

Worship on the Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 am September 13, 2026

Minister: The Rev. Brad Childs Music Director: Binu Kapadia

Vocalist: Linda Farrah-Basford Elder: Gina Kottke

Children's time: Brad Reader: Corrie Fort

We gather to worship God

Music prelude

Greeting

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you

P: and also with you

Lighting of the Christ candle

Welcome and announcements

Preparation for worship

Call to worship:

L: Praise the God of life.

P: Let us praise God together.

L: For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is God's steadfast love;

P: as far as the east is from the west, so far God removes our sins.

L: So let us rejoice in God's gracious presence.

P: Let us praise the God of mercy together.

Opening praise: *This is amazing grace*

Prayers of approach and confession

Holy, wonderful, and loving One,

God of the things we know about and the things we don't.

You take and you give, transforming one thing into another.

You take darkness and give light.

You take grief and give healing.

You take strife and give peace.

You take fatigue and give strength.

You take fear and give courage.

You take captivity and give liberation.

You take death and give new life.

But God the truth is most of us don't live in those cut and dry moments. Most of us are living in that space between death and resurrection, between grief and healing. Much of the time we are caught in the thick of it. Resolutions come and you are in charge but we must admit that while we wait we struggle.

We get beat down by life and by hard times and by suffering. We don't worry much about ourselves but we worry for others we love and sometimes that's too much and we break. We get mixed up and we say things we shouldn't and we feel pain and let that turn to anger. We turn good things (like wanting to make a better life for our kids by our work,

take our time with them away). We make errors in judgement, mostly well-meaning but we make them.

We blow up before we have the fact, we act impulsively.

But you give us this gift of confession and we want to use it. Where we are weak, make us strong.

Help us to take time with you.

Help us to take time with each other.

Help us make humility our currency and compassion the most treasured thing we have.

Take away sin. Take away cruel words, judgement, grudges, bitterness and complaints.

And fill our lives with things that uplift, things that challenge and things to build us and others up.

Make us new again and forgive us every wrong.

Response: *I will trust in the Lord*

Assurance of God's pardon

The proof of God's amazing love is this: while we were sinners Christ died for us. Know that, in Jesus name, you are forgiven, by Him, and be at peace. Amen.

Musical offering: Chantelle Marie and Alex Chernega

We listen for the voice of God

Song: *Jesus loves me* (373)

Children's time

Hi, friends! Come on up and sit with me for a minute. Have you ever done something mean to someone... or has someone done something mean to *you*? Maybe a brother or sister took your toy, or a friend said something unkind, and afterward you felt worried: "Are they still mad at me? Will they get me back?"

That's exactly what happened in the Bible with a man named Joseph and his brothers.

A long time ago, Joseph's big brothers were jealous of him. They did something really awful—they sold him as a slave and told their dad he was dead. Years later, God helped Joseph become a very important leader in Egypt. He was in charge of all the food during a huge famine, and he ended up saving lots of people... including his own family.

After their dad died, the brothers got scared. They thought, "Uh-oh. Now that Dad's gone, Joseph is going to pay us back for what we did!" So they came to Joseph, bowed down, and begged him to forgive them. They even said, "We'll be your servants!"

But Joseph didn't get angry. He started to cry a little, and then he said something beautiful:

"Don't be afraid. You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good... to save many lives. So don't be afraid. I will take care of you and your children."

Joseph forgave them. He chose kindness instead of revenge. And he saw the big picture: even the bad thing his brothers did was used by God for something good—saving a whole family and lots of other people from starving.

****Here's the big idea for us today:****

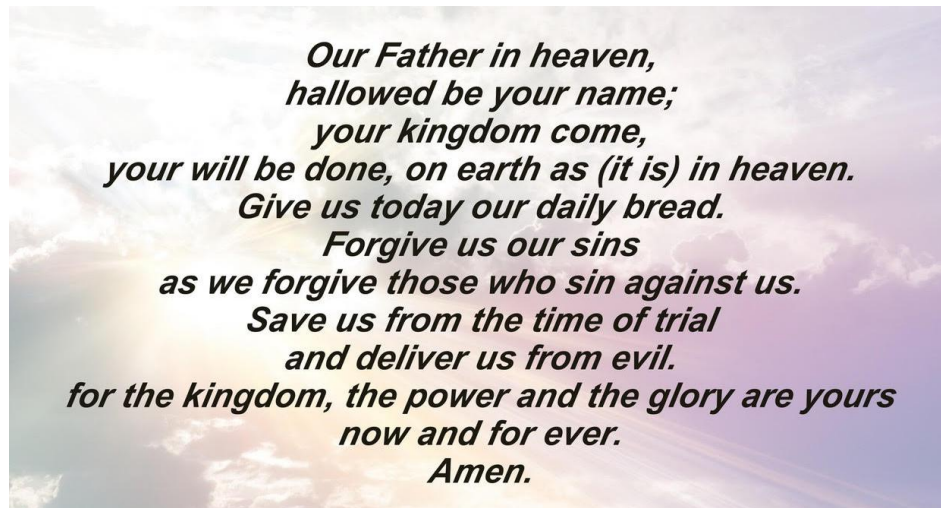
Sometimes people hurt us. Sometimes we mess up and hurt others. But God is bigger than the bad stuff. He can take the hard, sad, or mean things and turn them into something good. And when someone is truly sorry, we can forgive—just like Joseph did—because God has forgiven us.

