

Title: **-S-** Forgiving Others As God Forgives Us

Object: Soccer Ball

Scripture: “Then Peter came and said to Him, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.’ ” (Matthew 18:21-22)

Do you like sports? **-S-** What do you think the most popular sport in the world is?

-S- Soccer is played by more people and in more countries than any other sport. I played soccer as I went through school, because I am old, that was before soccer was well known in America. As in any sport knowing and following the rules is very important. Do any of you know what this is? **-S-** *Show Yellow Card on screen.* During a soccer game the referee holds up a “Yellow Card” to warn a player who has broken a rule or has done something un-sportsman like. **-S-** If one player were to kick another that would be un-sportsman like. When the referee holds up the “Yellow Card” it tells the player not to do that again. If the player breaks the rule the second time the referee holds up a **-S-** “RED Card”. *Show Red Card on screen.* Do you know what a “Red Card” means? It means the referee has removed the player from the game! In soccer you get one warning and then the second time you are out of the game.

-S- How many times do you think a person should be forgiven for doing something wrong? **-S-** Once? **-S-** Twice? **-S-** Three times? If you were to ask Jesus how many times a person should be forgiven – do you know what He would say? We know the answer because Jesus gave it to us in the Bible.

-S- “Peter came and said to *Jesus*, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’ I bet Peter thought he was being generous to say we should forgive someone seven times. To me, forgiving someone seven times does seem generous. What do you think? Jesus did not agree with Peter. **-S-** Jesus said to *Peter*, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.’ ” (Matthew 18:21-22) **-S-** Wow! Let me do the math in my head, **-S-** 70×7 **-S-** = **-S-** 490. I think before I got to 490 I would lose count and my patience. I think Jesus was trying to get Peter to understand and I think He wants you and me to understand that **-S-** we should not try to keep count of the wrongs someone has done against us, but if they are truly sorry, we should continue to forgive them.

-S- God gives His children, who are saved sinners more than two chances like in soccer. **-S-** For those who come to God truly sorry for their sins, God does not have a “Yellow or Red Card”, but He forgives them because of His deep love for Jesus, His Son.

Dear heavenly Father, we are thankful that you love us and forgive us of our sins without counting the number of times. Help us love and forgive others as You have forgiven us. We know this will honor You and show the world the change Jesus makes in our hearts. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

READING – Psalm 90

-S- The Savior Comes

September 14, 2014

John 11:17-37

Sermon #63

-S- One unsettling aspect of life is that we have no control over death. The reality is that life can end at any moment. We all know people whose life ended suddenly and unexpectedly. As Job lamented, **-S-** “Man, who is born of woman, is short-lived and full of turmoil. Like a flower he comes forth and withers. He also flees like a shadow and does not remain.”^(Job 14:1-2) **-S-** For Christians death is not the extinguishing of life’s light. True death extinguishes the physical lamp; dawn has come and we now live in the light of God. When John Owen, the great Puritan of the 17th century, laid in his bed near death his secretary was writing a letter dictated by Owen to a friend, **-S-** “I am still in the land of the living.” **-S-** “Stop,” said Owen. **-S-** “Change that and say, I am yet in the land of the dying, but I hope soon to be in the land of the living.” For us, who God has called and believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior, this is the correct attitude towards death. We live for Christ and live for the gain of those we serve - both God and His children. To die is also gain, for we enter eternity in heaven, our real home. I enjoyed what Mark Twain said, **-S-** “Let us endeavor so to live that when we come to die even the undertaker will be sorry.”

Most people spend their entire lives working to make their mark in society and to accumulate possessions. Yet, in the instant we die, death snatches our possessions and gives them to someone else. Now that I have depressed you – I believe you will be encouraged this morning as we examine this story of death, but death with hope. The beautiful truth is that death does not end believer’s hopes and dreams. Our hope is found in Christ, who conquered death and our dreams are of heaven.

John MacArthur wrote, **-S-** “Death marks the beginning of true life in glorified perfection and perfect fellowship with Christ.” This miracle of raising Lazarus from death formed a bridge between Jesus’ public ministry and His preparation of His disciples for His leaving and for their lives in ministry without Him directly there. This second scene of this story written by John is about Jesus and His coming in hope. Verses 17 to 37 sets the stage for the miracle to come. This passage demonstrates Jesus’ love and care for those who are His and can be divided into three parts: **-S-** Jesus Comes, **-S-** Jesus’ Claim and **-S-** Jesus’ Compassion.

-S- **Jesus Comes** – *Verses 17 to 19*

PRAYER

We begin at verse 17, **-S-** “So when Jesus came, He found that he (*Lazarus*) had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off; ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning *their* brother.” The Jewish tradition was to bury the deceased the day they died. This is confirmed by what Luke wrote, **-S-** “As *Peter* heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last ... The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him. Immediately *Sapphira* fell at *Peter’s* feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.” (Acts 5:5-6 & 10) Jews did not practice embalming, so time was short before the body began to decay. **-S-** John’s recording that Lazarus “had already been in the tomb four days” may be there to show Lazarus was truly dead, not mostly dead, as in the *Princess Bride*. **-S-** The tradition among the Jewish people was that one’s soul hovered above the body for three days after death. On the fourth day the soul

would notice the body was beginning to decompose and depart. Jews considered death irreversible on the fourth day. Therefore, Lazarus' resurrection could only be attributed to a divine act of God.

