

Sunday, February 23, 2025 - Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany

First Reading: Genesis 45:3-11, 15

What does it mean to forgive?

To forgive could mean to excuse – because they do not know any better. (Luke 23: 34)

To forgive could mean to let go of anger and a desire to get even.

To forgive could mean to become emotionally free, even if the other person does not apologize.

To forgive could mean to restore relationship – but that is not always possible or wise.

This is the first time in the Bible where there is a restoration of relationship between brothers.

Cain and Abel could not reconcile, because Abel was dead.

Isaac and Ishmael did not reconcile. Ishmael and his mother Hagar were sent away.

Jacob and Esau did not reconcile. Esau did not kill Jacob when he returned home, but there is no mention that they saw each other again until their father Isaac died.

45: 4-8 - Joseph said to his brothers, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God."

Genesis 50: 15-17 - Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrong that we did to him?" So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, 'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father."

Why did Joseph need to forgive his brothers?

Because they asked to be forgiven.

Because their father Jacob told him to forgive them.

Because God can make all things work together for good.

45: 15 – (Joseph) kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

Vs. Genesis 37: 4 – When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

Psalm: Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40

1 - Do not be provoked by evildoers.

3 - Put your trust in the LORD and do good.

5 - Commit your way to the LORD; put your trust in the LORD and see what God will do.

7 - Be still before the LORD and wait patiently.

39 - The deliverance of the righteous comes from you, O LORD;
you are their stronghold in time of trouble.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50

1 Corinthians 15 is the most complete and comprehensive expression of how absolutely central and essential the resurrection is to the Christian faith.

Without the resurrection, there is no Christian faith, and we have no hope.

Verses 12-19 - If Christ had not been raised

If Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation and your faith are in vain, we are misrepresenting God, your faith is futile, you are still in your sins, those who have died in Christ have perished, and we are of all people most to be pitied.

Verses 35-49 - How Christ could be raised

37-38 - You do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

42-44 - So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body.

45- 49 - Thus it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Cf. Romans 5: 18-19 –

Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

Verses 54-58 – Since Christ has been raised

Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Gospel: Luke 6:27-38

17-20 – A great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon had come to hear (Jesus) and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. All in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

Then Jesus continued to address the crowd of his disciples.

27-28 - I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

31 - Do to others as you would have them do to you.

32-33 - If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.

35 - Love your enemies.

36 - Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

37 - Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

38 - The measure you give will be the measure you get back.