So next time you're worried someone is still mad, or you're holding onto being mad yourself, remember Joseph's words: "Don't be afraid... God intended it for good."

Let's pray together:

Dear God, thank You that You can turn even the bad things into good. Help us forgive others the way Joseph forgave his brothers, and the way You forgive us. Help us trust Your good plan. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer (535)



Song: *Follow me, the Master said* (vrs 1-3 645)

Scripture readings: Genesis 50:15-21 & **Matthew** 18:21-35

Response: *Glory to the Father*

Message: **"Good from Evil/Infinite Mercy"**

Everyone has been hurt and not everyone deserves forgiveness. Here in the scriptures, Jesus explains the extent to which we should forgive with an illustration about how even the forgiven tend to hold grudges. And that's us. We are the forgiven. So how and what should we forgive and how far does it go?

The night air was sticky. July 27th, 1990, in Tampa, Florida. 28-year-old Debbie Bairgrie was having dinner with friends. They laughed and smiled, shared stories, and generally just had a good time. It was the first taste of wine Debbie had enjoyed in a while. She had just had her second baby a few days earlier, and this was her first night out.

They said their goodbyes and shared cheerful hugs, then Debbie eyeballed her car just down the street and took out her keys to drive home.

At some point in your life, you have been the victim of something so painful: That spouse that should have been on your side but wasn't. The family member who cheated or stole or tricked someone you love and care about. That person who takes you for granted. The boss that berates, the friend that stabbed you in the back, that one awful lie, that

embarrassment, that disloyalty, that disrespect, that physical abuse, that horrible attack, event or memory, that abandonment, that worst thing another person ever did to you. At some point in your life, someone harmed you in such an intense way that it actually changed something inside you... And you know what, they do **not deserve your compassion or your forgiveness**. But could you give it to them anyway? That's a tall order.

I remember a few years ago (maybe you remember this too) when George W. Bush was recorded as blundering through a popular saying. He said, and I quote, "There is an old saying in Tennessee. I know it's in Texas, probably in Tennessee – that says, Fool me once, shame on... shame on you. Fool me... ah, you can't get fooled again." The real saying, of course, is, "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me." The idea is simple, and it holds a lot of truth. Maybe Once bitten/twice shy... is better.

But what if they didn't intend to "**fool**" you, or they feel bad about it now? When should you forgive someone, and how many chances should you really be expected to take?

In our reading from Matthew, Jesus had just told the people to humble themselves like a child and have childlike faith. He has told the people how they are required to deal with each other in the church when they believe someone has done something wrong. And now he is about to answer that **age-old question... How many chances should people get?** Mathew writes, "Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, **how many times** shall I **forgive** my brother or sister who **sins against me?**"

Now Judaism had long recognized that **repeat offenders** might not actually be **repenting** at all. They had their own version of the "Fool me twice, shame on me" guideline. And this was generally accepted as the mark of an upright person. See, it was taught that a truly **gracious** person should be willing to forgive someone **3 times**. One saying from an ancient commentary states, "If a man commits a transgression, the first, second and third time **he is forgiven, but the fourth time he is not**" (Yoba 86b 87a). This was the standard teaching within Judaism and is largely based on Job 33:29-30 "God does all these things to a person—twice, even three times—he grants them chances to turn them back from the pit, that the light of life may shine on them."

Now Jesus has just told the people about discipline in the Christian community and says that if someone repents, they should be taken back so that one might "gain a brother or sister". Next, Peter goes up to Jesus to ask about this forgiveness and how often a person should forgive.

And let's be clear, this is one of Peter's **brown-noser/keener moments** (and he does have a few of these). So Peter goes up to the teacher with a question he really **already knows the answer to**. "How many times should I forgive?" He asks. 3 is the standard answer for a lot of Rabbi's. **But Peter also knows** that **Jesus** is more than just a regular Rabbi, and he expects **far more from people**. So, Peter **steps up his game a bit**, and he answers his own question: offering up "7 times," which represented a very rare tradition of a small number of pious Pharisees.

And I imagine Peter is probably so proud of himself right now. He knows Jesus so well. And I just bet he has a huge smile on his face.

