

# *A Follow Up Bible Study*

*Building on the Messages of the Lessons from the 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost*

## **Warm Up**

The phrase *I forgive you* means different things depending on who says it.

What is God saying when he says it?

What is a follower of Jesus Christ saying when they say it?

What do you think the average American today is saying when they say it?

## **1. Sermon for October 4, 2020**

**Text: Romans 14:5-9**

**Theme: Respect of our Lord leads to healthy respect for others.**

**Share your** questions or comments regarding Sunday's sermon.

**Share your** questions or comments regarding Sunday's sermon **text**.

2. At first glance it seemed to me that this Romans 14 text lacked any reasonable connection with the other 2 Lessons. That was a major complaint by many pastors of CW's practice of *modified lectio continua*<sup>1</sup> series of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lessons in the Sundays after Pentecost. But it is my experience that sufficient study and reflection reveals connections and truths that are buried just under the surface. Reflection on the connection enlightens. It opens eyes to God's message.

What is the common link between *judging the adiophora piety of a fellow believer* and *refusing to forgive a fellow believer*?

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<sup>1</sup> *lectio continua* is a series of readings that reads straight through a book of the Bible. The modified form reads snippets of the book, offering key sections and the flavor of the book.

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This point of acting like a brother's God or Lord was stated by Joseph. ***Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God?*** It's easier to see in Romans 14 if we included verses 3-4: ***...should not judge the person who does, because God has accepted him. <sup>4</sup> Who are you to pass judgment on someone else's servant? It is up to his master to decide whether that servant stands or falls.*** Now identify this same point in our texts.

***<sup>5</sup> One person values one day above another. Another person values every day the same. Let each person be fully convinced in his own mind. <sup>6</sup> The person who honors a certain day does this for the Lord, and the person who eats does this for the Lord, because he gives thanks to God. And the person who does not eat does this for the Lord and gives thanks to God.***

***<sup>7</sup> In fact, not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself. <sup>8</sup> Indeed, if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. <sup>9</sup> For this reason he died, rose, and lived, to be Lord of both the dead and the living.***

3. Why do believers treasure their practices of piety?

Why might Christians be tempted to judge *peculiar* pious acts of other Christians?

4. Offer examples of Christians who appropriately practice "considering certain days *sacred*."

Offer examples of those who claim to be Christians who take holy days too far.

Offer examples of Christians who practice appropriate piety of refraining from food.

Offer examples of those who in the name of Christ carry food restrictions too far.

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5. Here Paul reminds us what it means to have Jesus as our Lord:

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This is not speaking of people in general. Note: *not one of us...*

How did Jesus become our Lord? What does it mean that Jesus is our Lord?

What does Paul mean when he says, **if we live, we live for the Lord?**

What does Paul mean when he says, **if we die, we die for the Lord?**

## **First Lesson: Genesis 50:15-21**

6. What do you think? Did Jacob tell his 11 sons to send this message to Joseph after his death? Include your reasons for your thinking? Was Benjamin involved in this?

7. What did the message say that sought to tug at the strings of Joseph's heart?

8. What made Joseph weep? How did his brothers interpret his tears? What does that say about their mindset and character?

9. What truths did Joseph teach his brothers and us?

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## **Gospel Lesson: Matthew 18:21-35**

10. *Context:* Remember this comes after Jesus' instruction on what to do when a *brother* has sinned against you. This included Jesus' institution of the Ministry of Keys.

Why are we tempted, like Peter, to think we need to limit the number of times we forgive a *brother*?

11. Explain Jesus' answer, *Not seven times, but I tell you as many as seventy-seven times*. What **is** Jesus saying? What **isn't** Jesus saying?

Explain how Jesus' words and the context make it clear this is not the type of *forgiveness* that enables someone to keep on sinning.

12. Since the largest number in Greek is 1,000, the number 10,000 is like us saying a Gazillion dollars. 1 talent was a bag of unminted precious metal worth 6,000 denarii or more than 19 years of wages for a day laborer (assuming a faithful Old Testament believer didn't work on the Sabbath). Imagine the disciples' eyes when Jesus spoke of this debt. It's clear this is more than a lifetime of wages for a day laborer or even a family of day laborers. What a powerful illustration of the overwhelming debt our sins have accumulated with God. Lord have mercy!

What motivated the king to forgive the whole debt?

13. The key term that reveals the common thread with this account and the other 2 Lessons is *fellow servant*. **Explain** how that links the Lessons.

14. Explain why the servants who reported the behavior of the unmerciful servant didn't sin by gossiping or *ratting* on the man.

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15. Explain why the king is not unfair. If he forgave the debt, why is it fair for him to reinstate the debt? Then apply this to God. Some say, *If Jesus paid the debt of all sins for everyone, how can God be just and send anyone to hell?* How can we answer that charge?

16. Jesus concludes: *“This is what my heavenly Father will also do to you unless each one of you forgives his brother from his heart.”* Identify the Law in this message. Identify the Gospel in this message.

What is Jesus teaching when he says, *forgives his brother from his heart?*

It is obvious that the *forgiven* richly benefit from being freed from the obligation of a debt. But how does this kind of forgiveness benefit and free the one forgiving the debt?

We teach that God’s mercy is **unconditional**. Explain why this *unless* isn’t a condition placed on our salvation and eternal life.

How does this parable make it clear that servants of the king serve in a relationship with other servants - in a community of believers?