

Our guiding verses this week: ²¹ *Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?”* ²² *Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times. – Matthew 18:21-22*

Monday

Read Hosea chapters 1-3

Acknowledge that you are angry and need to forgive. Have you excused yourself from this message because you aren’t angry, don’t get angry, would not be outraged, and certainly never have feelings of hatred? Who are you trying to fool? God is angry in Hosea. The mere existence of anger is not evil, but what are you going to do about it? This is about you. This is about me. This is about us. Being a Jesus follower isn’t about pretending not to be angry – it is about what you do in response to that anger. If you haven’t been angry at what others “out there” have done at some point in 2020, I welcome you back to our planet from your time away. I’m not saying you’ve spent the year spewing fire and bile (maybe you have), but acknowledge if you’ve been angry, hostile, taken pot shots at different groups with snide comments, jaded memes, or angry cartoons, or given up on people, elements of society, or the whole thing this year.

Tuesday

Read Hosea chapters 4-7

Identify who you are angry at. Be as specific as you can. Is it a specific politician or leader, a party, a group, an organization, supporters, a mindset, a race, a religion, people who identify a certain way, etc.? Don’t pretend that your anger doesn’t exist just because your rage might not be socially acceptable in all circles. You aren’t going to heal and forgive if you can’t name it before God. God already knows. He wants you to know so you can work on forgiving together.

Process your anger. What are the reasons you angry at those you have just identified? Perhaps your anger has some good foundations. Beware. No one but God is right all the time. Only God is always in the truth. In politics and in society, no one has a stranglehold on truth and a broken clock is right twice a day. Process your anger. Acknowledge your pain. Identify your fear and anxiety. Forgiveness is not about denying any of those things, it is about moving forward in grace and mercy in light of the hurt.

Wednesday

Read Hosea chapters 8-10

Glorify God by forgiving. When you forgive – especially when you forgive people and groups who don’t know who you are and you don’t personally know them – you are glorifying God and exalting Jesus by living the truth they proclaim. You are honoring God by having mercy on His children that cause you so much grief. You are embracing Jesus’ teaching to forgive infinitely. You are loving God and others as you love yourself. This isn’t all just about you feeling better, it is about being, doing, and living as Jesus teaches us to live. You can’t hold onto your anger forever because you are angry at a semi-anonymous mass of people, or because you think you feel good when you are enraged, or because you think your anger is holy. Jesus teaches us to forgive infinitely. And consider the words that Jesus uses to finish the story I told the children earlier from Matthew 18, “‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.” You have been forgiven much, you also should forgive.

Thursday

Read Hosea chapters 11-14

Engage in the world. Our society needs you to be active in it as a Jesus follower to bring light to our world. Taking your light and going home isn’t going to make the world a better place. Engage. It is much harder to hate people you know. It is much harder to be angry with people you genuinely and consistently pray for. You don’t need to get involved with politics, but if you do, how are you going to do it in a way that honors all of God’s children and brings glory to the name of Jesus and His Church? How are you going to engage with people whose identity, politics, beliefs, etc., you aren’t sure about so that you can see them as a beloved child of God? How are you going to be a living witness to the forgiveness of God today?

Friday

In preparation for Sunday worship, please read and reflect upon Proverbs 3:5-8 and Luke 18:9-14.