Peter's offer to forgive a person 7 times is already extremely magnanimous, reflecting a desire for completeness that the number seven usually evokes for Hebrew people. This is an incredibly gracious and insanely dangerous way to think about forgiveness. 7 times?

But his number (7) still implies that he is truly inquiring **about the limits to which forgiveness should stretch**. His question is really, when can I stop forgiving someone. And that's when Jesus **just drops a bomb on him** because it turns out there **are no limits**.

And Jesus answered him, "I tell you, not seven times, but seven times seventy times." "No, Peter," he says, "It's actually this insane number you aren't even going to bother counting to."

Next, Jesus illustrates his point by telling this really dark story.

²³ "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him **ten thousand Talents** was brought to him."

Now this word for **ten thousand** bags or talents is **My-Re-Os** (myrioi), literally "countless," and points to a person of considerably high (if not impossible standing). In fact, in First-century, the Jewish Historian, Josephus tells us that King Herod's death tax collection from the whole of the kingdom equalled nearly 900 talents. The man in this parable owed over 10 times that amount. Today it would be worth roughly **3 billion dollars**.

Now Jesus says, ²⁵ "Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt." (And of course, that is never going to be enough.)

²⁶ "At this the servant **fell on his knees before him**.

(So, we are talking about someone who is **honestly repentant** here.)

'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' ²⁷ The servant's master took pity on him, **cancelled the debt** and **let him go**.

So now, not only has Jesus illustrated the **number of times** one must forgive (7 X 70, which is really to say, always) but also the **extent** to which one must forgive (insanely; beyond all reason).

Now we have to understand a couple of things here for context.

First, Jesus moves from **forgiveness of sin**, which was what Peter **actually asked about**, to forgiveness of **physical debts** here. This should not surprise us at all. For Jesus, the two are very interconnected. In fact, in the Lord's Prayer, Jesus links the forgiving of monetary debts with the forgiveness of sins directly. Luke, for example, explicitly notes Jesus saying, "forgive us our (Hamartias) sins, as we forgive all who are (O-Fi-Low) indebted to us."

Second, the original audience would not have been able to separate what Jesus was saying here from the Hebrew bible's concept of Jubilee, where every sabbatical year (7th year), the people were supposed to be forgiven all of their personal debts. And then in the 7th cycle of sabbatical years (the 49th year)... All debts were to be forgiven. No Hebrew was supposed to owe any other Hebrew anything. All prisoners were supposed to be freed (remember, prison was where you paid off debts, not how you were punished). And all of the land that was traded or sold would have to go back to the original tribes God allotted that land to. It was intended to be a total reset for each generation.

This Jubilee year was a foretaste of the messianic era, or what "the kingdom of Heaven" would be like. The point of all of this being that God had provided a way for everyone to escape from what might otherwise be eternal debt they could never get out of on their own.

Now here's the kicker. The Hebrew Scriptures offer some sparse evidence of the release of indentured servants. But there is really **no evidence at all**, that the Hebrews **ever** actually **practiced Jubilee**. It was in fact, the **ideal** they were called to **but never fulfilled**.

By the first century, the Pharisees had fabricated a new legal idea called Prozbul, which enabled the holder of a debt to give a personal debt over to the courts. Because it was no longer considered a **personal debt**, the 7-year rule on forgiveness could then be waived. By the early first century, very few debts were considered "personal debts" (how convenient). Instead, what happened is that lenders (who would not normally lend anyone money in the 6th year) were free to lend more and more. In the ancient text, *Rabbinic Traditions* Neusner notes that "the end result" was the perpetuation of debt" and foreclosures rather than forgiveness". The human heart found a way to take a law intended to forgive debts **and make it a cash machine instead**.

Here the Master frees this man from what would have certainly been an eternal punishment he could never dig his way out of. And moreover, in the parable the Master's intent was to "settle **all his accounts**".

If the Master forgave the 3 billion dollars - what do you **suspect he planned to do with the person who owed him \$200?** In Jesus' story, the master actually brings Jubilee to life, brings the messianic age, releases the captives from prison.

Unfortunately, the story is not over. Jesus continues on, saying, ²⁸ "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him **a hundred silver coins** (the equivalent of about 20 grand). He **grabbed him** and began to **choke him**. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. (And then, exactly like he had done before his master, this man too drops down before his master, on his knees.) Jesus says, ²⁹ "His fellow servant fell to **his** knees and begged **him**, 'Be patient with **me**, and **I will pay it back**.' (This is nearly word for word what he told his Master.)

³⁰ **"But the man refused. Instead, he went off and had the servant thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.**

In response, of course, we all know what happens. The real master finds out what his forgiven servant has done, and he immediately goes and grabs him and treats him in the same way. And so, the story ends **not with Jubilee, but with the servant in prison forever**, because **he could never possibly pay back the debt he owed**.

