

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

Daily Devotions

By Carl M. Zorn

for the

Twentieth Sunday After Trinity

-SATURDAY-

Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? – I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven. – Matthew 18:21-22.

Here we have Peter's question and Jesus' answer. We are to be ready to forgive at all times. How often has our gracious God forgiven us? Daily and richly! It cannot be counted. How many times have we sinned against our God; how many times has He, through His Gospel, reassured us of His certain, free, and full forgiveness? How often have our fellow Christians sinned against us? Those sins against us are as nothing compared with our innumerable offenses against God. Should we sinners be less ready to forgive than the holy and merciful God Himself? Could we, who would not be able to be guilt-free and truly happy without the forgiveness which God has given to us for Jesus' sake; ---could we, according to our "new man" (Ephesians 4:24), refuse to forgive others? The Savior has taught us in Luke 17: *"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against him, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying: 'I repent;' thou shalt forgive him"* (vv. 3-4). Jesus gave a strong warning to us when He said in Matthew 6: *"If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"* (v. 15). No one can remain a Christian who places himself in persistent opposition to these words of the Savior by willfully refusing to forgive another person who wants and needs his forgiveness. The Apostle Paul gave this timeless counsel in Ephesians 4: *"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor [yelling] and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"* (Ephesians 4:31-32).

PRAYER – Lord Jesus, again I come to Thee for Thy divine help. Help me against my sin-corrupted flesh, which fights against the Holy Spirit working through Thy Word in my heart and life. Strengthen my new man through Thy precious Gospel. Work in me an ever greater willingness to forgive those who repent of their sins against me, ever remembering how my God has forgiven me on account of Thy perfect and completed ransom, once for all. Amen.

If Thy beloved Son, O God, had not to earth descended; and in our mortal flesh and blood, had not sin's power ended; then this poor, wretched soul of mine, in hell eternally would pine, because of its transgression.

But now I find sweet peace and rest, despair no more reigns o'er me; no more am I by sin opprest, for Christ has borne sin for me; upon the cross for me He died, that reconciled I might abide, with Thee, my God forever. *TLH, 375, 1-2*

Scripture Reading for Saturday: I Peter 1:15-23 Theme this week: Sanctification