

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 17, 2023

Leading in Worship Today

Welcome and Announcements

Pastor: *John D. Jordan*

AV Director: *Marie Stiles*

Pianist: *Laurie Knapp*

AV Assistant: *Chris Derrick*

Time Together: *Joyce Robinson; Slone Taylor*

Prelude Laurie Knapp
Call To Worship "Come! Come! Everybody Worship" Choir

Greeting
*Hymn "O How I Love Jesus" 170

"Let the Children Come!"
(*Those 3 years of age through 8 years of age may go to Children's Church.*)

Prayer of Confession
The Lord's Prayer 895

Proclamation of the Word

Prayer of Illumination

Old Testament Reading Exodus 14:19-31 Pages 60-61 (O.T.)
Canticle of Moses and Miriam 135
*Hymn "Freely, Freely" 389

Epistle Reading Romans 14:1-12 Page 154 (N.T.)

Anthem "Glorify Thy Name" Choir

Gospel Reading Matthew 18:21-35 Page 24 (N.T.)
Sermon "Binding and Loosing, Forgiveness" Rev. John Jordan

*Affirmation of Faith "The Apostles' Creed" 881
*Gloria Patri "Glory Be to the Father" 70

Pastoral Prayer

Presentation of Tithes & Offerings

Offertory Laurie Knapp
*Doxology "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" 95

*Hymn *Where Charity and Love Prevail* 549

*Dismissal With Benediction
*Benediction Response "Go Now in Peace" Choir

*Postlude Laurie Knapp

*The Congregation May Stand

VISITORS ARE WELCOME in the service of worship! Please make use of the visitor's tags (located in the pew backs) to help us better welcome you as a visitor to Trinity this morning. We ask that you also please fill in the pew pad as it passes to register your attendance with us. **Large print hymnals** are available from the ushers.

You may join as a member into the life and work of this congregation by Confession of Faith or by Transfer of Membership from another church. If you would be interested in becoming a member, please speak to the pastor.

TODAY'S LOVELY FLOWERS ARE GIVEN to the Glory of God.

“AS MEMBERS OF THIS CONGREGATION, WE WILL FAITHFULLY PARTICIPATE IN ITS MINISTRIES BY OUR PRAYERS...

Patsy Zeigler Becky Derrick Carlis Edwards Dale Wells Patsy Shuler Christopher McCroskey
Jimmy Grahl Latson Lewis Kaye Floyd John Ballentine Jack Stevens Billy Pearson

Shut-Ins: Shirley Butler; Esther Carter; Gillett Hipp; Linda Maloch; Jean Raynor; Claudia Sineath; George Taylor

Family and Friends: Alex Courtney (friend of great nephew of Joyce Robinson); Lawrence Gilbert (friend of Becky Derrick); Bob Bohnstengel (spouse of Jo Ann Heiting's cousin); Judy Spence (former member); Anne Piercy (former member); Missy Abrams (stepdaughter of Lissa Abrams); Mary Davis (daughter of Bob & Libby Strickland); Kathleen Braun (sister of Mark Lewis); Lauren & Leah Grace Edwards (granddaughter & great-granddaughter of Hilda Edwards); Gloria Erd (friend of Lynn Martin); Pearl Geddens (mother of Tom Geddens); Beverly Lipscomb (sister-in-law of John Jordan); Ross Deal (grandson of Mary Kamoroff); Nancy Wilson (friend of Jeanette Hornsby); David Turner (brother of Pam Turner); Chip Mixon (friend of Tommy Gleaton); Ron Walker (friend of Tommy & Chris Gleaton); Merit Takach (friend of Joyce and Brent Robinson); James Boggs (father of Claire Boggs); Stacy Coggins (daughter of Steve Aiello); Dan & Leslie White (brother & sister-in-law of Steve White); Sweat Family (friends of Marty Johnson); Alva Humphries (friend of Marty Johnson); Bill Areheart (friend of Bonnie Ramsey); David Grandshaw (brother-in-law of Edwa Meek); Hayley Beaudoin (niece of Edwa Meek); Addie Kinard (cousin of coworker of Edwa Meek); Robert Bradley (Business Associate of Simon Ross); Gary Becton (friend of Mark Branham); Florence Lee Carter, Monnie Tiller (friends of Chris Derrick); Adrin & Linda Hargett (stepfather and stepmom of Christopher McCroskey); Alexa Lookingbill, Teddy Derrick (uncle of Arvan Derrick); Haidee Baehr (friends of Ruth Frady); Denise Paul, Scott & Karen Nelson (cousins of Gale Frady); Dan Conner, Max Johnson (friends of Gale Frady); Bernardo Velasquez, Walt & Janet Beck (friends of Jo Ann Heiting); Adam Lavender (son of Phil Lavender)

If you have a friend or family member on the Prayer List, we ask you to please keep us updated. If no word is received, we will trust that our prayers have been answered and remove the name. To update us, please call the office or e-mail us at trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com.

