

St. Herman of Alaska Eastern Orthodox Church

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“An Orthodox Presence in Northeastern Summit County”
www.sainthermanchurch.org



Important This Week:
Saturday, 11Sep at 6PM—Vespers
Sunday, 12Sep, 1000AM—Divine Liturgy

05Sep21

11th Sunday After Pentecost

Forgiving and Forgiveness

Lewis B. Smedes was a Christian author, ethicist, and theologian. He once famously wrote, *“To forgive is to set a prisoner free, and to discover that the prisoner was you.”*

Today’s Gospel is laser focused on the issue of forgiveness. But the account is precipitated by a couple of verses before today’s reading, in which St. Peter, judging himself to be magnanimous, asks Jesus, *“How many times am I to forgive my brother, Up to seven times?”* thinking that seven was a reasonably ‘giving’ number.

We know our Lord’s response. It instructed Peter (and by him, us) to forgive as God does—without limit. When one comes seeking forgiveness from another, it should be granted.

As we turn this focus on the relationship of us with God, seeking forgiveness implies repentance. And we know that the Church teaches us that if we come in true repentance seeking forgiveness from the Lord, He is quick to answer and forgive.

Our Lord’s use of today’s parable is intended to focus us on this need for repentance, and in that need, satisfying the need by being one who grants forgiveness, freely and

fully.

St. Paul teaches, *“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as Christ God forgave you.”* Note carefully the word ‘forgave’, in the past perfect tense. The forgiveness granted us by our Lord is an accomplished thing.

In today’s Gospel’s parable, Jesus says that this king *“had begun to reckon and found one which owed him ten thousand talents.”* The word ‘owed’ used is the Greek word ‘opheiletes’, and it means one who is in debt. It is the identical word used in the Lord’s Prayer when Jesus teaches us that God will forgive us *“as we forgive our debtors.”*

In both cases, the Lord’s Prayer and today’s parable, the focus is on being forgiving **first**, as a precondition to receiving forgiveness from God. *“Forgive us as we forgive.”* I must first be forgiving if I hope to approach the Master seeking forgiveness, for without being forgiving, there can be no true repentance!

St. Theophan says it this way. *“It would seem that such a small thing is required: forgive and you will be forgiven. When you are forgiven, you are received into mercy... (receiving) salvation, Paradise, and*

eternal bliss. What a great acquisition for such a small thing. But for our self-love there is nothing more difficult than forgiving.”

We must seek with all human strength, including by prayer and fasting, hearts conforming to the instruction our Lord gives us in being truly forgiving.

St. John Climacus says, *“When you are ready to stand in the presence of the Lord, let your soul wear a garment woven from the cloth of your forgiveness of others. Otherwise, your prayer will be of no value whatsoever.”*

Similarly, our Lord Himself says, *“If you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”*

To modify the starting phrase of this piece, we need to set BOTH prisoners free. When one is against another, someone must “go first” and be forgiving.

That must be us. And then, whether brother forgives us or not, we can know that our Lord will find favor with our offering, and forgive us!

This Week's Prayer Requests

For Health—St. Herman's: Betty Migyanko, Pat Blazosky.
Others: Metropolitan Joseph, Nikandra, Fr.Dn.Basil, Terah, Judy, Barry, Karen, Charles
For the Departed: Patriarch Maxim, Metropolitans Theodosius and Maxi-

mos, Archpriest Stephan, Popadia Marika, Matushka Illaria, Nun Theophania, Anne, Mary, Addyson, Paul, Anne, Mary, Richard, Joanne, Matushka Theodora, Stephen, Alex, Eleanor, child Sophia, Steve, Tina, Helen, Paul, Reader Charles

Weekly Statistics

Saturday	28Aug	Vespers	5 faithful, 2 views
Sunday	29Aug	Divine Liturgy	24 faithful, 4 views

In the News

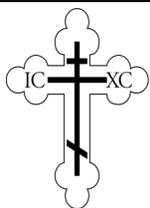
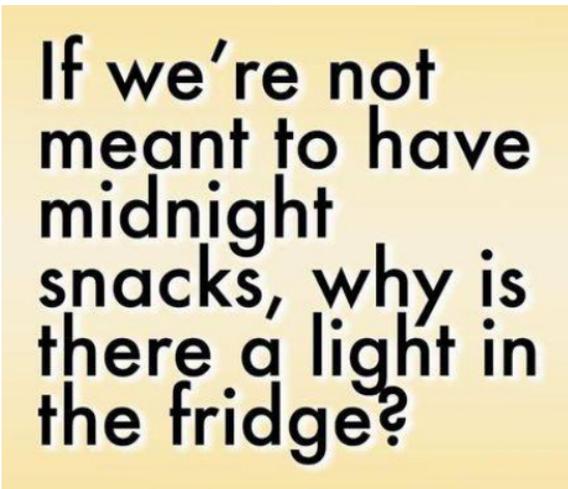
Videos of services can be found at:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfAOKICLMmH_-FIDe8SoWOWw

Remember—In two Sundays (19Sep) we begin our new Church School year! Bring your youth—it's important!

