

September 17, 2017

**“Forgive Me”
(No Easy Way Out)**

First Reading ~ *Matthew 18: 21-35*

Peter came up and asked Jesus, “When a sister or a brother wrongs me, how many times must I forgive? Seven times?”

“No,” Jesus replied, “Not seven times; I tell you, seventy times seven. And here’s why:

“The dominion of heaven is like a ruler who wished to settle accounts with their stewards. When the audit was begun, one steward was brought in who owed tens of millions of dollars. As the debtor had no way of paying, the ruler ordered the steward to be sold, along with family and property, in payment of the debt. At this, the steward bowed down in homage, and said, ‘I beg you, have patience with me, and I will pay you back in full. Moved with pity, the ruler let the steward go and wrote off the debt.

“Then that same steward went out and met another who owed the steward twenty dollars. The steward seized and throttled this debtor, with the demand, ‘Pay back what you owe me.’ The debtor fell to the ground and began to plead. ‘Just give me time, have patience with me, and I will pay you back in full.’ But the steward would hear none of it, and instead had the other put in debtor’s prison until the money was paid.

“When the others saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and went to the ruler, reporting the entire incident. Then the ruler sent for the steward and said, ‘You wicked steward! I cancelled your entire debt when you pleaded with me. Should you not have dealt mercifully with your fellow steward, as I dealt with you?’ Then in anger, the ruler handed the steward over to be imprisoned and tortured until the debt could be paid in full.

So our heavenly Parent will treat you exactly the same way, unless you truly forgive your sisters and brothers from your heart.”

**Second Reading ~ adapted from A.J. Swaboda in
“Messy: God Likes It That Way”**

God doesn’t have a theology. We do. And it becomes a very personal affair. To me, so much of our (and my) theology looks like us. Everything we do as human beings proclaims the theology that we nurture and care for in our heart. When we hate our neighbor for being of a certain religion or political party, it proclaims to the world what we think about God. Or when we forgive someone for hurting us, we pronounce to the world something about what we believe about God. Our way of life is God’s microphone. Our life preaches. Everything we do. When we accept this, we realize that there is ultimately no easy way out, no way to actually escape the necessity of theology in our lives. Theology is something we do, not just something we believe. The same is true for church. At our community gatherings on Sunday, we have a communal meal, the Eucharist—the essence of Christ. When we allow everyone to participate, it says something about God. Everything we do says something about God.