OUR PRESENCE ...

In-Person Attendance 09/10 SS: 15 Worship: 43

OUR GIFTS ...

General Fund 09/10 \$ 1,530.97

OUR SERVICE ...

OUR WITNESS."

Upcoming Events

Today Church Council following Worship

09/18 Exercise, 10:30 a.m.

09/19 Grief Support Group, 11 a.m.
Charge Conference, 7:30 p.m.

09/20 T.a.G., 7 p.m.

09/21 Exercise, 10:30 a.m.
GLIA Articles Due

09/22 Office Closed

Readings for September 24

Exodus 16:2-15

Psalms 78

Philippians 1:21-30

Matthew 20:1-16



Ministers	The Congregation
Pastor	John D. Jordan
Resident Bishop	Jonathan Holston
District Superintendent	Rev. Fran M. Elrod

Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Our vision is to Connect, Nurture, Inspire and Transform



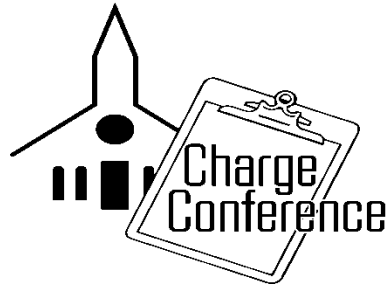
*...how often should I forgive?
"Not SEVEN times,
but, I tell you,
SEVENTY-
SEVEN
times."*

Matthew 18:21-22, NRSV

1201 Mohawk Drive
West Columbia, SC 29169
Telephone: 803.794.7777

E-mail: trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com

Website: www.trinityumcwc.org



**Tuesday, September 19
7:30 p.m.**



We are entering the hectic time in the Methodist calendar known as Charge Conference season. Trinity's has been scheduled for September 19, at 7:30 pm. In addition to the usual reports and celebrations of our ministry at Trinity, we will be voting on a resolution to adopt a new church structure. The new structure will consist of an administrative team and a ministry team of nine people each. The administrative teams will serve as the Trustees, SPRC, and finance committees. All the ministries of the church will be through the ministry team. These teams will be surrounded by a prayer team who will pray for God's guidance for the teams whenever they meet. All members of the church are encouraged to attend the Charge Conference.



**Tuesday, September 19
11 a.m.**

The Grief Support Group will meet on Tuesday, September 19, at 11 a.m. in the Conference Room. This group is open to everyone.



Sunday, September 24

Taste of Trinity, our church-wide covered dish luncheon, will be held on Sunday, September 24. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to share great food and great fellowship!



*You're Invited
October 1 Following Worship*

Attention: All Ladies of Trinity

You are invited to *shower* Baby Elijah, son of Brady and Jasmin, with gifts and love and welcome him to our Trinity Family.

Date: Sunday, October 1st

Time: Following Worship

Place: Trinity United Methodist Church
Fellowship Hall

RSVP: Bonnie Ramsey (803) 260-2283

Registry: www.babylist.com

Matthew 18:21-35

Last Sunday, we began to examine discipleship as life in a community. We defined sin as the disruption of relationships within the community, which disrupts our relationship with God. We noted that the sin within the community should be addressed, not ignored. Sin may be the disrupted relationship between individuals in the community. It is also the disruption of communal relationships. The goal of addressing disrupted relationships is reconciliation, repairing the broken relationships. We address broken relationships with prayer, humility, and love.

I ended last Sunday's sermon with the need for one thing for complete reconciliation to occur. The thing needed for reconciliation to be complete is forgiveness.

Dropping back a little to verse 18, Jesus says, "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Binding and loosing may be best thought of as tying and untying. What we tie to us on earth will be tied to us in heaven. What we untie from us on earth will be untied from us in heaven. Marley's ghost from *A Christmas Carol* gives us a good image of being bound in heaven. Marley's ghost visits Scrooge bound in the chains of greed that he lived by on earth.

We may tie actions, thoughts, attitudes, and emotions to us on earth that we do not want to be tied to us in heaven. Do we want our relationship with God disrupted for eternity? We want to untie that which disrupts relationships on earth to have an undisrupted relationship with God for eternity. Forgiveness unties those actions, thoughts, attitudes, and emotions from us that created barriers between us and others and us and God. Forgiveness removes that which creates barriers, freeing us to reconcile with others and God.