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” (Prov 22:6)

Parents cannot assure the eternal salvation of their child. But by omission or setting poor examples, they can damage the child's chances.... Do all that you can to find YOUR way into the kingdom, and they'll follow!

Logic 101



We must renew the intellect, transforming and changing the way we think. This is a conscious task at which each Christian must labor from the moment of baptism.

Priest Daniel Sysoev

Planting Seeds (Abbot Tryphon)

A number of years ago while visiting Holy Cross Monastery in West Virginia, one of their young monks drove me to Pennsylvania, into the heart of Amish country. While wandering around in a large hardware store that sold off the grid Amish supplies, I was mistaken by a little boy who was with his vacationing parents, as the “King of the Amish”. On another occasion, while traveling by ferry to Orcas Island in the State of Washington, a young boy thought I was Gandalf, the wizard from Lord of the Rings.

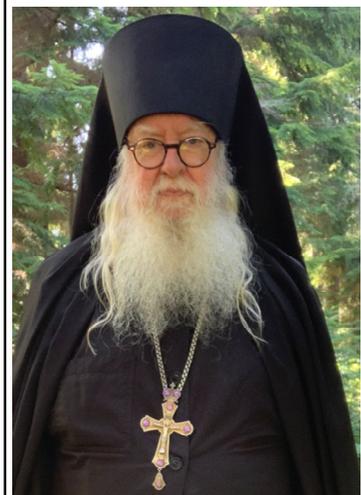
In both cases I saw this mistaken identity as one more reason I am glad we Orthodox clergy wear cas-

socks, and sport beards. In a society that has become increasingly secularized, and where Christian religious garb is rarely worn publicly, the identification with popular and good images from folklore, becomes a wonderful opening for the sharing of my Orthodox faith. It affords yet another moment for me to be the most loving, giving, caring, and approachable person they have ever met.

This in turn opens the way for the Holy Spirit to draw that person into a moment where they connect with that place within their own heart, where God awaits them. It also allows me to be a Johnny Appleseed of the Orthodox

Faith, planting seeds of faith.

Each Orthodox Christian is in fact, called to be a Johnny Appleseed in this our land, planting the seeds of faith among all those around us. You don't have to dress funny to plant seeds!



Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost *(from Holy Cross Monastery, holycross.org)*

Today's Gospel is a parable that follows Jesus' instructions to Peter when Peter asks how often he is to forgive his brother who sins against him. He asks if seven times is enough but Christ replies that it is to be seventy times seven, and then he follows this up with a parable on the same subject.

In this parable, we find that a servant is brought before the king and is asked to pay the exorbitant debt that he owes him. The servant is threatened and he then asks mercy of the King who then grants it to him and repeals the whole debt. Upon his release, the servant found a fellow servant who owed him a pittance and abused him, threatened him and demanded the money he was owed. Unable to pay his debt, he was thrown into prison. When the king found out about how the forgiven servant treated his fellow servant, calling the servant before himself, the King says that he should have forgiven the debt in the same way that his own was forgiven. He called him a wicked servant and then delivered him over until his debt should be paid.

The amount that the servant owes the king, ten thousand talents, is a sum that can never be paid off. This is an analogy of our offense towards God. Who can enumerate all of our offenses? What could we ever do to repay the debt we owe to God for His goodness? How many lifetimes would we have to live, without incurring further debt for our balance to be canceled? Our Saviour tells us: when we have done all those things of which we are commanded we are but unprofitable servants (Luke 17:10). Nevertheless, He still grants freedom to us debtors, freedom from the tyranny of our sins. This freedom that we receive from Christ is given not as a reward for works but for faithfulness to those who serve him well.

