

**"IMAGINE ALL THE PEOPLE" - FEBRUARY 24, 2019**  
**THE SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY**  
**GENESIS 45:3-11, 15; LUKE 6:27-38**

**Promises for your pocket or purse - Take notes and carry them with you.**

**How do you do it? Loving your spouse and children and family bless us in many ways, and yet, can be a challenge at times. Our extended family, circle of friends, co-workers, neighbors, touch our lives in many ways, too, and yet, also are not always easy. But how do you get along with your enemies? Do you carry grudges? Even if a relationship never reconciles, even if security or comfort are never a possibility, how do you go forward? In a world that often begs us to error on the side of caution, what can we do to reach out without setting up ourselves? Jesus challenges us with a new epiphany today, to call on his goodness and light to love our enemies, to do unto others, to give and to expect nothing in return. Imagine if all of God's people could set aside what makes them self-motivated, and instead, celebrate what makes us unique and different in God's own image! What could we do together? But how could we do such a thing? The One who treasures us first, accepts us while we were still sinners; died for us while we were still his enemies. Here is another epiphany to trust anew: Jesus loves us always, even when we are not loveable! The One who treasures us first, is driven to let us know, when we feel like loving ourselves is not easy, too big of a challenge, God is faithful. Here is just one thing Jesus longs for; to imagine all the people; unity, for us to be one with God and one with each other; this is God's own image, vision, purpose from the beginning; and in Jesus, God reconciles, calls, saves, treasures, graces, one and all!**

1. Imagine all the people, yet there is so much that divides us in this world.
  - A. Unfortunately, we let a lot of things get between us, one another, and the One who treasures us first. Luke 6:32-34, 37  
  
Insecurity; Status; Differences; Comfort; Convenience; Commitment.
  - B. Just like us, Joseph and his brothers knew about many of these pressures and temptations. They had been jealous, egotistical, concerned only for self; and now they had the chance to put those differences aside.  
Genesis 45:3-11, 15
2. The One who treasures us first, calls out to us with his grace and light to love our enemies, to do unto others as we would have them do unto us. Luke 6:27, 31, 35
  - A. Love our enemies and do good to those who hate us, ...turn the other cheek, ... do not withhold your shirt, ... lend money.
    - i. We are to let our lights shine so others see our good works and give glory to our Father in heaven.

- ii. Jesus longs for us to do for others, those who, too, belong to him; those who, too, are created in God's own image!
- B. We are to do to others and for others, thanks to Jesus who did for us, gave his all, for each of us, one and all! Luke 6:31-37
- i. The One who treasures us first, places great value on us, though we are sinners, though we do not make God first.
  - ii. What we forget at times is that Jesus places the same value on everyone else.
    - a. No one is valued greater than another.
    - b. No one is washed more thoroughly in baptism.
    - c. No one was died for more, risen for more, forgiven more, saved more, loved more, than another!
- C. Thanks be to God, while we were still his enemies, God sent Jesus for our sake; those created in God's own image!
- i. He was struck on the cheek, and he turned and offered the other. He gave us his all in redeeming and buying us back, he expects nothing in return, he knows how human we are. Our Father offered mercy, because we could not.
  - ii. The One who treasures us first, has already done unto us; let us go and do likewise. Let us go with the power of God's grace, and let us together imagine all God's people!