

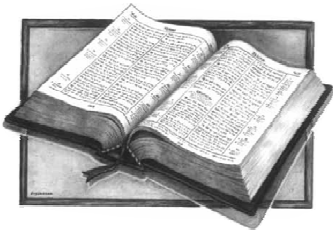
Diligently Seeking God (Hebrews 11:6)

PRAIRIE VILLAGE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Church Bulletin Articles from October 9, 2011

Hear sermons online at www.pvchurchofchrist.com

Scripture of the Week



Luke 17:3-5

"Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying 'I repent,' you shall forgive him.' And the apostles said to the Lord 'Increase our faith.'"

How often are you willing to forgive someone if he does something wrong to you? The old saying goes: "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me." It is very easy to adopt the "once bitten, twice shy" mentality because it really hurts when someone treats us poorly. But Jesus says if a brother or sister in Christ sins against us and then repents of that sin, we must forgive that person, even if he or she repeats the sin and repents seven times in a day. The Apostles recognized the difficulty of forgiving someone that frequently, so they asked Jesus to increase their faith to enable them to pull that off. It may seem ridiculous, on the surface, to think the that Lord would require such continual forgiveness for persis-

tent sinfulness. We might think God would understand that if someone repeats the same sin over and over again, he isn't really interested in repentance at all. But if we stop and consider things from God's perspective, we'll see that we often ask Him to do the very same for us, even several times in a single day. As God willingly forgives us when we ask, we must always be ready to forgive our brethren in Christ when they repent. Jesus said we must be willing to do this seven times in a day. But if we've truly forgiven someone for a sin he has repented of, each time he sins against us is really only the first time. True forgiveness doesn't keep a running account, it doesn't dwell on the past and it doesn't bring he past up again.

Forgiveness & Repentance

Forgiveness is really the greatest need that anyone has, whether a person realizes it or not. It was our need to have our sins forgiven that prompted God to conceive the plan of salvation and put it into motion. It was our need for forgiveness that motivated Christ to come to the earth and pour out His love for us through His own veins on the cross at Calvary. And God tells us plainly that we need to forgive others as surely as we need God to forgive us (Matthew 6:14-15). But, like every other aspect of God's perfect plan that involves our free will, there are conditions placed upon forgiveness. As critical as forgiveness is to our salvation, to the health of our

relationships and to our own peace of mind, God will not give it to us or require it from us unconditionally. Repentance is the requirement that must be met to receive forgiveness. Repentance is a change of heart that leads to a change of life. It is a mental turning away from sin that allows our actions to follow suit. Jesus tells us that we must repent of our sins if we want God to forgive us (Luke 13:3), and also if we expect people to forgive us (Luke 17:3-5). Repentance is not merely remorse, but it does involve remorse. 2 Corinthians 7:10 says that godly sorrow leads to repentance. This means that remorse must precede repentance as surely as repen-

tance precedes forgiveness. If a brother rebukes us for sinning against him (Luke 17:3), we should not be angry at his unpleasant words, but remorseful for our own sinful actions. When we do wrong, whether against God or man or both, and we're made aware of our misdeed, our very soul's salvation depends upon godly regret and genuine penitence. It is all too easy to be mortified by the unrighteous deeds of other people and then dismiss our own indiscretions in an offhand way. But we mustn't make excuses for the sins we commit. We must be sorrowful, make the mental determination to turn from our sins, and ask God to forgive us (Acts 8:22).

Please Come Visit Us At...

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Preacher – Louie Taylor

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www.pvchurchofchrist.com

Times of Services

Sunday Morning Bible Study.....9:30

Sunday Morning Worship Service.....10:30

Sunday Evening Worship Service.....6:30

Wednesday Evening Bible Study.....7:30



Don't Lose Heart

In Luke 18:1-8, Jesus spoke a parable about an offended widow and a wicked judge, to teach us to always pray and not lose heart. In the story, a widow in a certain city went to a judge seeking justice against an adversary who had wronged her. Jesus said the judge didn't fear God or respect men, but because the woman wore him out with her persistent petitions, he eventually gave in to her wishes to have peace. Jesus taught this parable after His gloomy warnings at the end of chapter 17 about a time of great distress in the very near future of the disciples in His listening audience. Jesus spoke of His own harsh treatment and rejection in Luke 17:26, and then of the suffering that would ensue for the people of Jerusalem because of their rejection of Him

in Luke 17:27-37. (For evidence that Jesus spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and not of the general, worldwide destruction associated with His 2nd Coming, consider Matthew 22:36-39.) With the Parable of the Unjust Judge, Jesus taught His disciples how best to deal with the perilous times that lie ahead. He taught them that dedication to prayer was an absolute must in order to make it through to the end with their faith intact. Just as the widow was relentless in her request for justice from the merciless judge, so too, it greatly benefits the faithful Christian to keep a continual prayer vigil with the righteous Judge of Heaven. We should cry out to Him day and night (verse 7) during life's trying hours because He is always sympathetic to

the suffering of His elect, and He will see to it that justice is served. Jesus also taught that as we prayerfully pursue our Avenger during the troubling times of life, we must be careful to not lose heart. The Father only rewards those of His elect who remain faithful until the end (Revelation 2:10). No matter how difficult the persecutions, injustices and sufferings may be in life, we must not allow discouragement to make shipwreck of our faith. If we cling tightly to our anchor of hope, even if our bodies are dashed upon the rocks and reduced to rubble, God will renew our spirits daily and preserve them eternally. *"Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day"* (2 Corinthians 4:16).

OUR GOSPEL MEETING WITH GERRY SANDUSKY

If you missed any of the lessons from our Gospel meeting of August 15-17, they are posted on our website at www.pvchurchofchrist.com. Click the tab that indicates that meeting, and you can either "left click" the "play" button and listen to the sermon from your computer, or you can "right click" and save that sermon to file and listen to it elsewhere. Thanks to everyone who attended and prayed for our special meeting.