

The Rev. Jay Lawlor preaches on the power of forgiveness

The Rev. Jay Lawlor preached at Holy Family Episcopal Church in Fishers, Indiana on the 15th Sunday After Pentecost - September 17, 2017.

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, US, February 12, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- "When we forgive, we are free. We are free from anger, resentment, and pain. And when we are free from anger, resentment, and pain, we can be reconciled to God and to others. Reconciliation being our primary task as followers of Jesus – it is the very mission of the Church to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ," said [the Rev. Jay Lawlor](#) in his sermon titled "[The Power of Forgiveness](#)."

He preached the sermon for the 15th Sunday After Pentecost Year A - September 17, 2017, at Holy Family Episcopal Church in Fishers, Indiana. A video recording of the Rev. Lawlor's sermon has been posted by Holy Family Productions and on the Rev. Jay Lawlor's website. Following are excerpts from the sermon transcript:



The Rev. Jay Lawlor preaching 15th Sunday After Pentecost Proper 19 Year A, September 17, 2017 at Holy Family Episcopal Church in Fishers, IN.

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Jesus invites us to be healed and made whole. [It is] our way forward toward reconciliation. Jesus placed such an important emphasis on forgiveness because our existence as human beings depends on it.”

The Rev. Jay Lawlor

In today's reading from Matthew's Gospel, Peter believes he is being especially generous when he asks Jesus: “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” (Matthew 18:21) Surely, Peter likely thought, forgiving seven times is beyond what is required. But rather than praising Peter for his generosity in doling out forgiveness: Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.” (Matthew 18:22)

In biblical terminology, “seventy-seven times” means “always.” Jesus picks a number – “seventy seven” – which well exceeds

Peter's “seven times” to impress upon Peter that forgiveness is limitless. There isn't even a little wiggle room on this. Biblical scholars and theologians are in clear agreement: Jesus' use of “seventy-seven times” means followers of Jesus are to offer unconditional and infinite forgiveness.

To our ears – probably even to Peter's ears – this may seem impossible. It certainly is difficult. But Jesus is nothing if not consistent in telling his disciples that following him is not easy. In fact, discipleship can be costly. Nonetheless, Jesus is equally clear that out of that difficulty, out of what discipleship may cost us, there is freedom. A freedom that can only come through the unconditional love and grace of God. An unconditional love and grace of God given in Jesus.

When we forgive, we are free. We are free from anger, resentment, and pain. And when we are free from anger, resentment, and pain, we can be reconciled to God and to others. Reconciliation being our primary task as followers of Jesus – it is the very mission of the Church to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ. Forgiveness is a required action in order for there to be reconciliation.

Studies show that there are social, psychological, even physiological benefits to forgiveness. There are definite spiritual benefits. It seems we are hard wired for forgiveness. It is in our DNA as human beings. A human family created in the image of God.

None of this means that forgiveness is necessarily quick or easy. It often is a process. Sometimes the process is lengthy and reflects more of a journey. Nonetheless, Jesus sets the pattern of forgiveness for his followers and invites us to forgive so we may be healed, set free, and at peace.

The entire sermon can be viewed at <https://www.therevjaylawlor.com/the-power-of-forgiveness-sermon-by-the-rev-jay-lawlor-sep-17-2017-video/>

Visit [Sermons Video Series](#) page on the Rev. Jay Lawlor's website for all six of the sermons the Rev. Lawlor preached at Holy Family.

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