

What is the Power of Forgiveness?

Sermon Notes for Sept 17, 2017 at Brentwood

Ps 114 & Matthew 18:21-35



**Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but I tell you, seventy-seven times.”
(Matt:18:22)**

Provocative Ponderings that Call Forth Our Potential in Christ

- Love our Bible studies every other Friday at 5:30 – learned something from Winston that I didn’t know – 7 is often used in the Bible to represent the fullness and wholeness of God’s intent
- 7 indicates the completion of God’s purpose for his creation – that’s what happened in Jesus, God’s Christ – in a way that humans are still trying to understand more fully, God brought this world back into a wholesome relationship with the community of God by forgiving humanity’s rebellion against their original role as stewards of the creation – God is still completing that work – the trauma that rebellion has created, accumulating generation after generation, is deeply embedded in human history – Jesus begins a long process of reorienting the collective human soul back to its proper relationship with God
- So, we could read our text as Jesus saying that God’s forgiveness, the central feature of God’s reconciliation, is steadfast and everlasting – not just complete, but really, really complete and deeper than you can ever imagine – and this is addressed to Peter, who would need that forgiveness in ways he probably didn’t imagine at the time of this exchange – he would need God’s forgiveness when he denied knowing anything about God was doing in Jesus three times, when God in Jesus Christ needed him most
- I’ve chosen Rembrandt’s representation of the forgiveness and reconciliation of the rebellious son, the son who thought he could go it alone, handle his father’s legacy all by himself – and I played again this week Dan’s wonderful jazz suite based on this story – especially struck by the quiet joy of the final movement – captured in ways that transcend words the contentment and joy that come with forgiveness – the power to make us whole, to restore us to our full role in creation – being blessings as we do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God – Creator, Redeemer, and Reformer

So, what are we going to do with this ...

God’s forgiveness is gift – not something we earn, but something we receive – humbly, on our knees, having come to ourselves and realized how much we need the wholeness that God alone offers – so, we come home – and out of gratitude for the undeserved welcome we receive, we take up the care of our legacy with new insight and vigor – we become the blessings God created us to be, in everything we do

Notes for a sermon preached by Brian Fraser,
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