

## PRELUDE

## GREETING &amp; GATHERING

***Guy next to me on the plane by Warren L. Molton****August 20, 2020*

He said he was a fallen catholic, lower case, and smiled. Said he didn't intend to be, often pretended not to be, but was. Said that God for him was like the guy next door, a retired cop who packed a .38 and a billy club wherever he went, but was nice as Hell. Insisted that the only Jesus he ever really knew was his best bud, who lived across the street, and on the other side lived the Holy Spirit, a loving little old lady of ninety who made the best sweet potato pie with toasted meringue he ever tasted.

He talked sort of sideways to me with his fingers laced and his elbows braced on both arm rests, chin on his hands. When I asked if he ever prayed, he dropped his hands into his lap as though startled or just caught, and turning toward me, he said, All the time anymore, since I had to put down my tired and sick old dog, Sam. I took him to the vet to do it. Laying there on the table with his great head cupped in my hands, he looked at me with the most loving and forgiving eyes I ever saw, like he was human and I was his God, or something.

...

When hardness of heart threatens our vision of holy love, God's mercy clears our view. Forgiveness is the glory of Jesus Christ, and forgiveness continues his work on earth. Lord Jesus, forgive us our trespasses, and lead us to forgive those who trespass against us.

## CALL TO WORSHIP

When grudges hold on to our hearts, **God's love frees us to forgive.**  
 When quarrels divide us from one another, **Christ's compassion leads us to reconciliation.**  
 When we feel hardhearted, **The Holy Spirit's presence invites us to peace.**  
 When all hope of fellowship seems lost, **The grace of our Lord restores our hope.**  
 Come, let us worship God, who inspires to forgive ourselves and others.

## HYMN - ALL MY HOPE IS FIRMLY GROUNDED UMH 132

1. All my hope is firmly grounded in the great  
 2. and living Lord; who whenever I most need him, never fails to keep his word. God I must wholly trust, God the ever good and just.

2. Tell me, who can trust our nature, human, weak, and insecure? Which of all the airy castles can the hurricane endure? Built on sand, naught can trust, God the ever good and just.

3. But in every time and season, out of love's abundant store, God sustains the whole creation, fount of life forever more. We who share earth and air count on God's unfailing care.

4. Thank, O thank, our Creator, thru God's only Son this day; God alone, the heavenly potter, made us out of earth and clay. Quick to heed, strong indeed, God shall all the people feed.

## PRAYER

The forgiving power of Jesus our Savior be with you. **And also with you.**

Let us pray responsively:

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the world, that a spirit of respect and forbearance may grow among nations and peoples, let us pray to the Lord,

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those in positions of public trust, especially our president and our governor, that they may serve justice and promote the dignity and freedom of all people, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For a blessing upon the labors of all and for the right use of the riches of creation, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the poor, the persecuted, the sick, and all who suffer; for refugees, prisoners, and all who are in danger; that they may be relieved and protected, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this community, for those who are present at this moment and for those who are absent, that we may be delivered from hardness of heart and may show forth your glory in all we say and do, we pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

And for our enemies and those who wish us harm and for all whom we have injured or offended, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

RESPONSE - THERE'S A WIDENESS IN GOD'S MERCY UMH 121 (verses 1 & 3)

**There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea;  
there's a kindness in God's justice, which is more than liberty.**

**For the love of God is broader than the measure of our mind;  
and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.**

MOMENT OF MINISTRY  
3rd Grade Bible Presentation

BLESSING OF STUDENTS, PARENTS & TEACHERS

THE OFFERING

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 18:21-35

Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. 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.’ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. 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. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

## HOMILY

“In Order to Forgive (What Needs to Happen?)”



ANTHEM

INVITATION

HYMN - TAKE MY LIFE, AND LET IT BE UMH 399

<p>1. Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee. Take my moments and my days; let them flow in ceaseless praise. Take my hands, and let them move at the impulse of thy love. Take my feet, and let them be swift and beautiful for thee.</p> <p>2. Take my voice, and let me sing always, only, for my King. Take my lips, and let them be filled with messages from thee. Take my silver and my gold; not a mite would I withhold. Take my intellect, and use every power as thou shalt choose.</p>	<p>3. Take my will, and make it thine; it shall be no longer mine. Take my heart, it is thine own; it shall be thy royal throne. Take my love, my Lord, I pour at thy feet its treasure-store. Take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for thee.</p>
--	---

BENEDICTION

Go in Peace

**Stand Firm in your Faith. Be Strong. Be Brave.  
Let Everything You Do Be Done in Love.**

POSTLUDE