St. Nicodemus, in his homily entitled *What God Has Done for our Salvation* lists the many ways in which God has worked to bring about our salvation. He lists all that God has done noting:

- the preparation of a kingdom for those who are obedient;
- the blessedness and happiness prepared for us;
- His desire to make us children by grace and communicants of the Holy Spirit.
- He prepared the heavenly armies, the Angels, and Archangels whose work it is to protect men and save them waging war against the demons for our salvation;
- He has created the material world out of nothing and set us in it to rule over it;
- He gave us the Law and the commandments;
- He sent the prophets for no other reason than to teach us the way of salvation, and
- then He sent us His only begotten Son.

In contrast, what have we done that is so great, whether it be towards God or our neighbor, that we should not deserve the offenses which we have suffered from others, the hundred pence, compared with the innumerable times that we grieve our good God? Nevertheless, God easily and freely forgives our sins and requires that we do the same for our neighbor.

We are familiar with the Lord's prayer where we ask God to forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, but in this parable Christ adds something further. He says that our Heavenly Father will judge us based on our forgiveness of our brother's offenses or lack thereof when he says: "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses." Therefore, our brother's offenses do us no harm. Instead, it is we who harm ourselves when we do not forgive him. We are condemned by our own actions.

Commenting on this passage, St. John Chrysostom says: Let us not then thrust the sword into ourselves by being revengeful. For our brother is not grieved as much as we will be, if we do not forgive him but instead are angry with him. Herein, we draw upon ourselves the sentence of God to condemn us.

What are we to make of those who grieve us then? St. Isaac the Syrian instructs us not to hate him because we both have a common enemy, the devil, who deceives us and in our weakness, we fall prey to him. He writes:

Do not hate the sinner. We are, indeed, all laden with guilt. If for the sake of God you are moved to oppose him, weep over him. Why do you hate him? Hate his sins and pray for him, that you may imitate Christ Who was not wroth with sinners, but interceded for them. Do you see how he wept over Jerusalem? We are mocked by the devil in many instances, so why should we hate the man who is mocked by him who mocks us also?

Instead of being grieved by such occurrences, St. John Chrysostom says that we should know that this brother is our benefactor and not our enemy. He writes:

Say not then that he insulted thee, and slandered thee, and did unto thee ills beyond number; for the more thou tellest, so much the more dost thou declare him a benefactor. For he hath given thee an opportunity to wash away thy sins; so that the greater the injuries he hath done thee, so much greater is he become to thee a cause of a greater remission of sins.

For if we be willing, no one shall be able to injure us, but even our enemies shall advantage us in the greatest degree.

Abba Anthony said: "Our life and our death depend on our neighbor: if we gain our brother, we gain God; and if we scandalize our brother, we sin against Christ."

Throughout the lives of the Desert Fathers, we see this worked out whether it be Abba Agathon willing to exchange his body for that of a leper or when Abba Makarios upon finding that a certain elder was ill but also had no food to sustain him, walked to Alexandria to buy him some food. Is not the forgiveness of our brother's offenses toward us, not the smallest thing we can do compared to such examples of love towards our brothers? Is this not one of the easiest acts to do which will keep us from harm?

Dear brothers and sisters, may we love one another and forgive one another as God has forgiven us and not harm ourselves through anger and resentment. Especially on this day when we are soon to approach the dread Mysteries of Christ, may we not partake unworthily.

If you desire, O man, to eat the Body of the Master, Approach with fear, lest you be burnt; for It is fire. And when you drink the Divine Blood of communion, First be reconciled to them that have grieved you, Then dare to eat the Mystical Food.

We welcome you to our humble church, and we pray that your experience here will be spiritually rewarding, calling you back to pray with us at our next scheduled service.

St. Herman of Alaska Eastern Orthodox Church is established with the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan JOSEPH of New York, and is one of approximately 30 parishes or missions that are all part of the Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Diocese of the USA, Canada and Australia, Bulgarian Patriarchate.

Our worship is exclusively in English, and we use “contemporary” English translations of liturgical texts wherever possible. Singing is congregational. The Divine Liturgy is literally “the work of the people”, and as such your presence and participation in the service are essential parts of our worship. The worship of others here present is diminished when you are absent or unable to participate.

Participation in the Eucharist is important to us, and as such we ask you to recognize that it is limited to Orthodox Christians who have prepared for receiving the very Body and Blood of our Lord. Preparation includes fasting from the previous evening and recent confession. If you are not known to our priest, please let him know as you approach that you are Orthodox and prepared to receive! Please do not be offended if the priest so questions your approach—this is important, truly “our Life”!

