

Forgiveness

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*

Look

A fellow parishioner suggested to me at church on Sunday that Jesus got it wrong with this gospel. The argument was that Jesus uses a metaphor for forgiveness that doesn't work. It's easy to forgive people a monetary debt, but harder to forgive other things.

1. What do you think about that? Is it easy for you to forgive a monetary debt? When might that be hard to do?
2. What types of offenses do you find easy to forgive?
3. What actions do you find hard to forgive?

Book Matthew 18:21-35

In this passage Jesus does not mince words about forgiveness. When asked how often we should forgive, Jesus basically answers with "infinity times infinity". And Jesus doesn't qualify what types of offenses we are to forgive or not forgive – we are to forgive all of them.

1. What difference does it make in your life that God has forgiven you? Has it been hard for you to accept God's forgiveness? Why or why not?
2. How does our own ability to accept forgiveness for our transgressions affect our ability to forgive others?

Took

We often make the mistake of thinking that forgiving someone is about them and their salvation – if we forgive them then they are now better somehow. But in reality, forgiving someone else is really about saving ourselves from the burden of grief and anger and bitterness that we carry when we hold a grudge.

1. How have you been affected in your life by holding a grudge and refusing to forgive someone?
2. Is there someone in your life right now that you need to forgive? What might it take for you to finally forgive them?