



Wednesday Prayer

7th Sunday after Epiphany – The measure you use

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. ~Luke 6:37-38

I was given three Scripture passages to use this week: Psalm 37:1-11, Luke 6:27-38, and Genesis 45:3-11. I chose Luke as my lead-off Scripture because of the line, *The measure you use*. This phrase sums up the main messages in all of these passages. Psalm 37 speaks of the need to trust God and not bother ourselves with the actions of bad people. Our patience and God's faithfulness work hand in hand towards an end result of righteousness. Genesis 45 tells the age-old story of Joseph's forgiveness of the brothers who sold him into slavery. Joseph gives God the glory for turning the brother's harmful action into good during a great famine. And Luke 6 reveals Jesus' teaching of "The Golden Rule:" *Do to others as you would have them do to you*. But more than this, we are not just to treat friends & family with love and respect; we must also love our enemies and do good to them.

These are difficult passages to share with young people who have been victimized by adults with evil intentions. Their raw emotions and intense anger at what happened to them leaves little room for even the *thought* of forgiveness! And for those teens and preteens who have been blessed *not* to have been mistreated, why should they be on the lookout for predators when none appear to exist? I have spoken to and with both these kinds of teens, and my message is always the same: "As a survivor of sexual assault at gunpoint myself, I *get* it. *I get YOU!*" I also was angry and swore to never forgive, never let my guard down for one second.

But then I found God and asked Jesus into my life as my personal Savior. The transformation wasn't instantaneous; I didn't even know how God would provide me grace, gently, gently, like silky clouds enveloping my raw emotions and soothing my frazzled soul. I dreamed a white dove landed on my head, before I knew the dove was a symbol of God's peace. A group of church women went through adult confirmation with me, though they had all done it before as teens. Soon, I found myself saying—and believing—that I had forgiven the man who assaulted me! Oh, I still didn't like what he *did* to me, and I still experience trauma just as real as that horrid day. But the measure God will use to measure *me* must look *something* like the measure I use to measure others. My life was spared; many women *don't* come home. I have lived a full life, with two husbands, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. How can I stay stuck at my point of pain and trauma? Martin Luther King Jr. said, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." Dr. King's idea matches the concepts in this week's Scripture passages: through trust in God and in the possibility of restoration, we survivors can find a path to healing.

Jesus, show us the measure you would have us use in our assessment of ourselves and others. Amen.

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