

Lord, how often should I forgive?

MATTHEW 18:21



September 13, 2026



EPIPHANY
LUTHERAN CHURCH

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

In today's second reading Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.

PRELUDE

From Every Stormy Wind That Blows

Tune "Retreat" by Thomas Hastings, 1842

Arranged by Evelyn R. Larter

THE GATHERING

WELCOME

OPENING SONG

10,000 Reasons (Bless The Lord)

by Jonas Myrin and Matt Redman

CHORUS

VERSE 1

The sun comes up It's a new day dawning
It's time to sing Your song again
Whatever may pass And whatever lies before me
Let me be singing When the evening comes

CHORUS

VERSE 2

You're rich in love And You're slow to anger
Your name is great And Your heart is kind
For all Your goodness I will keep on singing
Ten thousand reasons For my heart to find

CHORUS

VERSE 3

And on that day When my strength is failing
The end draws near And my time has come
Still my soul will Sing Your praise unending
Ten thousand years And then forevermore

CHORUS

Bless the Lord O my soul
O my soul
Worship His Holy name
Sing like never before
O my soul
I'll worship Your Holy name

ORDER OF CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

A: Blessed be the holy Trinity,† one God, who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth.

C: Amen.

A: Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith. Let us confess our sin to God.

Silence For Reflection

A: Compassionate God,

C: we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse. Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships. Indifference keeps us from seeking justice. Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others. Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our world and reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.

A: Hear this good news: We have peace with God through † Jesus Christ, in whom there is no condemnation, but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. Receive freely this healing gift of grace.

C: Amen.

THE PEACE

We receive and extend to one another the gift of Christ's peace. You may greet one another and say "peace be with you" or similar words.

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray.

C: O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

THE WORD

JESUS LOVES ME

Jesus loves me! this I know,
for the Bible tells me so;
little ones to him belong.
they are weak, but he is strong.

Yes, Jesus loves me (X3)
the Bible tells me so.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

A READING FROM

GENESIS 50:15-21

After Jacob's death the brothers of Joseph begged for forgiveness for the crime they had done against him. You intended to do me harm, Joseph said, but God used this as an opportunity to do good and save many lives.

Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, 'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

A RESONSIVE READING

PSALM 103:[1-7] 8-13

Lord, you are full of compassion and mercy. (Ps. 103:8)

L: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless God's holy name.

C: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits—

L: who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,

C: who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,

L: who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

C: The Lord works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed.

L: He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel.

C: The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

L: He will not always accuse, nor will he keep his anger forever.

C: He does not deal with us according to our sins nor repay us according to our iniquities.

L: For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;

C: as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us.

L: As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him.

L: This is the word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia (ELW Setting X)



S205a

Al - le-lu - ia! Lord and Sav - ior: o - pen now your sav - ing word.



Let it burn like fire with - in us; speak un - til our hearts are stirred.



Al - le-lu - ia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

THE GOSPEL READING

MATTHEW 18:21-35

(Congregation standing)

L: The Holy Gospel of St. Matthew, beginning in the eighteenth chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

When Peter asks about the limits of forgiveness, Jesus responds with a parable that suggests human forgiveness should mirror the unlimited mercy of God.

Peter came and said to [Jesus,] "Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.' Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

L: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

PREACHING OF THE GOOD NEWS & A MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

HYMN OF THE DAY

Forgive Our Sins As We Forgive (ELW 605)



1 "For - give our sins as we for - give," you taught us, Lord, to pray;
2 How can your par - don reach and bless the un - for - giv - ing heart
3 In blaz - ing light your cross re - veals the truth we dim - ly knew:
4 Lord, cleanse the depths with - in our souls and bid re - sent - ment cease;



but you a - lone can grant us grace to live the words we say.
that broods on wrongs and will not let old bit - ter - ness de - part?
how tri - fling oth - ers' debts to us; how great our debt to you!
then, by your mer - cy rec - on - ciled, our lives will spread your peace.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

A: Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us.

Each petition shall conclude with:

A: Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

the Prayers conclude:

A: Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name.

C: Amen.

THE MEAL

THE OFFERING

MUSICAL OFFERING

For the Beauty of the Earth

Arranged by Justin K. Reeves

THE OFFERTORY

Create In Me (Capers) ELW 185

In contrast to last week's congregational setting of "Create in Me" (ELW 187), today's Offertory features John W. Capers' modern choral arrangement of Psalm 51:10—"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." This contemplative setting calls us to open our hearts before God's transforming promise ("Do not be afraid, Abram; I am your shield," Gen 15:1), freeing us from anxiety and inviting us into faithful obedience as we present what we have offered to God.

The musical score is written for a single voice part in treble clef, with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes, with some phrases spanning across bar lines. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span multiple notes. The score consists of six lines of music, each with a corresponding line of lyrics.

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your
pres - ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me.
Re - store to me the joy of your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me
with your free Spir - it. Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God,
and re - new a right spir - it with - in me.

