

Ripon and Lower Dales Circuit

Worship at Home.

- Sunday, September 13th 2020

The Peace of the Lord be with us all.

We gather together in Worship as we read from **StF 32**

Meet and right it is to praise

in every time and place.,
glory to our heavenly King,
the God of truth and grace:
join we then with sweet accord,
all in one thanksgiving join;
holy, holy, holy Lord,
eternal praise be thine.

Father, God, thy love we praise,
which gave thy Son to die;
Jesus, full of truth and grace,
alike we glorify;
Spirit, Comforter divine,
praise by all to thee be given;
till we in full chorus join,
and earth is turned to heaven.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

We continue in Praise of God as together we bring our prayers.

God the Son. God beside us, we adore you.
You were born into our messy world. A world of strange contrast. A world of risk -and opportunity, a world of joy-and of violence. But in every place you point us to hope that is present .For you are Hope.
That's why in **every place** "Meet and right it is to praise"

God our Father, God beyond us, we adore you.
We don't know what the future holds- but what we know is in you is the future. You are future.
That's why in **every time**-meet and right it is to give "Glory to our heavenly King. "

God the Spirit. God around us. We adore

you.

You draw us to God the Father and to God the Son.

You empower and prompt.

You set the world dancing

That's why we proclaim you as "Comforter divine".

So God beside, beyond and around, we adore you.

In every time and place meet and right it is to praise you. We offer you this day's worship. Pardon it's imperfection and make it greater.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

It's in things - like happenings, and in things like creation, that the Psalmist recognises the activity of God's presence. It's as though solid cliffs become like flowing springs.

The Psalm given us for today is an expression of Thanks for such moments in which we recognise God's presence. Together we read Psalm 114 -

When the people of Israel left Egypt,
The Red sea looked and ran away;
the River Jordan stopped flowing.
The mountains skipped like goats;
the hills jumped about like lambs.

What happened, Sea, to make you run away?
And you, O Jordan, why did you stop flowing?
You mountains, why did you skip like goats?
You hills, why did you jump about like lambs?
Tremble, earth, at the Lord's coming,
at the presence of the God of Jacob,
who changes rocks into pools of water
and solid cliffs into flowing springs.

Now we bring our prayers of Confession -

Holy God we're getting older. No longer can we look with the freshness of five year old eyes. At times in things of this earth we fail to recognise your presence - It's then we complain about your apparent absence!.
Father forgive. Father forgive us.

Holy God your Christ forgave a thief and offered him Paradise. To the home of the most unpopular man in town Jesus invited himself in for a drink. There's no limit to his

forgiving. But we, we're more inclined to keep distance-or sweep disagreements under the carpet, or seek revenge. Father forgive. Father forgive us.

Holy God your Christ he teaches - "If you do not forgive others, then your Heavenly Father will not forgive the wrongs you have done". So often though our way out is just to trust in the forgiving nature of your wonderful kindness.

Father forgive. Father forgive us.
In the quiet we make our own confession.....

Father forgive. Father forgive us.
Jesus says, "You are forgiven. Go and sin no more."
Thanks be to God. Amen

Together we repeat The Lord's Prayer.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are
yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

Now we come to the Gospel reading given us
for today -

St Matthew 18 v 21- 35

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked,
"Lord, if my brother keeps on sinning against
me, how many times do I have to forgive
him? Seven times?"

"No, not seven times," answered Jesus,
"but seventy times seven, because the
Kingdom of heaven is like this. Once there
was a king who decided to check on his
servants' accounts. He had just begun to do
so when one of them was brought in who
owed him millions of ponds.

The servant did not have enough to pay
his debt, so the king ordered him to be sold
as a slave, with his wife and his children and
all that he had, in order to pay the debt.

The servant fell on his knees before the
king. "Be patient with me" he begged "and I
will pay you everything!"

The king felt sorry for him, so he forgave
him the debt and let him go.

Then the man went out and met one his
fellow-servants who owed him a few pounds.
He grabbed him and started choking him.
"Pay back what you owe me!" he said.

His fellow-servant fell down and begged
him, "Be patient with me and I will pay you
back!"

But he refused; instead he had him
thrown into jail until he should pay the debt.

When the other servants saw what had
happened, they were very upset and went to
the king and told him everything.

So he called the servant in. "You
worthless slave!" He said. "I forgave you the
whole amount you owed me, just because
you asked me to. You should have had
mercy on your fellow-servant, just as I had
mercy on you".

The king was very angry, and he sent the
servant to jail to be punished until he should
pay back the whole amount.

