

Lessons for Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

February 24, 2019

Psalm 103:1-13 ~ *David praised the Lord for forgiveness, renewal, and redeeming love, undeserved.*

Genesis 45:3-15 ~ *Joseph welcomed his brothers with forgiveness and told them about God's providence.*

1 Corinthians 15:21-26, 30-42 ~ *God's ultimate grace is the gift of resurrection life through Christ.*

Luke 6:27-38 ~ *With sixteen imperatives Jesus told how to become merciful by modeling God's mercy.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: It's All about Grace.

Through little acts of kindness, from not expecting the return of a loan to the sacrifice of a great personal debt, like forgiving brothers who intended murder, God's people are called upon to reflect the mercy of their God. Ultimately our neighbors will see in us the supreme grace of God who gives new life in the resurrection of our bodies through the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus our Lord.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Gracious Lord, it is your pleasure to extend mercy to your people. Open my eyes to see every evidence of your undeserved kindness so that I may rejoice in your ultimate grace through Jesus. Then give me the will to share your love joyfully through acts of mercy toward my neighbors. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: We have received the great gift of life from God. The little things we give from our work-a-day lives are blessed by him to be acts of kindness to those who need to know God's love. As we show mercy to our neighbors, we become models of God's mercy, seen finally in Jesus' victory over death and the grave - his gift to us!

OFFERING PRAYER: Bless, O Lord, these offerings, these tokens we are giving
From the bounty of your goodness in our daily living.
Use these gifts to show your greatest mercy is forgiving. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: We usually think of grace as a one way action with ourselves on the receiving end. We want others to be kind to us, to like us, to do good to us, even when we hate, mistreat, and demand of them. We are more often than not, surprised as were Joseph's brothers, when someone forgives a great injustice we have done. And yet, God in his supreme sacrifice, gives the ultimate gift of grace by joining us to Christ's resurrection and giving us the assurance that because he lives, we too shall rise.