-S- John also notes that Bethany is only about two miles east of Jerusalem and this tells us two things: **-S-** First, it makes clear the risk to Jesus by coming so close to Jerusalem were the leadership plotted and sought His death. **-S-** Second, since Lazarus, Mary and Martha were a well-to-do family, as the pound of perfumed nard that Mary anointed Jesus with would indicate, many Jews would have traveled from Jerusalem to show their respect for Lazarus. **-S-** The “**Jews**”, as John has written throughout his gospel, meant the Jewish leadership. So now, we have a strong indication that the Jews coming from Jerusalem included those in leadership who were hostile toward Jesus. **-S-** The traditional period of mourning was one month, with the first seven days being the most intense and having the most visitors. Since Lazarus was in the tomb for only four days, the number of people would have been at its largest when Jesus arrived.

-S- **Jesus' Claim** – *Verses 20 to 27*

The story continues, **-S-** “**Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him, but Mary stayed at the house.** ²¹ **Martha then said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.** ²² **Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.’** ²³ **Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’** **-S-** ²⁴ **Martha said to Him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.** ²⁵ **Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies,** ²⁶ **and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?’** ²⁷ **She said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; I**

have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, *even He who comes into the world.*' ” The behavior of Martha and Mary is consistent with what Luke recorded; Martha was working and taking care of people and chores, while Mary is quiet and sitting still. According to Jewish culture those who suffered the loss of a loved one sat while the other mourners stood and comforted them. Because Martha was a “doer” she leaves the house and goes to meet Jesus.

When Martha arrives her words are a mixture of grief and wavering faith. She says, **-S-** “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.” She believed that if Jesus had been there her brother would not have died. Does this imply that she felt Jesus had to be present in order to prevent Lazarus’ death? After all she knew Jesus had healed the nobleman’s son from a distance in chapter four. **-S-** By what Martha said it would appear that her faith in Jesus did not extend to Jesus resurrecting her brother. **-S-** This is supported by what Martha says in verse 39, look with me, in your Bible, “Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been *dead four days.*” Perhaps, the possibility of Jesus raising the dead did not even cross her mind. After all we have a perspective from Scripture that Martha did not have. We know from the scriptures that Jesus raised the dead and that He will return, but what about now, today? **-S-** How about our faith in Jesus? **-S-** Do we believe Jesus can do anything, but that His power is limited until His second coming? **-S-** Jesus can do anything, but is that somehow in the future?

Martha follows by saying to Jesus, **-S-** “Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.” She certainly showed faith in Jesus’ ability to heal the sick, but seems to lack faith the Jesus will raise the dead. **-S-** What limits do we place on Jesus? Martha is about to find out there are no limits for Jesus, the incarnate God. Jesus patiently wants to assure Martha saying to her, **-S-** “Your brother will

rise again.” Jesus is speaking about the here and now, but Martha misses the point and thinks Jesus is referring to Lazarus rising from the dead at the end of the age.

-S- The resurrection of the body was taught in the Old Testament, the only Testament, that Martha and the others knew. Daniel wrote, **-S-** “Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace *and* everlasting contempt.” (Daniel 12:2) The resurrection was believed by the Pharisees, but not the Sadducees as Luke recorded the actions and words of Paul, **-S-** ⁶ “But perceiving that one group were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, Paul *began* crying out in the Council, ‘Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!’ **-S-** ⁷ As he said this, there occurred a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. ⁸ For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.” (Acts 23:6-8) Martha and the others understood there would be a resurrection of the dead in the future both from the Old Testament writings and Jesus’ teachings. She says to Jesus in verse 24, **-S-** “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” It appears that Martha thought Jesus had the power to raise Lazarus in the future, but did not perceive He could do it in the present.

Jesus now challenges Martha to move beyond thinking of the distance future and to place her complete faith in Him. Jesus now delivers the fifth great “I AM” of the seven found in the Gospel of John saying to Martha, **-S-** “I am the resurrection and the life.” **-S-** Jesus has the power to resurrect and give life in eternity past, in the present and in the future. Jesus continues and pushes Martha to understand, **-S-** ²⁵ “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.” Verses 25 and 26 are