Now I want you to note something:

Forgiveness is not carelessness or indifference to wrong. It is not permissiveness nor the absence of an ethical standard. Forgiveness does not abrogate but rather fulfils righteousness.

In 1 Corinthians 13 we are told that “Love” “keeps no record of wrongs”. But this does **not** mean you are required to let yourself be abused. This is also not about staying in dangerous situations. Believe me, a wife **can forgive a truly repentant abusive husband** but still live **2000 miles safely away from him**. And I should add, there seems to be a requirement here... people need to really want to be forgiven. They actually have to mean it. The servant **begs** for it. And that’s important.

The night air was sticky. It was humid as usual on July 27th, 1990, in Tampa, Florida. 28 year old Debbie Bairgrie was having dinner with friends. It was the first taste of wine Debbie had enjoyed in a while. After some fun with her friends and with a newborn at home (she was now desperate to see) she pulled her keys from her purse to unlock her car and drive home.

She heard the faint mumble of something in her ear and turned. And “no” she wasn’t drunk.

And that’s when she saw the barrel of a handgun staring her down, heard the words “give it up” and then heard the bang. In a split second, the small-calibre bullet went into her open mouth, banged around inside, bouncing off of teeth and her jaw before exiting the side of her neck, leaving a gaping, blood-soaked deluge of fluid behind it. Debbie collapsed on a damp southern street, keys still in hand, and began to bleed out.

But Debbie survived.

She had 10 years worth of reconstructive surgery, but she survived.

Three days after her attack, Ian Manuel, confessed to the crime. In February of '91, he pled guilty to armed robbery and attempted murder and was sentenced to life in prison without parole (something a Supreme Court decision would later overturn).

Debbie settled back into life. But just before Christmas, she received a phone call from the person who put a bullet in her face. It was Ian Manuel (then **13 years old**) and he tearfully begged for Debbie to forgive him.

He meant it. And so, she forgave him.

Ian and Debbie are now friends. In fact, Debbie spent 19 years as Ian’s primary advocate, visited him regularly and was the first person to greet him on the outside of the prison fence in early 2010 when he was finally released.

The Master paid a debt we could never have paid on our own. That fact is true for every single person in this room. He released us from an eternal debt way too big to pay. He

declared a Jubilee. But this is where it gets hard. And it is **a tall order**. See now... **now he expects us all to do the very same thing**.

At some point in your life, you have been the victim of something so incredibly painful you just don't know how to deal with it. Maybe you didn't take a bullet to the head... but then again, there are worse things.

I don't know what it was they did to you. But I know this... if you want to see what the Kingdom of Heaven is like... Jesus said this - you need to freely offer the same kind of forgiveness to them that God offers to you in Christ. That doesn't mean that actions don't have consequences, or that you should forget, or that you should put yourself in a place to be hurt again. But it does mean being willing to forgive a countless number of times, and for some of the most difficult things to imagine.

Now if my Bank only believed the same thing...Amen.

Song: *Called as partners in Christ's service* (587)

We respond to serve God

Our time of giving



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3. Click the Donate button on our website (bottom right at www.DayspringChurch.ca).
4. On Sundays, ask the Media Team how to use the machine in the Media Room.

Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession

God of grace and new life,

we come before you today, glad to know you give us the chance to change our lives when we have wandered away from your purposes.

We give you thanks for the encouragement and support we receive from friends in Christ, here in your church and wherever we meet them.

We thank you for relationships that have grown stronger through the courage to forgive which you inspire in us.

Use us as signs and servants of the new possibilities you create.

God of changed hearts,

Renew the future for us all.

Christ our Companion,

make our community one that lives out your grace and mercy.

Today we pray for those among us and around us who are struggling to live wisely and well,

who seek a way of integrity for the future.

We pray for those who are confronting addictions

or trying to change old habits that are harmful to health:

give them persistence and support

We pray for those who want to end violence and anger in their lives:

give them courage and wisdom to walk a new way

God of changed hearts,

Renew the future for us all.

We pray for those who have broken the law and now seek to make amends:

inspire us with good judgement and grace in action and relationships.

We pray for those who have broken their word and want to rebuild trust and integrity:

show them how to take responsibility and live it out.

God of changed hearts,

Renew the future for us all.

We pray for those who are seeking new work, learning new skills, or changing employment:

open new opportunities for them.

We pray for all of us who seek new ways to live out our faith

in this church and in this community:

help us communicate God's love in fresh ways so others catch the vision of your love.

God of changed hearts,

Renew the future for us all.

Song: *Make me a channel of your peace* (740)

Sending out with God's blessing

2 Cor. 13:11 - Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you even unto the end. Amen.

Response: *Benediction (as you go)*

Music postlude

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