

HOMILY FOR THE 24TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME MATTHEW 2017

1. Wrath and anger are interesting emotions
 - a. We would agree with Sirach, they are hateful things
 - b. Unless of course, someone has offended us
 - c. It can be very hard to let go of anger
 - d. We may argue within ourselves,
 - i. I know I should forgive,
 - ii. but that person does not deserve to be forgiven
 - iii. It is too painful
 - e. Both Jesus and Sirach suggest that our difficulty in forgiving another is not really because the other has been so evil
2. They are telling us maybe we need to look at our pride
 - a. Could we be putting ourselves above God, making ourselves the central person in the world
3. In Jesus' story, a king has decided to settle accounts with his servants
 - a. A servant is brought in who owes so much that there is no way for him to repay the king
 - b. King says "I might as well just sell you and your family into slavery, at least I will get some return"
 - c. Servant begs for forgiveness, finds a soft spot in the king and he forgives the debt
 - d. At this point in the story, Jesus listeners would be thinking how lucky that servant was
 - e. Could not imagine any king being that forgiving
 - f. Servant at this point would be the hero of the story, who could imagine anyone able to save himself and his family from the anger of a king
4. Jesus then pulls a switch in the story
 - a. The servant leaves the palace, probably proud of himself, being able to convince the king to forgive his debt
 - b. He meets a fellow servant who owes him a tiny amount in comparison to his own debt
 - c. This servant uses the identical language the first did with the king
 - d. "be patient with me and I will repay you"
 - e. Instead of being generous, the first servant has the other thrown into prison
 - f. Jesus would hardly have needed to continue the story
 - g. Listeners would have demanded that this servant be reported to the king and be punished
 - h. That kind of arrogance and self-importance would be offensive to everyone
5. Story came out of the very practical question that Peter asked of Jesus

- a. If someone hurts me, offends me deeply, how often do I have to keep forgiving him
 - b. Seven times sounds like a lot, I struggle to forgive once
 - c. Jesus throws out seventy-seven times
6. Both Sirach and Jesus are asking us to remember we are not God
- a. When we are struggling with forgiveness of another, we need to step back and look at how generous God is with us
 - b. He has made us everything we are
 - c. We owe God continuous praise for his love and forgiveness
 - d. How often each day do we even think about God, much less ignore His will for us
 - e. When we are struggling with forgiving another, which probably happens a lot
 - f. We should imagine throwing ourselves down at the throne of God and ask Him to forgive us
 - g. Once we have the humility to admit to ourselves that we are not better than God, we may actually begin to be able to forgive each other