

Reading I

[1 Sm 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23](#)

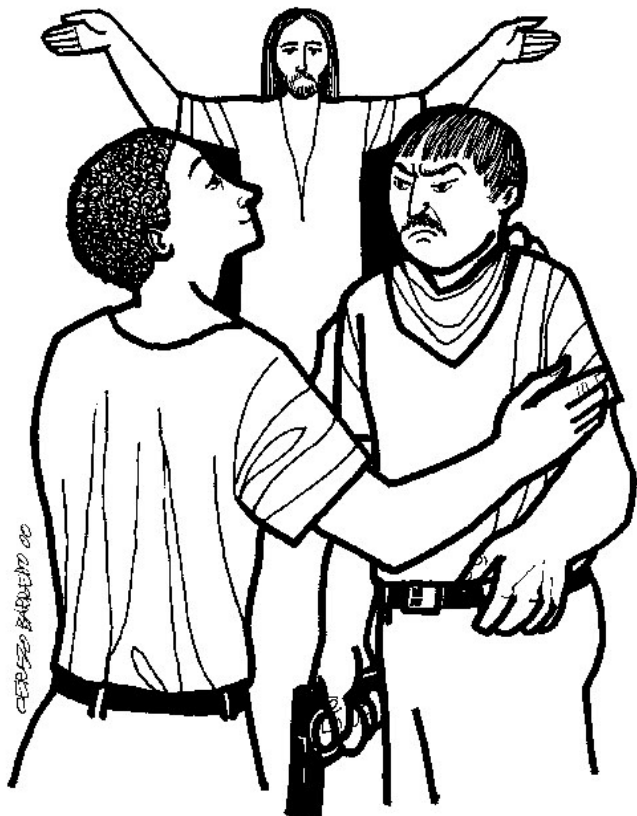
In those days, Saul went down to the desert of Ziph with three thousand picked men of Israel, to search for David in the desert of Ziph. So David and Abishai went among Saul's soldiers by night and found Saul lying asleep within the barricade, with his spear thrust into the ground at his head and Abner and his men sleeping around him.

Abishai whispered to David:

"God has delivered your enemy into your grasp this day. Let me nail him to the ground with one thrust of the spear; I will not need a second thrust!"

But David said to Abishai, "Do not harm him, for who can lay hands on the LORD's anointed and remain unpunished?" So David took the spear and the water jug from their place at Saul's head, and they got away without anyone's seeing or knowing or awakening. All remained asleep, because the LORD had put them into a deep slumber.

Going across to an opposite slope, David stood on a remote hilltop at a great distance from Abner, son of Ner, and the troops. He said: "Here is the king's spear. Let an attendant come over to get it. The LORD will reward each man for his justice and faithfulness. Today, though the LORD delivered you into my grasp, I would not harm the LORD'S anointed."



Reading II

[1 Cor 15:45-49](#)

Brothers and sisters:

It is written, The first man, Adam, became a living being, the last Adam a life-giving spirit.

But the spiritual was not first; rather the natural and then the spiritual.

The first man was from the earth, earthly; the second man, from heaven.

As was the earthly one, so also are the earthly, and as is the heavenly one, so also are the heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthly one, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly one.

Gospel

[Lk 6:27-38](#)

Jesus said to his disciples:

"To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic.

Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?

Even sinners love those who love them.

And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you?

Even sinners do the same.

If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you?

Even sinners lend to sinners, and get back the same amount.

But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back;

then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

"Stop judging and you will not be judged.

Stop condemning and you will not be condemned.

Forgive and you will be forgiven.

Give, and gifts will be given to you;

a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap.

For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you."

*Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time***Scripture Background**

In the Old Testament reading today, David chooses to spare his enemy from destruction. There is no hint of vengeance or hatred in the description of David's treatment of Saul. We only hear that David relies on God to reward those who are righteous and faithful. David's respect for Saul is founded on the fact that, even with all of his faults, the king is still the Lord's anointed. David's personal qualities are admirable. He does not take advantage of Saul's vulnerability. Instead, David offers forgiveness when his enemy is defenseless.

In today's gospel Jesus presents a remarkable vision of love. It is a vision that moves beyond loving only those who love us in return. Jesus challenges his followers to love their enemies and do good, expecting nothing in return. According to Jesus, God sets the standard of how we treat our enemies. And that standard includes acting merciful and extending forgiveness even toward the undeserving. This teaching was unconventional for its time and it continues to challenge followers of Jesus today.

Jesus taught love of enemies with his actions as well as his words. Jesus' entire life and ultimately his death modeled a self-giving love offered to all. Jesus offered forgiveness to the very ones who were persecuting him. The love and forgiveness that Jesus extended was given freely for the salvation of all humanity.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

1. Do you treat others the same way that you would like to be treated?

2. Does God love us even when we do not deserve God's love?

3. How can you extend love and forgiveness to those who have not earned it?

Love of Enemies

In this Sunday's gospel we find that Jesus' commandment to love God and neighbor extends to include love for one's enemies. As followers of Jesus we are to love God and love all people. This includes those whom we consider our "enemies."

Violence and hatred were directed to Jesus. Those who mocked him and put him to death saw Jesus as "the enemy." Jesus forgave his "enemies," and by his sacrifice all people are reconciled with God.

We all need to stand up for ourselves when we are being harmed or mistreated. However, as followers of Christ we are called to seek non-violent ways of dealing with conflict. We are given the ability to offer love to the undeserving and expect nothing in return when we turn to love's Source. Love for one's enemies requires reliance upon the grace of God.

4. How can you follow the example of Jesus in the way you treat those who hurt you?

5. How can you rely on God to help you forgive those who have not earned your forgiveness?

6. Are you able to accept the forgiveness and mercy that God offers you?
