

Better Together
IN CHRIST

LENT 2022

EPHESIANS 4:4-6

MARCH 2-APRIL 16

WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE HERE!

SALEM BIBLE CHURCH
Shalom

TIAM BOTH LOCATIONS
Stonecrest Campus 5460 Hillendale Dr. Stonecrest, GA 30058
Atlanta Campus 2283 Baker Rd. N.W. Atlanta, GA 30318

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2022 LENT DEVOTIONAL

MARCH 2- APRIL 16

WEEK 2

Salem Bible Church

2283 Baker Road | 5460 Hillendale Drive

Atlanta, GA. 30318 | Lithonia, GA. 30058

Dr. Joseph L. Williams, Senior Pastor

Rev. Jasper W. Williams, Jr., Pastor Emeritus

Dear Salem Family and Friends:

The 2022 Lent season is upon us, and we pray that you will be blessed by our program this year. In keeping with our 2022 church theme *Better Together in Christ*, we will focus on the tenet *Unification* in the acronym C.U.R.E.

Other features of our Lenten observance will include:

- Daily prayer, Bible readings and personal worship
- Weekly Devotional Readings and Jubilee Growth Groups
- 42 Weeks of Prayer and Consecration with Jubilee Prayer Partner
- Fasting & Prayer Times (personal and corporate)
- Virtual Sunday School classes
- Maundy Thursday Observance
- Easter Sunday Services
- Special Resurrection Offering (over and above regular tithe and offerings)

Finally, please know that although we are in prayer with you during this Lenten Season as God continues to bless during the season of Jubilee. We pray that you continue to stay safe, in good health and that God will prosper you. Until we see you again, Shalom and God bless you.

Yours in Christ,

Dr. Joseph L. Williams, Senior Pastor

Rev. Jasper W. Williams, Pastor Emeritus

WEEK 2 (March 7-12, 2022)

The Bridge (Forgiveness)

Scripture Reading:

21 Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" 22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy seventy-seven times. (Matthew 18:21-22)

Devotional Reading

Matthew 18:21-35, 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13

Once upon a time two brothers who lived on adjoining farms fell into conflict. It was the first serious rift in 40 years of farming side by side. They had been sharing machinery, trading a labor and goods as needed without a hitch. Then the long collaboration fell apart. It began with a small misunderstanding, and it grew into a major difference which exploded into an exchange of bitter words followed by weeks of silence.

One morning there was a knock on elder brother's door. He opened it to find a man with a carpenter's toolbox. "I am looking for a few days of work", he said. "Perhaps you would have a few small jobs here and there. Could I help you?"

"Yes!" said the elder brother. "I do have a job for you. Look across the creek at that farm. That's my neighbor, in fact, it's my younger brother and we don't get along. Last week he dug a wider passage for water into his farm. But he ended up creating a very wide creek in between our farms and I am sure he did it just to annoy me. I want you to build me something so that we don't have to stand and see each other's face from across."

The carpenter said "I think I understand the situation. I will be able to do a job that will please you." The elder brother had to go

to town for supplies, so he helped the carpenter get the materials ready and then he was off for the day. The carpenter worked hard all that day measuring, sawing, nailing.

At sunset when the elder brother returned, the carpenter had just finished his job. The elder brother's eyes opened wide, and his jaw dropped. It was not what he had even thought of or imagined. It was a bridge stretching from one side of the creek to the other! A fine piece of work, beautiful handrails. And to his surprise, his younger brother across the creek was coming to meet him with a big smile and arms wide open to hug him.

"You are really kind and humble my brother! After all I had done and said to you, you still shown that blood relations can never be broken! I am truly sorry for my behavior", the younger brother said as he hugged his elder brother. They turned to see the carpenter hoist his toolbox on his shoulder. "No, wait! Stay a few days. I have a lot of other projects for you," said the older brother. "I'd love to stay on", the carpenter said, "but, I have many more bridges to build!"

There is no shame in accepting your mistake or forgiving each other. We should be kind and humble. We should try to stay together as a family and not break away from it over the petty arguments.¹

Scripture Commentary

In these passages (Matthew 18:21-35), in what I call a message to believers, Peter then asked Jesus...Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sin against me? Up to seven times? Peter was being generous here, for the traditional Rabbinic

² The Bridge. <https://www.moralstories.org/the-bridge/>, retrieved 1/13/2022

³ France, R. T. (1994). [Matthew](#). In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 928). Inter-Varsity Press.

teaching was that an offended person needed to forgive a brother only three times.

Jesus' reply was that forgiveness needs to be exercised to a much greater extent. Not just 7 times, but "70 times 7" that is, 490 times. Jesus meant that no limits should be set.

Human willingness to forgive has its natural limits; but God's does not, and those who would live in God's kingdom must choose God as their model. Jesus goes on to illustrate this point with a parable of a king who mercifully cancels an astronomical debt, but who reimposes it when he learns that the forgiven servant would not overlook the trifling sum he was owed by another. Followers of Jesus are to give as they have received, love as they have loved, and forgive as they have been forgiven if they would have a part in God's kingdom.

Reflection Questions

Question 1: Why is forgiveness within the church an important aspect of the believer's life?

Question 2: What are some effects of not having a forgiving heart?