

May 21, 2023  
The Seventh Sunday of Easter  
Pastor Matt Duerr

### “Way Above My Pay Grade-Love Part III”

Grace and peace be to you God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen. Well, we are here, the last Sunday of Easter, the 7th Sunday of Easter and we continue with our theme of being asked to do that which is “way above our pay grade.” We're focusing on love today as we pick up the third part of love. We've seen that the love of Christ is rooted in reality and in understanding. It is Christ who has catapulted us into heaven. As we looked at that balance and saw Him being put on it, making things right, justifying us, and catapulting us towards heaven.

That's how He showed His love for us, and we wondered how do we show our love for Him? Well, we take time with Him, we talk to Him, we learn about Him. We learn His likes and His dislikes and as we saw last week, he very much dislikes sin. In fact, He hates sin. What does He like? Well, we read in John 14:21 that “if anyone loves me, he will keep my word.” What is this? We tend to focus on the Great Commission, which is very good. It's what He's told us, ‘go make disciples. Do this by baptizing them and by teaching them.’ We are supposed to love one another and oh, here comes part three.

Luke 17 verse 3 “If your brother sins, rebuke him. If he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times and he repents seven times, forgive him seven times.” He ends this little discourse with these four words; “you must forgive him. This was probably ringing in Peter's ears when in Matthew 18, he asked Jesus, ‘how many times do I have to forgive my brother, seven times?’ And Jesus answers; “I tell you not seven times, but seventy-seven times.” What was the response of Jesus's disciples to that response, to that word, seventy-seven times? “Increase our faith.” Why would they say that? Because forgiveness is so very, very, hard. But why? Quite simply because we are self-centered, and we've been wronged. Maybe rumors have been spread about us. In today's day and age, it is sometimes the exact opposite and you're

ghosted. they call it. You're treated as if you're dead. Both of these really run wild on the Internet. Something maybe has been taken from us or from you, or maybe someone has taken advantage of you. But, really why is it so hard? Because it is act of purpose. It's done on purpose and as a result, trust is broken.

It reminds me of situation I was made aware of years ago, where a husband became actively engaged online with a site to hook up for one-night stands, shall we say. He responded, actively responded, and actively engaged multiple times. How was his wife, the mother of his three children, supposed to react to that when she got the word? It made me think about the Saturday Night Live skit where Eddie Murphy says, 'I'm gonna get me a shotgun to shoot...' you know, I'll let you fill in the rest of it. Yeah, how would you react? When it comes down to it, I think we would all agree that what this individual did was despicable, number one, he had taken back to when he got married; he knew those vows, he knew it was wrong, and yet he put himself and his desires first. He cared only for himself. He broke that trust, and he deserves whatever's coming his way, right?

Well, that's where Jesus comes along with a little bit of cold water and throws it right in our face. A Biblical reality check is due here. Let's look at King David. King David saw Bathsheba bathing and said, now that is a fine-looking woman. And so, he invited her to his castle, or to his throne. He enticed her, he cheated with her, she got pregnant, and what was his first reaction? Hey, let's cover it up. I'll bring your husband home, and while he's home, we can claim that he got you pregnant.

Her husband was Uriah, a faithful general in king David's army. David called him back to give a report. And after Uriah gave the report to him, he said, oh thanks Uriah for this wonderful report, you know you certainly so well go spend time with that beautiful wife of yours, Bathsheba. Unfortunately for King David, Uriah was the kind of guy that we want in the military. Frankly, the kind of guy that we want in the church, the kind of guy that we want in politics. He didn't go home. When asked about it, he said, "how can I go home while my men are at the front? That would not be right." What an awesome guy! So awesome and so righteous a response and thinking of his men, that David decided that he'd better react to it. He had Uriah killed by having

everybody pull back from him in battle, leaving him alone. Which, once he was dead, led to the third reaction. I'll take Bathsheba to be my wife after all I'm such a caring king, aren't I? When you look at King David, he sinned, and in the process, he tried to cover it up. He killed the story, killed Uriah, he killed the relationship between the Uriah and his wife and in the end, 'I look good, too.'

