

The Home Sunday Worship Supplement

15th Sunday after Pentecost, 13th September 2020

Forgive anyone who has caused you pain or harm.

Keep in mind that forgiving is not for others. It is for you.

It is remembering without anger.

It frees up your power, heals your body, mind and spirit.

Forgiveness opens up a pathway to a new place of peace, where you can persist despite what has happened to you.

When you hold resentment toward one another, you are bound to that person or condition by an emotional link that is stronger than steel.

Forgiveness is the only way to dissolve that link and get free.

Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future

To err is human, to forgive, divine.



Psalm 114

¹ When Israel came out of
Egypt:

and the house of Jacob
from among a people
of an alien tongue,

² Judah became his
sanctuary:

and Israel his
dominion.

³ The sea saw that, and fled:
Jordan was driven
back.

⁴ The mountains skipped
like rams:

and the little hills like young sheep.

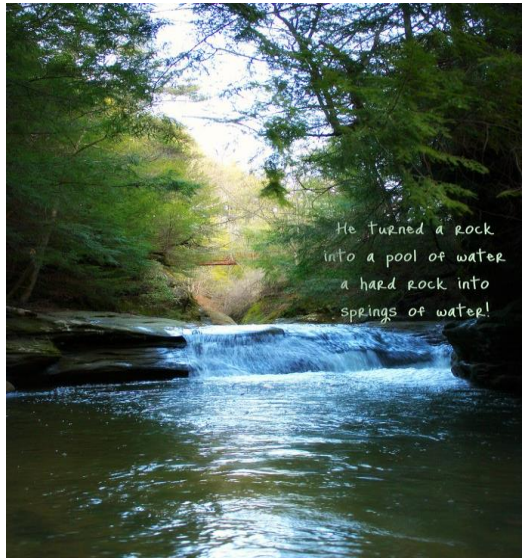
⁵ What ailed you, O sea, that you fled:

O Jordan, that you were driven back?

⁶ You mountains, that you skipped like rams:
and you little hills like young sheep?

⁷ Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord:
at the presence of the God of Jacob,

⁸ Who turned the rock into a pool of water:
and the flint-stone into a welling spring.



Matt 18:21-35

²¹ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, ‘Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?’ ²² Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. ²³ ‘Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the



settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. ²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. ²⁶ ‘At this the servant fell on his knees before him. “Be patient with me,” he begged, “and I will pay back everything.” ²⁷ The servant’s master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go. ²⁸ ‘But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. “Pay back what you owe me!” he demanded. ²⁹ ‘His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, “Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.” ³⁰ ‘But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. ³² ‘Then the master called the servant in. “You wicked servant,” he said, “I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³ Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?” ³⁴ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. ³⁵ ‘This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.’

FORGIVENESS

Reflection on Matt 18:21-35

By Pamela Langford

Peter asks Jesus – how many times should I forgive someone who has sinned against me? As many as seven times? And Jesus' reply is not seven times, seventy-seven times.

Forgiveness for Jesus is a way of being, a lifestyle, a way of loving, a way of relating, a way of thinking and seeing, and if we are to be followers of Jesus it must be our way as well.

Forgiveness for Jesus is not quantified.

And who are we to forgive? The drunk driver? The cheating spouse? The manipulating business person? The racist? The child abuser? The bully? The murderer? The terrorist? Yes!!

Looking at our own lives, we find broken promises, hurt feelings, betrayals, harsh words, physical and emotional wounds. Everyone of us can tell stories of being hurt or victimised by another. Beneath the pain, the wounds, the losses and the memories is the question of forgiveness.

Everyone, I suspect is in favour of forgiveness, at least in principle. "Everyone," C.S.Lewis writes "says forgiveness is a lovely idea until there is something to forgive."

What do we do then? What do we do when there is something to forgive?

Some will strike back and try revenge. Some will run away from life and relationships. Some will let the darkness paralyse them.

In my own experience I have done them all. I know how hard forgiveness is. Like everyone, I struggle with it and often avoid it. None of these is the way of Jesus. All of them leave us stuck in the past, tied to the evil of another and bereft of the future God wants to give us.

Forgiveness is the only way forward. That does not mean that we forget or condone what was done. It does not mean that we ignore or excuse cruelty or injustice. It means that we are released from them. We let go of the thoughts and fantasies of revenge. We look to the future instead of the past.

