

## Forgiveness...

In Luke 17 we hear Jesus commanding the apostles to **forgive** anyone who repents, even 7 times a day! They've experienced God's power, yet this task of **forgiving** seems impossible and insurmountable. So, the apostles say, "Lord, increase (or add on to) our **faith**."

The apostles ask for a "prothes" in the Greek, a prosthetic addition to their **faith**. They want a **bionic faith**. After all, that must be what it would take to **forgive** anyone that much!

The apostles think of **faith** in terms of units that you collect. I have 3 units of **faith**, or 4 units. If I am to **forgive** the same person 7 times a day, or (let's face it) even once, then I need some more **faith** units! And you've got to give them credit because they aren't afraid to ask! "Lord, increase our **faith**!"

But notice the reply of Jesus, "If you had **faith** the size of a mustard seed" you could do great and mighty deeds. You could uproot a mulberry tree. More importantly and even harder, you could **forgive** and **forgive** and **forgive**. Jesus is saying that when it comes to **faith**, a little goes a long way.

**Faith** is not about having 1 quantity or 10 quantities. Either we have it or we don't. It is not much like bean counting but instead it is a lot more like **breathing**. You don't store up **breaths** for the future. Each one is there; ready to be taken as it is needed. **Faith** surrounds us like the air we **breathe**, each **breath** providing immediate life and strength. Each **breath** used immediately for its purpose.

**Breathing** is a continual process, and so is **faith**. You cannot store it up, you can only **breathe** it in and allow it to affect you, and release it again into the world.

Jesus tells us, a little **faith** goes a long way. No **bionics** needed. No prosthetics or technological enhancements required. No experience necessary. We have already been equipped for this task in our baptism and we are being re-equipped for this task each time we gather around the Word of God and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

If we had **faith** in God's **forgiveness** we could **forgive** even those who do NOT repent. If we had **faith** in God's **forgiveness** we could **forgive** because we have been **forgiven**. When we **forgive**, we witness to that amazing grace and **forgiveness** that God has given us.

On the other hand, our inability to **forgive** each other is a visible sign of our lack of **faith** in God's **forgiveness** of us.

Don't miss that – when we do not **forgive** each other it is damning evidence that we do not trust in God's **forgiveness**.

You may be reading this with the need to hear those words again, "God **forgives** you."

You may be reading this with a need to **forgive** others. Did you ever imagine that *God might be using the people who have sinned against you as a way to increase your **faith**?*

Did you imagine that your ability to **forgive** them might be a witness to other people of God's **forgiveness** and power working through you?

They may have repented and asked for your **forgiveness**. In this case Jesus says in verse 4 that we "must **forgive**."

They also might not have repented, but there is no prohibition against **forgiving** them anyway! This is what I like to call "pre-emptive **forgiveness**."

Jesus taught us to pray this way – "**forgive** us our sins, as we **forgive** those who sin against us."

Who is it that you are not **forgiving**? No **bionics** are necessary. Nothing additional is needed.

So what are you waiting for? Stop holding your **breath**. **Breathe** in **faith** and **forgiveness**.

**Breathe** deeply and allow it to affect you, and release it again into the world as a witness of the power of God.

Peace be with you,  
Pastor Chris