You know that's when the prophet Nathan comes, and he does what is biblical. What we read before, what Jesus said, If your brother sins, rebuke him. Nathan rebukes him and King David, his response lays it all out. Indeed, Uriah is the one who was killed, but the reality was this was the result of sin. And ultimately, David understood and he wrote; "Against you, and you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight. Against you, oh Lord, against you alone have I sinned." Why did he say this? Well again, in his own words, "so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment." David knew, he expected, God is going to judge this sin, because it's against Him that I sin. He's the one who set the standards and there must be an accounting.

Well, what was that judgment? In second Samuel, 12 we read that what David had done privately, now God, his accounting would be done publicly. So that people would see, so that people would learn. David confessed, he would change and God forgave him, but now comes the accounting. Nathan says to him, "the Lord has also put away your sin, you shall not die." There's forgiveness. After all, the wages of sin is death. Nevertheless, Nathan continues, because of this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD. Because of this, the child who was born to you will die.

There is a judgment for sin, there's a consequence, it's death. David fasted; he laid on the ground by his bed. Literally he brought in dirt from outside, put it on the floor by the bed of his son, and you made on it. Basically saying, 'I'm dirt,' and he prayed for six days. He laid there fasting and praying that God would not take his son. But on day seven, the child died. David's servants, who were standing up could see the child had died. They began whispering to each other and David heard that whispering, and asked, 'is the child dead?' They didn't want to tell him because they thought he might commit suicide or do harm to himself, but he asks, is the child dead and they

said, he is dead. And we read; He rose from the earth, remember dirt was brought in. He washed and he changed clothes. He went to the Tabernacle, and he worshipped. The servants were looking at him saying, ‘what in the world, your son is dead?’ King David's response is “he's dead, can I bring him back? But what he says is amazing. “I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.” King David understood there's eternal life. He understood there is a consequence, but he also was ready to move on with life because he understood, he was forgiven.

And when we take a look at that, David did something that's amazing. he worshipped. He worshipped God because he knew he was forgiven he knew he would see his son. He prayed and he wrote it down in Psalm 51, which we heard this morning: “wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.” The amazing statement as we heard last week God hates sin and sin is equated with darkness, and I think there's a reason for that. Darkness is dark, it's black, why is this black because it absorbs all the light that gets to it. It doesn't reflect anything. Likewise, sin is so diverse. We as sinful humans just tend to absorb it and make it a part of our life. But we are told when we lay our sins before God, He takes them all away, we have a white robe of righteousness. But what I loved is that King David said, wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. How can you get whiter than white which reflects all light?

I think it takes us back to what Jesus said, be a light in the world! Shine, it goes even beyond being made clean, it becomes to shining for Him and He continued in that prayer; “create in me a clean heart oh God. Create, make something from nothing. I don't have a clean heart. Lord, you can make it clean. Cast me not away from your presence. I deserve it, but Lord, please keep me here. Restore to me the joy of your salvation. I am hurting. I lost my son. Fill me with the joy of knowing he is saved, and I will be with him. Oh Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. And God answered that prayer, and David praised God.

And so, back to the sermon on the mount, Jesus tells us forgive and you will be forgiven. Or as Saint Paul says in Colossians 3:13 “As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.” Every time we sin, it's a sin against God and it does hurt others. We are to repent. Number one admit we're wrong and know that God forgives. But then change, do right, make right and then

rejoice in His forgiveness. Every time that we are signed against, that we are hurt, forgive as you have been forgiven. Forgiveness is the ultimate expression of love. That's that ultimate expression of love God Himself has modeled for us through His son Jesus Christ who went to that cross, died at the hands of His creation, to save His creation. He rose from the dead victorious so that we can forgive as we have been forgiven. And He continues to give, continues to love as He comes to us again today, as we celebrate Holy Communion, the holy time set apart to be with this loving, forgiving, Savior of the world. In His name, Amen.