prison of the past. Joseph’s brothers feared that they would finally have to pay for what they did to Joseph. We can relate. While repentant, we still can expect God to get even with us for our past sins. Shame on us! We are making God as shallow as we are! In God’s eyes our sins are forgiven, forgotten, forever. Joseph wept recalling all the hurt, but was free from the prison of the past; he had forgiven his brothers their terrible deeds. So he calmed his brothers’ fears and forgave them like God forgives. As God’s forgiven children, we can do no less.

**PSALM 103** (page 105 in hymnal) *ALL sing REFRAIN and speak the verses responsively*

#### **SECOND LESSON: Ephesians 4:29-5:2**

Paul commands us not to act like the unmerciful servant, but rather: “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.” The Church is comprised of people who have been sealed for redemption, so let’s act like it! Not only kindness and compassion, but forgiveness is the primary mark of the Christian. We forgive because God forgave us in Christ. That makes us imitators of God. Christ’s atoning sacrifice won our forgiveness and inspires our forgiveness for others.

**VERSE OF THE DAY: Alleluia. Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Alleluia.** (Romans 15:4)

**GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 18:21-35 (EHV)**

"The human animal is not...good at forgiveness. Forgiveness is not some innate, natural human emotion. It is natural for us to defend ourselves, to snarl and crouch into a defensive position when attacked, to howl when wronged, to bite back when bitten. Forgiveness is not natural. Forgiveness must be learned, and Peter thought he had figured it out. He was taught a "1,2,3 and that's it" forgiveness. So Peter thought 7 times should do it. Until Jesus said, "Not seven times, Peter, seventy times seven!. I say to you that your forgiveness should have no limit, but be like God's." Jesus' parable contrasts the forgiveness of God and our own unforgiving nature. The servant's debt was impossibly high (perhaps 150,000 years' wages). What an arresting picture of our debt of sin before God! The greatness of the debt magnifies the compassion of the king who wipes the debt away. Have mercy on us, Lord, and teach us to forgive like you!

P: This is the gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise be to you, O Christ! ALL sing**

**HYMN #493: "Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive" ALL sing**

**SERMON—based on Gospel Lesson Matthew 18:21-35**

**APOSTLES' CREED**

**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

M: Lord God, our maker and preserver, we praise and thank you for all that you give us day after day.

**C: We are not worthy of all the mercies you show us.**

M: You have given us your precious Word to nourish our souls and to protect us from the temptations of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature.

**C: We thank you for those who teach and preach your saving truth at this place and everywhere. Grant them a rich measure of patience, wisdom, and love.**

M: Heavenly Father, we pray that you shield us from every kind of danger: sudden catastrophe, terrors of crime, and the pain of disease. Watch over those who travel by land, sea, and air. Keep our loved ones from whatever perils may threaten them.

**C: Heal those who are sick, cheer those who are sad, calm those who are distressed, and comfort all who are old and infirm.**

M: Bless our land, our people, and those who hold offices of high trust. Keep our government and schools upright and strong for the advancement of good citizenship and useful vocations, that we may enjoy your gifts of peace, security, and well-being.

**C: Grant your blessing to every nation on earth. Where there are wars, may there be peace. Where there is hatred, let it be healed. Where there is poverty, danger, or disaster, come with your almighty power to help and restore.**

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

*Silent prayer.*

M: We bring these requests before you in the name of Jesus our Lord, and ask you to hear us. Take all that we have, our bodies and minds, our time and skills, our ministries and offerings, and use them to your glory.

**C: We give ourselves to you that we may serve you in whatever way is pleasing in your sight. Amen.**

**LORD'S PRAYER**

**BENEDICTION**

M: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

**HYMN #491: "O Master of the Loving Heart" ALL sing verses 1 & 3**

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**REMINDER: Church services are at 8:00 & 10:45am with Adult Bible Class & Sunday School between services.**

**Bible Class "Christians in Conflict" series themes for this week:**

- Today 9:20am: "How We Deal With Conflict"
- Tuesday, 6:30pm & Wednesday, 1:30pm: "The Most Excellent Way"