And Jesus concluded, "That is how my
Father in heaven will treat every one of you
unless you forgive your brother from your
heart".

(Good News Bible)
*This is the Gospel of Christ
Praise to Christ our Lord .*

Reflection

To begin- a question !- In this parable who
does Jesus make as the central character?
Who is the one who holds the key?

It's the debtor isn't it-the one whose
enormous debt is cancelled. Perhaps that
answer takes us by surprise. Perhaps we
reply- Surely not. Isn't it the other way
round, - it's the one who forgave millions of
pounds. It's the king. But as with some of
Jesus' other parables the one whom we least
expect is the one whom Jesus makes central.
. Here, it's the debtor. He's the one best

placed as judge. He's the one best able to describe forgiveness.

The debtor is the one who notices that in the king's cancellation of his debt there's no real forgiveness. The king's action has strings attached. "You **should** have had mercy".he demands of the debtor. There's not much forgiveness here. "You should have". The king's supposed generosity is conditional- and that's not part of the forgiveness Jesus embodies. . In the forgiveness of Jesus is release, is freedom .There are no strings attached. We are free from and free for.

The debtor notices also though the king liberates him from debt, the king himself isn't liberated. The king is locked in the circle of retaliation. The debtor notices that though he might seem forgiving, the king knows "anger". The king punishes and the debtor experiences being thrown into jail until the whole amount is paid off - every last coin!! Perhaps more hurting even than that is the way the king "puts down" the debtor. He "calls him in". The king yells -You're a "worthless slave".

All this from a man claiming to forgive! How different from another parable of Jesus where forgiveness includes throwing a party, hiring musicians, providing the offender with the best clothes and calling the forgiven one "son of mine". By contrast with that, the king is bitter towards the one he claims to have forgiven. His mind is closed to any possible blossoming relationship with the forgiven one. Not for him does the "frozen misery break, crack, begin to move. And life return again". How different from the forgiving Christ who when dying offers Paradise to a criminal.

Finally in this parable isn't Jesus reminding us "Jesus situations" they're within ordinary events.-Ordinary events in which someone's debt is cleared-without strings attached, ordinary events in which the donor and benefactor become as one. Within the ordinary happening is hidden the extraordinary. Within the insignificant is the significant. Within the secular is the Kingdom of God. The religious world is not separate

from the secular. As Matthew announces it depends upon our forgiving our brother whether we close the door against God's forgiveness of ourselves. "Forgive us the wrongs we have done **as we forgive the wrongs** that others have done to us".That's what we prayed this morning in The Lord's Prayer' . It's not just that "God is forgiving" so hang around and you'll be alright. In this parable Jesus sharpens the whole concept of forgiveness. God's forgiveness of ourselves. It hangs first upon our forgiving of others. .

It's for this understanding of forgiveness Jesus lives and dies. *Amen*

Now we bring our prayers for others -

Let us pray -

Holy God through our days your Christ is walking his way of forgiveness.

We remember a world leader who to divide communities, in hatred he builds high walls and thorny fences.

"We lay our broken world
In sorrow at your feet,
haunted by hunger, war and fear,
oppressed by power and hate".

We remember a country divided over disturbances following the death of a black man. Some see it no more than another issue of Law and Order.

Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

"Here human life seems less
than profit, might and pride,
though to unit us all in you,
you lived and loved and died.

"We bring our broken towns,
our neighbours hurt and bruised;
you show us how old pain and wounds
for new life can be used".

Holy God in Christ's coming Heaven and earth meet.

We pray for those perplexed in bereavement.
We remember those whom still we love but see no more. Grant them the assurance of our affection. ~May they keep resting in Peace and rising in Glory.

We ask prayers for those whose memory is

fading. For those seeming to forget treasured experiences and cherished names.

In the power of the Holy Spirit grant to these the “love which tends the hurt they never hoped to find”.

And we pray for carers. In the power of the Holy Spirit strengthen them in their tiredness. Hold them in their grief.

Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.

O Spirit, on us breathe,
with life and strength anew;
find in us love, and hope, and trust,
and lift us up to you. StF

718. *Anna Briggs (b.1947)*

All these prayers we make in Jesus’ name
and for his world’s sake.

Amen

And now our concluding hymn –

StF 391. Elizabeth Ann Head (1850-1936)

O breath of life, come sweeping through us,
revive your Church with life and power;
O breath of life, come, cleanse, renew us,
and fit your Church to meet this hour.

O breath of love, come, breathe within us,
renewing thought and will and heart;
come, love of Christ, afresh to win us,
revive your Church in every part.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love
of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all. *Amen.*

J P

Readings from - Good News Bible

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