

16th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**ST. PETERS ANGLICAN CHURCH BUNDOORA****Sunday 13th September 2026****Fr. Stephen Monsieigneur****Readings:**¹ Exodus 14:19-31 / Psalm 114 / Romans 14:1-14 / Matthew 18:21-35**Series Title:** Called to Discipleship, Who Me? How?**Today's Theme:** *"Mercy Received, Mercy Given"***Exodus 14:19-31**

⁹ The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. ²⁰ It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided. ²² The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. ²³ The Egyptians pursued and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. ²⁴ At the morning watch the Lord, in the pillar of fire and cloud, looked down on the Egyptian army and threw the Egyptian army into a panic. ²⁵ He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt."

The Pursuers Drowned

²⁶ Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers." ²⁷ So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. ²⁸ The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. ²⁹ But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. ³⁰ Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. ³¹ Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

Psalm 114*God's Wonders at the Exodus*

- ¹ When Israel went out from Egypt,
the house of Jacob from a people of strange language,
² Judah became God's sanctuary,
Israel his dominion.
³ The sea looked and fled;
Jordan turned back.
⁴ The mountains skipped like rams,
the hills like lambs.

¹ All scriptural quotations are lifted from New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. (NRSVUE)
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- ⁵ Why is it, O sea, that you flee?
 O Jordan, that you turn back?
⁶ O mountains, that you skip like rams?
 O hills, like lambs?
⁷ Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord,
 at the presence of the God of Jacob,
⁸ who turns the rock into a pool of water,
 the flint into a spring of water.

Romans 14:1-14

Do Not Judge Another

14 Welcome those who are weak in faith but not for the purpose of quarrelling over opinions. ² Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³ Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat, for God has welcomed them. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on slaves of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

⁵ Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. ⁶ Those who observe the day, observe it for the Lord. Also those who eat, eat for the Lord, since they give thanks to God, while those who abstain, abstain for the Lord and give thanks to God.

⁷ For we do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸ If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God."

¹² So then, each one of us will be held accountable.

Do Not Make Another Stumble

¹³ Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother or sister. ¹⁴ I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who considers it unclean.

Matthew 18:21-35

Forgiveness

²¹ Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" ²² Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

²³ "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you

everything.’²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt.²⁸ But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him by the throat he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt.³¹ When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place.³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.’³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt.³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

SERMON

As disciples even today the experience of being mocked is real. This experience is varied for each of us but in some way for each of us can be a source of hurt and fuel anger toward another. How many of you contain some frustration, some anger toward someone else? What about that person who cheated, embarrassed or even deliberately hurt you?

In today's readings, we journey from the shores of the Red Sea to Jesus teaching on forgiveness. Though these passages come from different parts of Scripture, very different times in the life of Israel, God's people, they are united by a single message: those who have received God's mercy are called to extend mercy to others.

In Exodus, the Israelites stand trapped between Pharaoh's army and the sea. They have nowhere to run and no power to save themselves. Yet God acts on their behalf. Parting the waters, God leads them through on dry ground, and delivers them from their enemies. The story is not about Israel's strength, courage, or ingenuity. It is about God's faithfulness. When God's people were helpless, God made a way where there was no way.²

In declaring, ‘The sea flees, the Jordan turns back, the mountains skip like rams, and the earth trembles before the presence of the Lord’. The Psalmist reflecting on this same event reminds us that God's saving acts are never ordinary events. When God moves, creation itself responds. Worship begins with remembering. Faith grows stronger when we recall what God has already done.³

Yet Scripture never allows us to stop at remembrance alone. God's mercy always calls forth a response.

In Romans, Paul addresses Christians who disagree with one another. Some hold different convictions about food. Others differ about the observance of special days. Rather than taking sides, Paul reminds them that God has welcomed them all. Because they belong to the Lord, they must learn to live together without contempt or judgment.⁴

² Exodus 14:19-31

³ Psalm 114

⁴ Romans 14:1-14

This is a difficult lesson for every generation of Christians. We are often tempted to divide ourselves into camps of the right and the wrong, the enlightened and the misguided. Yet Paul asks a searching question: Who are we to condemn those whom God has accepted? If God has welcomed our brother or sister, then we, too, must open our hearts.

The Gospel reading takes this theme even further. Peter approaches Jesus with what he probably considers a generous proposal. "How many times should I forgive? As many as seven times?"⁵ Jesus responds by exploding all limits: not seven times, but seventy-seven times. He then tells the parable of a servant who is forgiven an unimaginably large debt but refuses to forgive a fellow servant who owes him a comparatively small amount.

The point is unmistakable. We who have received God's mercy cannot withhold mercy from others. "I am sorry" does not equate to fixing a problem but it demands forgiveness. Mercy is not weakness but a demonstration of forgiveness.

Every one of us stands in the position of that first servant. We have received forgiveness that we could never earn and grace that we could never repay. Yet how easily we cling to resentment, nurse old wounds, and keep records of wrongs. Jesus teaches that forgiveness is not an optional extra for disciples. No, Forgiveness is the natural fruit of a life transformed by grace.

The progression through today's readings is simply one of seamless beauty in its display and recognition of divine love.

God delivers Israel. The psalm celebrates God's saving power. Paul calls believers to welcome one another. Jesus commands us to forgive one another. The movement is from God's action toward us to our action toward others.

Now I cannot speak for anyone but myself but when I truly reflect on how much God has forgiven me, I cannot receive except by allowing my own judgment to give way to compassion. My own pride must give way to humility. My own resentment must give way to forgiveness.

So the question before us today is simple: Where do we need to practice the mercy we have received?

Perhaps there is someone we have judged too quickly or through anger. Perhaps there is a grievance we have carried for years. Perhaps there is a relationship waiting to be healed. We are called to forgive not simply because it is what God does for us, but because it is necessary if we are to grow in relationship.

The God who parted the sea, who welcomed us into his family, and forgave our immeasurable debt now invites us to become people of mercy ourselves. People of growth. For those who have received mercy are called to give mercy.

⁵ Matthew 18:22

Let us pray,

God of boundless love, you have shown humanity mercy in so many ways. May we who while undeserving have been benefited from your merciful grace, we who hold grudges, having been forgiven by you, be strengthened that we might share the grace you have so generously shared with us so that we might serve others with mercy and forgiveness who have faulted us. We ask for your generous spirit to fill our hearts with hope that anger will give way to peace. In Jesus name we say, Amen.