

**August 15, 2018**

Greetings from Sixth Street Christian Church! In Sunday school, we read Matthew 18:21-22 about Jesus telling Peter that he should forgive someone who sins against him not just seven times but seventy-seven times. We wondered together what good it did to forgive a person who kept committing the same sin. One person suggested that forgiving someone – especially someone who wouldn't change his or her behavior – wouldn't affect the sinner as much as the person sinned against. Once a person lets go of his or her anger and need to retaliate, he or she can start to heal. Yet if the sinner doesn't recognize the damage he or she has done, forgiveness will not change him or her and repeated injury becomes likely. I don't believe Jesus wanted Peter to suffer seventy-seven times before protecting himself. Forgiving someone doesn't mean you have to stick around for future abuse. Perhaps Jesus was telling Peter that he would have to keep forgiving someone not because the sin was committed more than once but because the effects of the sin would remain long after it was committed. I have heard the saying, "forgive and forget" and wonder if the forgetting part is possible. We are changed by what happens to us regardless of our willingness to forgive. When we remember a time we were wronged in the past, the pain we suffered rises to the surface once again, and so does our need to forgive. God has filled us with grace until our cup overflows. It is from this abundance that our acts of forgiveness become possible until we are truly and finally healed.