OFFERING PRAYER

A: Let us pray together.

C: God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always. Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts!

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise!



WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

We practice "Open Communion," acknowledging that Jesus welcomes all persons, sinners and saints alike, to the table. All means ALL. Please come forward by the center aisle and receive the Sacrament in a continuous line, exiting by the side aisles. Communion is by intinction. We offer a chalice of wine and a chalice of white grape juice in which you may dip the bread. Gluten-free wafers are available; please ask for them at the altar, if needed. The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you. The communicant may say: Amen.

Infants who are not yet ready to receive food will receive a blessing. Parents who have questions about the practice of open communion may instruct their children to receive just a blessing.

Communion can be served to those who are not physically able to join us for worship. Please speak with an usher if you know of someone who would desire communion from Sunday's table brought to them.

LAMB OF GOD



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION SONG

Break Now the Bread of Life (ELW 515)

(Slides only)

COMMUNION BLESSING

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in God's grace until life everlasting.

C: Amen.

THE SENDING

THE BENEDICTION

P: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son ☩, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

SENDING SONG

My Lighthouse

This joyful modern song celebrates God's steadfast guidance in times of uncertainty. As Jesus crossed a dangerous sea to bring healing, so too does God meet us in our storms. Like the man made whole in today's Gospel lesson, we are called to go forth and share what God has done for us—with confidence and light.

VERSE 1

In our wrestling and in our doubts
In our failures You won't walk out
Your great love will Lead us through
You are the peace in our troubled sea whoa oh
You are the peace in our troubled sea

VERSE 2

In the silence You won't let go
In the questions Your truth will hold
Your great love will lead us through
You are the peace in our troubled sea whoa oh
You are the peace in our troubled sea

CHORUS

Our Lighthouse, our Lighthouse
Shining in the darkness, we will follow You oh
Our Lighthouse, our Lighthouse
we will trust the promise, You will carry us
Safe to shore x4

VERSE 3

We won't fear what tomorrow brings
With each morning we'll rise and sing
Our God's love will lead us through
You are the peace in our troubled sea whoa oh
You are the peace in our troubled sea

CHORUS

BRIDGE (4X)

Fire before us
You're the brightest
You will lead us
Through the storms

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSED & SENT TO SERVE

A: This little light of mine...

C: I'm gonna let it shine!

A: Forgiveness can be hard. But granting forgiveness can feel like lifting a great burden from ourselves as much as from those we forgive. We know that we have been granted a great gift in forgiveness from Jesus. Through Jesus we have been made right with God. We will continue to forgive others and proclaim God's forgiveness for all until...

C: Everyone knows that God loves them!

A: Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

C: Thanks be to God!



POSTLUDE

If you are worshipping with us at 9:00 am we kindly ask that you leave your bulletin on the back table on your way out for those that are worshipping at 11:00 am if you did not make notes. We wish to be good stewards of our environment and resources.

*** Our services are live-streamed and recorded for later viewing. We also utilize images from our services and activities on our website. If you do not want images of you or your family on our website, please inform us via an email to communications@epiphanysuwanee.org.*



EPIPHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sunday Worship Services

9:00 am & 11:00 am (in-person and online)

Ministers: The People of God

Pastor: Chris Hermansen

Minister of Youth: Kris Perkola

Director of Worship and Music: Heather Hart, DMus

Worship Production: Steve Belfield

Church Administrator: Bonnie Bradberry

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From Every Stormy Wind That Blows

Tune "Retreat" by Thomas Hastings, 1842
Arranged by Evelyn R. Larter, c. 2007 Evelyn Larter Music

10,000 Reasons (Bless The Lord)

by Jonas Myrin and Matt Redman
© 2011 Thankyou Music, Said And Done Music, and SHOUT!
Publishing
CCLI Song # 6016351

Jesus Loves Me (ELW 595)

Lyrics Anna Bartlett Warner (1859)
Music William B. Bradbury music, 1862
Public Domain

Alleluia (ELW SETTING X)

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Forgive Our Sins As We Forgive (ELW 605)

Text: Rosamond E. Herklots, 1966
Music: The Sacred Harp, Philadelphia, 1844
Text © Oxford University Press

For The Beauty of the Earth

Lyrics: Folliott Sandfor Pierpoint, 1864
Music: Conrad Kocher, 1838
Arranged by Justin K. Reeves, copyright 2011 Justin K. Reeves

Create In Me (Capers) (ELW 185)

Music © 1993 Augsburg Fortress
Sources Music: Liturgy of Joy, James M. Capers, b. 1984, arranged
by Dennis Friesen Cooper
Text Public domain

Lamb of God

ELW Holy Communion Setting Four
admin. Augsburg Fortress Text & Music: Public Domain

Break Now the Bread of Life (ELW 515)

Lyrics: Mary A. Lathbury (1877)
Music: William F. Sherwin (1877)
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My Lighthouse

Chris Llewellyn, Gareth Gilkeson
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