

Life Sunday Series #3

Forgiveness

This series for observing consecutive Life Sundays is designed to call Christians to action. Each theme builds on the previous Sunday. Sunday three concentrates our attention on calling Christians to practice horizontal forgiveness. Christ's love compels us to seek not only forgiveness from God for our sin, but to emulate and mirror that same forgiving love in our dealings with others, including those who have sinned in life issues. The first lesson illustrates King David forgiving a blisteringly hot-tongued Shimei. Paul's words to the Colossians guide Christians to wear Christ's love by showing forgiveness. Finally Jesus teaches us through the parable of the Unmerciful Servant how to—and not to forgive.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Merciful Lord, through the power of Your word, humble our hearts to see the depth, the width, and the height of Your forgiving love. As Your people, move us to forgive others time and again with hearts mirroring Your grace; we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

THE WORD

First Lesson: 2 Samuel 19:18-23 [Alt: Gen. 50:15-21]

Legally, Shimei deserved nothing but death. In chapter 16 the slandering, slighting, he threw a barrage of stones and verbal abuse on David and his whole entourage as they left Jerusalem. Still David showed mercy. On the King's return to his city, he demonstrated forgiveness even to a floundering and wallowing Shimei.

Psalm of the Day: 130

One of the penitential Psalms, the holy writer reiterates the joy of God's forgiveness to us in Christ. Because of His great deeds, He is worthy of our trust, our love, our service, and ultimately our lives.

Second Lesson: Colossians 3:8-14

In verses 5-11, Paul is explicit in what behaviors the people should remove from their lives—and put to death. There is no toying around with the Old Adam. We are in trouble if we think we can reform him. Then in 12-14, the apostle urges us to put on new clothes, clothes which are a copy of the Master. These clothes manifest themselves in our dealings with one another—including the way we forgive and ultimately love one another.

Verse of the Day

Alleluia. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Alleluia. (Mt. 6:12) Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35

Jesus addresses in this parable how to answer the ‘*W*’ questions. *Whom* should I forgive? Anyone. *What?* Debts great and small. *When?* Anytime. *Where?* Any place. *Why?* The debt your King has forgiven for you! And even *how often*—infinitely. Truly a forgiving love that does this must be from God!

HYMN OF THE DAY

[CW] 411—What a Friend We Have in Jesus

366—O Jesus So Sweet, O Jesus So Mild

460—How Can I Thank You Jesus

449—Children of the Heavenly Father

SUGGESTED SERMON TEXTS

Jonah 3:3-10

2 Samuel 12:1-14

Matthew 18:23-35

1 John 1:8-9

Luke 18:10-14