

"OH, YOU THINK SO!" - SEPTEMBER 17, 2017
THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
GENESIS 50:15-21; ROMANS 14:1-12; MATTHEW 18:21-35
Promises for your pocket or purse - Take notes and carry them with you.

Some things just do not make any sense; even when it is so easy to say, 'Oh, you think so!' At times, we act so contrary, so ironically, to what history or our heart tells us. Just when we are trying to make positive changes in our life, we make a mistake. Just when we expected the one person we needed most to be on our side, we hear, 'Oh, you think so,' and they abandon us and we feel all the more ashamed. Thanks be to God there are those times when we are sure no one cares, that no one will be there for us, and then suddenly we are blessed to hear, 'Oh, you think so,' and we are surrounded or lifted up. In our faith journey, there is much that still does not make sense. Like, when we try to make God first, only to have him come in last. Like, when we are sure we have sinned too much or too deeply to ever be taken in by our Savior, only to have him say, 'The debt is paid.' Like, when after receiving God's unconditional love and forgiveness, we turn around and mistreat or judge others, showing no compassion or mercy. Contrary to the extreme, ironic as it may appear, just when you think God would rightly say, 'Oh, you think so?' God in Jesus forgives you once again. Even when it makes no sense, celebrate and trust a new beginning is given to you in God's abundant mercy and grace!

1. Contrary to wishful and prayerful devotion, even a new beginning in grace does not mean we are not human. It doesn't take much to cast judgment on someone else. Matthew 18:28; Romans 14:4,10-12
 - A. 'Oh, you think so;' we would rather find fault in others than assume our own responsibility.
 - B. 'Oh, you think so;' we would rather cast blame than admit our own role.
2. Thanks to a new beginning in grace, it does not take much to tell someone you are truly sorry. Genesis 50:17; Matthew 18:26; 28-35
 - A. Saying you are sorry simply requires you to be honest and complete in your confession.
 - B. What takes more effort, a little more grace, is to repent; to hear the Holy Spirit say, 'Oh, you think so,' and turn you around.

3. Thanks to a new beginning in grace, it does not take much once you are ready, to share the gift of forgiveness, to receive the gift of forgiveness.
Genesis 50:19; Matthew 18:21-22,27
 - A. It can take time and healing to be ready to say, "I forgive you."
 - B. 'Oh, you think so?!' Saying, "I forgive you," does not mean it was 'ok.' It means you and I will be 'ok,' we are 'ok,' now let's go forward in a new way.
 - C. Thanks be to God, we are blessed with a new beginning in God's abundant mercy and grace! 'Oh, you think so,' indeed, we are forgiven to forgive one another in Jesus' name!

A few simple math problems:

$\$10 \times 8 \text{ hours} = \$80/\text{day} \times 5 \text{ days} = 40 \text{ hours/week}, \$400/\text{week}$

$\$80/\text{day}/(1 \text{ denari}) \times 100 \text{ days} (100 \text{ denari}) = \$8000;$

$\$400 \times 50 = \$20,000/\text{year}; \$20,000 \times 15 \text{ years}(1 \text{ talent}) = \$300,000/\text{talent}$

$\$300,000 \times 10,000 \text{ talents} = \$3,000,000,000$

In the parable, the slave that approached his master, was forgiven 10,000 talents, a debt relative to the \$3 billion, and when that debt was forgiven, that same slave would not forgive the debt of his fellow slave, 100 denari, a debt relative to \$8000. God's grace forgives us far more than we deserve, and sadly we struggle to forgive others, even when what they have done to us is often relatively minor. Please note: Big hurts between people require time and processing and God's help and grace to go forward in new ways.

4. Thanks to a new beginning in grace, it does not take much of God's mercy to know the forgiving power of Jesus. Jesus could make it hard for us; could say to us, "Oh, you think so;" could have solidified an ending for us; and yet, we are graced with a new beginning! We know it took so much to provide us with forgiveness and new life! Let us not make too little of that. In Jesus, God's grace, compassion and mercy are for real. Let us be honest about who we are, accept what forgiveness is, and trust all that God is! Romans 14:7-9; Matthew 18:27