

Sunday 13th September 2020

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Affirmation

Disciples and doubters,
foolish and fearless,
we are all God's people,
and He welcomes us all
We draw near Him and worship.

Hymn: StF 59

Sing / Read / pray / proclaim the words or
listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rce9UHYZwl4>

Lord, the light of your love is shining,
In the midst of the darkness, shining;
Jesus, light of the world, shine upon us;
Set us free by the truth you now bring us,
Shine on me, shine on me.

*Shine, Jesus, shine,
Fill this land with the Father's glory;
Blaze, Spirit, blaze,
Set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow,
Flood the nations with grace and mercy;
Send forth your word,
Lord, and let there be light!*

Lord, I come to your awesome presence,
From the shadows into your radiance;
By the blood I may enter your brightness,
Search me, try me, consume all my
darkness.
Shine on me, shine on me.

Chorus

As we gaze on your kingly brightness
So our faces display your likeness.
Ever changing from glory to glory,
Mirrored here may our lives tell your
story.

Shine on me, shine on me.

Chorus

Let us pray together

Lord you have created a world full of
people
A universe full of planets and stars
You sent us your Son Jesus
To show us how to live in our world
May we have the grace to follow Him.

Amen

Loving God, we are sorry
when we have wandered far from you.
When we have not listened to your voice
and listened instead to other voices –
the voices of greed, and selfishness,
you have offered us abundance of life,
but we have settled for so much less.
Forgive us.

Assurance of pardon

In Jesus we have been forgiven
So let us live as one who is forgiven,
in the name of Christ.

Amen

Today's Reading from the Old Testament Genesis 50:15-21

Joseph Forgives His Brothers

Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, 'What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?' So they approached Joseph, saying, 'Your father gave this instruction before he died, "Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you." Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father.' Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, 'We are here as your slaves.' But Joseph said to them, 'Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones.' In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

Today's Gospel Reading: Matt 18:21-35

Forgiveness

Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.'

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

'For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and

payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe." Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?" And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'

Time to Reflect – think about

Unlimited forgiveness, - how easy is it to forgive, - can we move on from the hurt we feel

In our gospel reading Peter wanted to know what he must do about forgiveness. We may find the word 'sorry', is easily said, often used and sometimes it is not really meant.

Peter thought he was being very generous by saying that a person should forgive 7 times. The number seven was thought to be the perfect number. Jesus answers Peter that this is not enough, and even seventy times seven would not be enough.

Seventy times seven at that time was thought to be an infinite number.

What Jesus is guiding Peter and us to understand is about forgiveness that it is not a worldly thing, but something that is at the heart of His teaching. Jesus told Peter the parable of the King and his unmerciful servants to illustrate that his followers should be willing to forgive and the consequences if they do not. In parts of the world they find it is difficult for people to forgive because their honour is at stake. When someone is hurt, they want to hurt back. They want revenge for what has happened, but that is an endless route.

Revenge or retaliation is the way of the world and Jesus shows us that forgiveness starts from God. By accepting His forgiveness, we are transformed in His likeness so that we too should offer forgiveness to others in the same way. To forgive someone when you have been hurt, or had your life affected is not easy. During this time of lock down, people will have been hurt, disappointed, and maybe angered by neighbours or people taking more food than they need. We need to let go of those feelings and embrace God's love. It is said that when a victim forgives, it stops the bitterness hardening their heart and ruining their life, that by forgiving, a person is changed from being the victim into a survivor. The generosity of what the victim has done may touch the life of the offender, to the extent that in some cases; the act of forgiveness, has changed their ways and in some cases made them friends. Some people have been surprised by their neighbour's help

during the lock down, neighbours they have never spoken to.

In the reading from Genesis we heard how Joseph's brothers were afraid. They were afraid of what Joseph would do to them. When they saw Joseph, they fell on their knees and said they were his slaves. Joseph is disturbed by their sadness and says the most amazing thing; "God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives". By this statement Joseph showed that he had not allowed his hurt to corrupt him, he had taken his suffering and seen that through it God had led him to help others. Had he stayed with his brothers, Joseph would not have become such an important person, and would not have been able to help thousands of people from starving. God asks us to let go, and to lay all our burdens at His feet, this includes the hurt and suffering that we have received. By forgiving we are showing others God's love.

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

Loving and forgiving God
We pray for our world today
As we bring the virus under control
Help and guide Prime ministers,
Presidents, Kings and Queens, all types of
workers around the world
Parents and children
And all who have lost loved ones
may they feel your love this week as they
go about their work. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to 'Lord I come to you'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CL1POv2eY04>

Lord I come to You,
Let my heart be changed, renewed
Flowing from the grace
That I've found in You
Lord I've come to know
The weaknesses I see in me
Will be stripped away
By the power of Your love

*Hold me close
Let Your love surround me
Bring me near
Draw me to Your side
And as I wait
I'll rise up like the eagle
And I will soar with You
Your Spirit leads me on
In the power of Your love*

Lord unveil my eyes
Let me see You face to face
The knowledge of Your love
As You live in me
Lord renew my mind
As Your will unfolds in my life
In living every day
By the power of Your love

Chorus

A prayer of blessing

StF771

May the love of the Lord rest upon your
soul
May his love dwell in you throughout
every day
May his Countenance shine upon you and
be gracious to you
May His Spirit be upon you as you leave
this place. Amen