We try to see and love as Jesus loves. Forgiveness is a way in which we align our life with God's life. To withhold forgiveness is to put ourselves in the place of God, the ultimate judge to whom all are accountable. (Rom 14.10,12)

God's forgiveness and human forgiveness are integrally related. In today's parable the king forgives his slave an extraordinary amount. Ten thousand talents is about 3,000 years of work at the ordinary daily wage.

It seems there is no debt too large to be forgiven. This man, this debtor was forgiven. That's what the Kingdom of God is like. That's how God is.

This slave however, refused to forgive his fellow slave 100 denarii, about three months work at the ordinary wage.

That's often what our world is like. Often it is how we are. In that refusal the forgiven slave lost his own forgiveness.

We pray over and over "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." We pray these words so easily and with familiarity,

but do we live our prayer? Do our actions support our request? “Not seven times, but, I tell you seventy-seven times.”

Think about it, that’s a lot of forgiveness, but the pain of the world, the nation and individuals is great. We need to forgive as much for ourselves as for the ones we forgive. Forgiving those who sin against us is the balm that begins to heal our wounds.

It may not heal the one who hurt you but your life will be more alive, more grace filled, more whole, more God like for having forgiven another.

Forgiveness creates space for new life, forgiveness is an act of hopefulness and resurrection for the one who forgives. It is the healing of our soul and life. Forgiveness takes us out of the darkness into the light, from death to life. It disentangles us from the evil of another. It is the refusal to let our future be determined by the past. It is the letting go of the thoughts, the hatred, the fear that filled us so that we might live and love again.

So how do we begin to forgive? There is no easy road to forgiveness.

Don’t let anyone tell you, “Just give it up to God. Forgive and forget.”

Simplistic trite answers only demean those who suffer and pick at the wound. Forgiving another takes time and work. It needs daily practise.

It begins with recognition and thanksgiving that we have been forgiven. We are the beneficiaries of Jesus’ crucifixion.

Hanging between two thieves he prayed “Father forgive them”. (Luke 23.24) That is the cry of infinite forgiveness, a cry we are to echo in our own lives, in our families, our parish, our daily life.

Forgiveness does not originate with us. It begins with God. That's what the slave who refused to forgive didn't understand. It was not about him, it's about God. We do not choose to forgive. We only choose to share the forgiveness we have already received.

For most of us forgiveness is a process that we live into.

Sometimes however, we just can't, the pain is just too much, the wound too raw, the memories too real. Then on those days all we can do is to choose to want to forgive. But we choose, because that's the choice Jesus made. How many times must we choose to forgive? How many times have you been hurt and suffered by the actions or words of another?

How many times has anger or fear controlled you? How many times has the thought of revenge filled you? How many times have you shuddered at the sight of a name or memory of another? How many times have you replayed in your head the argument with another? That's how many times you choose. With each choosing we move a step closer to forgiveness.

"Not seven times, but I tell you seventy-seven times."

Collect

O God,
 you call your Church to witness that in Christ
 we are reconciled to you:
 help us so to proclaim the good news of your love,
 that all who hear it may turn to you;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever. Amen.

*If you, O Lord, should note what we do wrong, Lord,
who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you,
so that you may be revered. Psalm 130.3 - 4*

NOTICES

Christmas Bowl

Donations are being accepted for Christmas Bowl this year. The best way to send donations would be direct deposit, with reference as “Christmas Bowl” so we know to mark it suitably. If you need the bank details again, please contact us.

Church Online

Perhaps you are missing live church on a Sunday morning and would like to tap into a church service being streamed via the internet? If so, click on the following link to see which Anglican Churches are live streaming or recording services. <https://www.graftondiocese.org.au/ministry/ministry-resources/online-church/>

Cathedral Livestream Service

Impressive, professional-quality live-streaming equipment has just been installed in Grafton Cathedral – so you might like to check out the new look Sunday service being livestreamed each Sunday at 9 am. Go to:
<https://www.graftoncathedral.org.au/virtual-cathedral>



The next Home Supplement

Will be Sunday 20th Sept – Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Keep an eye on your email on Thursday.