Our passage today begins with Peter asking Jesus, "If my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus replies, "Not seven times, but I tell you, seventy-seven times." The seventy-seven could also be translated as seven times seventy, which would be four-hundred and ninety times.

I think Jesus is telling Peter two things about forgiveness. In ancient Hebrew numerology, seven was a number symbolizing completeness. The message is to forgive until forgiveness is complete. It is not enough to say you forgive someone but say it until you untie and remove the barrier in the relationship. One may say they forgive someone, but they hold on to the anger. Complete forgiveness is letting go of the anger, so it is no longer a barrier in the relationship.

We see that forgiveness may be a process. Depending on the severity of the hurt, it may take a long time to untie the knot and let go. Forgiveness begins by acknowledging the hurt done to us or by us, as we discussed last week. We continue to forgive until the break in the relationship is healed.

Also, by telling Peter such a high number of times to forgive, especially if translated seven times seventy, Jesus implies that there is no limit on forgiveness. Keeping count of the number of times you forgive someone is not forgiveness. It is keeping score. We continue to forgive until we get past the hurt that disrupted the relationship. We also ask for forgiveness until we get past the guilt that disrupts the relationship.

Forgiveness is not swallowing our resentment and forgetting as if nothing happened, but placing the value of the relationship over the hurt. Even though there may be scars and changes in the relationship, the relationship is restored.

Since we are discussing forgiveness in the context of life in the community, is it necessary to forgive those outside the community? Do I need to forgive someone with whom I have no relationship and may never see again? What happens if I do not forgive someone?

Jesus tells the parable of the unforgiving servant to emphasize the necessity of forgiveness. The tendency is to read this parable as an allegory where the king is God. The problem with that reading is the king takes back his forgiveness of the servant. God's grace is overflowing, and God does not take back divine grace. So, let's look at this parable as it is without allegory.

A king was settling accounts with his servants. In this context, these servants would be the tax collectors. One servant owed ten thousand talents. The talent was the largest monetary unit, worth 20.4 kilograms of silver. Just to give an idea of the amount of this debt, it would be \$150,144,000. This was an insurmountable debt. There was no way the servant would ever be able to pay this debt.

To recoup what he could, the king ordered the servant's wife and children to be sold into slavery. The servant begs for more time, promising to pay the debt (which he never could). The king has mercy and forgives the whole debt, all \$150,144,000 of it.

As he was leaving, the servant spies a fellow servant who owes him one hundred denarii. Using the formula I used before, this would come out to \$250, a fairly substantial but not insurmountable sum. In comparison to what the king had forgiven, this was a small drop in a large bucket.

One would think that the first servant would be so happy about being forgiven his debt that he would forgive his fellow servant's debt. But no, he demands immediate payment. Even though his fellow servant begs for mercy even as he did, he has the debtor thrown into prison.

The king retracted the mercy and forgiveness given to the servant. He handed the servant over to be tortured until the debt was paid. Of course, the debt could never be paid.

This is where the allegorical reading of this parable breaks down. God does not retract grace and mercy from us. God's grace and mercy are overflowing and never ceasing. So, we must take God out of the parable.

God's graciousness is indiscriminate, and a disciple must be willing to offer the same graciousness. The king was willing to forgive the debt. The king let go of the debt that would have destroyed the servant and his family. The well-being of his servant and his family was more valuable than the debt. The king removed the debt that disrupted the relationship with the servant.

However, the servant held onto the debt owed to him. The debt was more important than the relationship with his fellow servant. He demanded retribution and restitution. He bound the debt to himself. Because he bound the debt to himself rather than letting go of the debt, he was imprisoned and tortured.

Wendy Wright stated, “That which is unforgiven holds us captive. We are imprisoned by the hatred and malice we clutch in our hearts.”¹ The servant was imprisoned and tortured by the malice he held toward his fellow servant who owed him.

As the prayer Jesus taught us says, we are to forgive as God forgives us. God forgives out of love, with unsurpassable grace and mercy. Therefore, we are to forgive with love, grace, and mercy. We receive God’s unmerited grace and forgiveness. We are also to receive forgiveness from others.

What we bind on earth we bind in heaven. To unbind, we must acknowledge sins against us and sins we have committed. We must forgive to unbind ourselves from the hate, anger, resentment, malice, greed, etc. that hold us captive. We ask for and receive forgiveness to unbind ourselves from guilt, shame, blame, remorse, etc. that hold us captive. Forgiveness frees us to be reconciled with God and with others on earth and in heaven. Loose the sin and be free to love God and others.

¹ Wendy M. Wright, *The Time Between*, In *A Guide to Prayer for All Who Seek God* by Ruben P. Job and Norman Sawchuck, (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2006) 336.