Troparion for the Day: (Tone 2) *When You descended to death, O Life Immortal, You slayed hell with the splendor of Your God-head. And when from the depths You raised the dead, all the powers of heaven cried out: ‘O Giver of Life, Christ our God, glory to You!’*

Troparion to Saint Herman: *O blessed Father Herman of Alaska, / north-star of Christ’s holy Church, / the light of your holy life and great deeds / guides those who follow the Orthodox way. / Together we lift high the Holy Cross / you planted firmly in America. / Let all behold and glorify Jesus Christ, // singing His holy Resurrection.*

Glory to the Father....

Kontakion of the Day: (Tone 2) *Hell became afraid, O almighty Savior, seeing the miracle of Your Resurrection from the tomb! The dead arose! Creation, with Adam beheld this and rejoiced with You! And the world, O my Savior, praises You forever.*

Now and ever...

Kontakion to the Theotokos: *Steadfast Protectress of Christians, constant advocate before the Creator, despise not the entreating cries of us sinners, but in your goodness speedily come to help us who call on you in faith. Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O Theotokos, for you always protect those who honor you.*

Epistle: 1Cor 9:2-12

Gospel: Mat 18:23-35

Financial Tracker

August Total Income \$ 4,867
 August Total Expenses \$18,304
 Month Net Income (Loss) (\$13,437)
 *Loss due to Parking Lot Paving Expense

We’ve Left Facebook!

Find us on MeWe:
<https://mewe.com/group/607d8c9f4f460a30da00dbd3>

Web Tracker

StHerman Google Bus Site 3034 views/28 days
 Blog Site Views 8502 Total Views
 Web Site Views 103 in past 30 days

**St. Herman of Alaska
 Eastern Orthodox Church
 VRevFrBasil Rusen, Pastor**

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**CURRENT WEEK
 HIGHLIGHTED**

September 2021						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			Church New Year 1	2	3	4
			2Cor 3:4-11 Mat 23:29-39	2Cor 4:1-6 Mat 24:13-28	2Cor 4:13-18 Mat 24:27-33, 42-51	Vespers/Conf 6PM 1Cor 1:3-9 Mat 19:3-12
11th Sunday 5 Divine Liturgy 10AM	6	7	Nativity of Theotokos 8	9	10	Before Elev of Holy Cross 11 Vespers/Conf 6PM 1Cor 2:6-9 Mat 10:37-11:1
1Cor 9:2-12 Mat 18:23-35	T2 2Cor 5:10-15 Mark 1:9-15	2Cor 5:15-21 Mark 1:16-22	Phil 2:5-11; Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28	2Cor 7:1-10 Mark 1:29-35	2Cor 7:10-16 Mark 2:18-22	11th Sunday 5 Divine Liturgy 10AM
Before Elev of Holy Cross 12 Divine Liturgy 10AM	Vespertal Liturgy 6PM	13	Elevation of Holy Cross 14	15	16	St Sophia and Daughters 17 After Elev of Holy Cross 18 Vespers/Conf 6PM 1Cor 1:26-29 John 8:21-30
1Cor 15:1-11 Mat 19:16-26	T3 2Cor 8:7-15 Mat 3:6-12	1Cor 12:18-24; Jn 19:6, 11, 13-20, 25-35	Adult/Teen Study 7PM 2Cor 9:12-10:7 Mark 3:20-27	2Cor 10:7-18 Mark 3:28-35	2Cor 11:5-21 Mark 4:1-9	12th Sunday 6 Divine Liturgy 10AM
After Elev of Holy Cross 19 Divine Liturgy 10AM	20	21	22	23	24	25
1Cor 16:13-24 Mat 21:33-42	T4 2Cor 12:10-19 Luke 3:19-22	2Cor 12:20-13:2 Luke 3:23-4:1	Adult/Teen Study 7PM 2Cor 13:3-14 Luke 4:1-15	Gal 1:1-10, 20-2:5 Luke 4:16-22	Gal 2:6-10 Luke 4:22-30	13th Sunday 7 Divine Liturgy 10AM
14th Sunday 26 1st Luke	27	28	29	30		
2Cor 1:21-2:4 Luke 5:1-11	T5 Gal 2:11-16 Luke 4:37-44	Gal 2:21-3:7 Luke 5:12-16	Adult/Teen Study 7PM Gal 3:15-22 Luke 5:33-39	Gal 3:23-4:6 Luke 6:12-19		