

**“FORGIVENESS AND SALVATION”**

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**Text: Luke 11:1-13 NLT**

**God’s Word: Colossians 3:12-17 NLT**

**Luke 11:1-13 NLT**

*<sup>1</sup> Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” <sup>2</sup> Jesus said, “This is how you should pray: “Father, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. <sup>3</sup> Give us each day the food we need, <sup>4</sup> and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And don’t let us yield to temptation.”*

*<sup>5</sup> Then, teaching them more about prayer, he used this story: “Suppose you went to a friend’s house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You say to him, <sup>6</sup> ‘A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.’ <sup>7</sup> And suppose he calls out from his bedroom, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is locked for the night, and my family and I are all in bed. I can’t help you.’ <sup>8</sup> But I tell you this—though he won’t do it for friendship’s sake, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you whatever you need because of your shameless persistence.*

*<sup>9</sup> “And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.*

*<sup>11</sup> “You fathers—if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? <sup>12</sup> Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not! <sup>13</sup> So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.”*

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(Beginning with a clip from the movie: Spider-Man 3)

A friend mentioned to me this past week: “I once spent 6 years angry at another person. It didn’t do a thing to them, but boy, it sure ate me up inside.”

Peter Parker has allowed this sin-stuff—this lust for vengeance and revenge—this hatred...get the better of him and it has transformed him into someone he doesn’t know—even into someone he doesn’t like. His girlfriend, Mary Jane, asks Peter, “Who are you?” to which Peter replies: “I don’t know.”

Have you ever felt so lost and confused that you didn’t even know what was controlling your actions? You didn’t even know who you were any longer? Have you ever spent so much time in the fog of anger and despair that you finally cried out: “I want to see the real me!”?...“Who am I?” ...“Where am I?” ...“What am I doing here?” ...It’s a wake-up call, really.

The founder of Methodism, John Wesley might call it Prevenient Grace...that is, the grace and love of God working in our lives in order to awaken us to our sins and our need for a Savior...preparing us for repentance and thus forgiveness and reconciliation!!!

And so Peter Parker walks out into the darkness, and he hears God calling through the clanging of the church bells. And he spends the night as the sin-stained Spider-Man...on the roof of a church, underneath a Cross...repenting. And the grace becomes justifying grace when Peter enters the church by way of the bell-tower...and allows God to tear the black ooze out of his body in the form of the black suit...It is almost a near-perfect metaphor for repentance and redemption. Parker even ends up in the shower—a metaphor for baptism. And we see that the sin—or the black suit is transferred to Edward Brock who is, himself, filled with anger, hate, and the lust for revenge...

*“One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.’”*

*And Jesus said to them, “When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins for we also forgive everyone who sins against us....’”*

Do we really? Do we really forgive others the way we want and expect God to forgive us? ....The way God has forgiven us? Do we really?

In Matthew Chapter 5, Jesus instructs us that if we have an un-reconciled situation with one of our brothers or sisters and we have come to worship God...we are to first go and be reconciled with our brother or sister and then come back and worship God. We can't worship God and knowingly harbor grudges and hate and anger at the same time

And what should we do if someone asks forgiveness for something they have done against us? Should we accept their forgiveness and move on...truly forgiving them...or is it just too hard to forgive? Is it just too much for them to ask of us?

Peter asked Jesus this very same question. In Matthew 18 we are told that Peter *"came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?'"* *"Jesus answered, I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."* Which is a metaphor for every time into eternity!!!

After that, Jesus goes into talking about a parable where a king forgave the debt of a man when that man could not repay it, and had come to the king falling on his knees before him...begging for mercy. But after that, the forgiven man was not forgiving of others when they owed him and could not repay.

Jesus says, *"He refused. Instead, he went off and"* had the people thrown in prison! The parable ends with the unmerciful man losing his 'salvation', and Jesus says *"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."*

So this forgiving of others stuff is pretty serious business!!! As more than one person has said, "It's not worth losing your soul over!"

Are you angry at anyone? Are you harboring grudges? Do you have a lust for revenge? Whatever you are mad about..."It's not worth losing your soul over!" We can't live as forgiven Kingdom People—unless we forgive others! It just doesn't work!!!

When we do not forgive, our hell is of our own making! We have freedom of choice, and the right choice is not the easy choice...but it is the only way we can be saved!!!

In the clip from Spider-Man 3 that we just watched, Aunt May comes to visit Peter Parker. And she gives Peter some excellent advice. She says to Peter, "You start by doing the hardest thing—you forgive..." And as she is leaving Peter's apartment she

turns and says, “I believe in you Peter.” What a fantastic metaphor for the type of faith God has in us!

God believes in us. God believes in us so much that God came to earth, died the death we deserve and rose again...forgiving us our sins...so that we could also forgive ourselves and others, and thus, find real peace, real satisfaction in life—real salvation!!! God believes in our capacity to forgive! God knows we can do it. After-all we are created in God’s image!

Paul writes in Colossians Chapter 3: *“as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you...let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...”*

That is what it means to be a Christian! That is what it means to have life and life to the full!!! That is what it means to live within the community of faith as the Church of Jesus Christ—Christ’s Body on earth!!!

Forgiveness leads to peace. Forgiveness releases us from slavery and bondage to sin and death. Forgiveness transforms our lives. Forgiveness sets us free! Weak persons stay angry. Insecure persons start wars. Humble persons forgive. Forgiveness is the greatest sign of strength there ever was.

Do you remember what Christ did on the Cross as He bled and died the most tormenting of deaths? He prayed, *“Father forgive them...”*

Is there anything more powerful than forgiveness or what? Is there anything more wonderful? Christ has faith in our ability to forgive—and there lies our salvation!!! Jesus believes in you; Jesus believes in me!!!

Do you have something against someone? Forgive them.

And do this daily as you pray, *“Lord forgive me my trespasses as I forgive those who trespass against me.”*

AMEN