not redundant for they teach separate, but related truths. **-S-** In verse 25 he who believes “in” Jesus will be physically raised from the dead to be with Christ. Jesus explained earlier in John, **-S-** “For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.” (John 5:21) **-S-** Verse 26 then makes clear that since “everyone who believes in” Jesus has eternal life; they “will never die” spiritually. **-S-** This makes clear that physical death does not extinguish eternal spiritual life. Paul declared his understanding of these two principles saying, **-S-** ⁵⁵ “O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?’ *(Paul is quoting the prophet Hosea 13:14)* ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; ⁵⁷ but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 15:55-57) Jesus now challenges Martha **-S-** “Do you believe this?” **-S-** Jesus is not asking her if she believes He will raise Lazarus, but does she believe that He alone is the source of resurrection power and of eternal life. Some who call themselves Christian hear what Jesus says, they will reason and argue about what Jesus claims. But it is true belief to embrace it, trust it and live it. **-S-** To believe “in” Jesus as your Lord and Savior is to receive God’s Word, both written and living, and enjoy the reality and power He gives, which results in comfort, peace, joy and hope the lost world simply does not understand. **-S-** Are you living by faith? **-S-** Do you know Jesus’ comfort, peace, joy and hope? **-S-** The depth of your faith results in the measure of your enjoyment of Christ.

Here we observe Martha’s deep faith “in” Jesus. Martha responds to Jesus’ question, “Do you believe this?” with, **-S-** “Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world.” **-S-** Like Andrew, John the Baptist and Nathanael of the first chapter of John and the rest of the disciples, “Those who were in the boat worshiped Him *(Jesus)*, saying, “You are

certainly God's Son!"^(Matthew 14:33) Martha calls Jesus the **-S-** "Son of God" and this testified as the Old Testament predicted that Jesus is "He who comes into the world" as the Deliverer sent by God the Father. As the prophet Micah wrote, **-S-** "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, (אֶפְרַתָּה [ef·rawth] which is near Bethel where Rachel, the wife of Jacob and mother of Benjamin, died and was buried.) *too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One (the Messiah) will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.*"^(Micah 5:2) Jesus Christ and the New Testament always build upon and confirm the Old.

-S- **Jesus' Compassion** *Verses 28 to 37*

Jesus has comforted Martha and affirmed her faith that He is the Christ. So now, we begin reading again in verse 28, **-S-** "... she went away and called Mary her sister, saying secretly, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.'²⁹ And when she heard it, she got up quickly and was coming to Him."

-S-³⁰ "Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha met Him.³¹ Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and consoling her, when they saw that Mary got up quickly and went out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. **-S-**³² Therefore, when Mary came where Jesus was, she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, 'Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.'³³ When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her *also* weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled, **-S-**³⁴ and said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to Him, 'Lord, come and see.'³⁵ Jesus wept.³⁶ So the Jews were saying, 'See how He loved him!'³⁷ But some of them said, 'Could not this man, who opened

the eyes of the blind man, have kept this man also from dying?’ ” This last question in verse 37 is answered as we will see next week if the Lord tarries.

Martha now goes to tell Mary secretly, **-S-** “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” (v. 28) Mary is still back at the house and Jesus is outside the village. **-S-** Martha may have told Mary in secret to keep the hostile Jewish leaders away from Jesus. However, **-S-** Martha’s attempt for privacy fails as the mourners “followed her (Mary), supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there.” (v. 31) **-S-**

When Mary arrives at where Jesus was in her grief she “fell at His feet, saying to Him, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.’” (v.32) The mourners who followed Mary would have also been weeping and wailing.

According to Jewish custom families were to hire at least two flute players and professional wailing women. **-S-** Jesus sees the confusion and weeping and “He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled.” (v.33) The English translation of

-S- “deeply moved” is misleading. **-S-** This very long Greek word, which I will not even attempt to pronounce, is only used three times in the New Testament and would properly be translated as “stern warning” or “scolding” and includes the emotions of anger, outrage and indignation. **-S-** With this understanding John might have desired to indicate that the mourners were acting as pagans, who have no eternal hope and upset Jesus. For even the Jews believed in the resurrection as shown earlier.

Jesus asks, **-S-** “Where have you laid him?” Remember, everyone had followed Mary as she sought Jesus and they were not at the tomb. The people in the crowd who said, **-S-** “Lord, come and see” may have been followers of Jesus or had respect for Him as a prophet since they used the title of “Lord”. Then follows the first verse I memorized **-S-**³⁵ “Jesus wept.” The Greek verb translated as “wept” is

used only here in the entire New Testament. **-S-** In contrast to the loud wailing of the mourners, this word means silent weeping with tears. Jesus tears were for His love of Lazarus and for the fallen world of sinners all around Him. **-S-** Verse 35 shows Jesus' humanity, He truly was "A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." (Isaiah 53:3) Jesus did indeed weep for Lazarus whom He loved, but He did not weep without hope as those around Him that were lost. We too, weep for those we love and have died. But for those who are saved, in spite of our lost, we also weep with tears of joy for they are now with Christ in heaven for all eternity. **-S-** My beloved, I pray this morning has given you a better understanding of the hope you have in Christ. Can you declare as Paul and Hosea did, **-S-**⁵⁵ "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?"⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;⁵⁷ but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:55-57) **-S-** Jesus now challenges you, as He did Martha, "Do you believe this?" If so - then live – live each day for Christ, our eternal hope!