

Forgiveness when Paul visits Philip

CHARACTERS: 4 daughters of Philip the evangelist

PROPS: none specified

SETTING: Philip's house in Caesarea

RUN TIME: 2 minutes

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: Acts 7, 8 and 21; Matthew 6, Mark 11, Luke 6:37, 11:4 and 17:3-4, 23:34.

Before you begin: What does rancor mean? How might you feel if you had to show hospitality to someone who had killed a person close to your family?

At rise: Ruth is doing household tasks as MIRIAM and RUTH enter, arguing.

MIRIAM: I'm just saying why can't he stay somewhere else with someone else? Caesarea is a big city.

RUTH: But there aren't that many Christian households and ... *(lets her words trail off as she shrugs)*

MIRIAM: *(somewhat bitterly)* No one else wants a murderer in their house. *(with more rancor)* Especially someone who murdered their father's best friend.

RUTH: That was 20 years ago and technically, he didn't murder him. It was a mob.

MIRIAM: *(outraged)* He helped! He watched the clothes the mob threw off to pick up stones to murder a man in cold blood.

RUTH: He's in a better place. Daddy said he saw Jesus standing there, next to God's throne, ready to receive Stephen. Jesus was not sitting; he was standing! Standing! What an honor! *(MIRIAM throws up her hands and starts working)*

PRISCILLA: Ruth, you weren't even born when it happened. You wouldn't understand.

RUTH: I understand the Lord said to **forgive** people so that our heavenly Father will **forgive** us as well.

MIRIAM: *(facetiously)* Seven times 70. Do we have to wait until there are 491 corpses?

RUTH: Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. **Forgive**, and you will be **forgiven**. *(RHODA enters)*

RHODA: And Stephen forgave them all as he died, just like someone else who said "Father, **forgive** them, because they do not know what they are doing."

PRISCILLA: How do you know what we're talking about?

RHODA: The same way all the neighbors know.

MIRIAM: Oh no! *(dropping her voice)* Did daddy hear us?

RHODA: You should be asking if Paul, Luke, all the visitors heard. *(The other women are horrified at the thought. RHODA pauses before adding)* No, no one else heard, not even the neighbors. But please remember our voices carry more than most.

PRISCILLA: *(thoughtfully, almost to herself)* Because we are so used to prophesying.

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RUTH: And because we have been so gifted by the spirit, what comes out of our mouths, spirit inspired or not (*she pauses to let another complete the sentence*)

PRISCILLA: Can be taken as spirit inspired.

MIRIAM: And we would seem mean spirited at best.

PRICILLA: If our Lord and Stephen can forgive, than who am I not to forgive Paul.

MIRIAM: We shall welcome him into our home as if he were Jesus himself.