

Ripon and Lower Dales Methodist Circuit

Worship at Home for
17th September 2023

Psalm 103:1-5

Praise the Lord, Oh my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy
name.

Praise the Lord, Oh my soul,
and forget not all his benefits-
Who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and
compassion,
who satisfies your desires with good
things
so that your youth is renewed like the
eagle's.

StF 58

Lord, I come before your throne of
grace;
I find rest in your presence
and fullness of joy.
In worship and wonder
I behold your face,
singing what a faithful God have I.

What a faithful God have I,
what a faithful God.
what a faithful God have I,
faithful in every way.

Lord of mercy, you have heard my cry;
through the storm you're the beacon,
my song in the night.
In the shelter of your wings,
hear my heart's reply,
singing what a faithful God have I.

What a faithful God have I,
what a faithful God.
what a faithful God have I,
faithful in every way.

Lord all sovereign, granting peace from
heaven,
let me comfort those who suffer
with the comfort you have given.
I will tell of your great love for as long
as I live,

singing what a faithful God have I.

What a faithful God have I,
what a faithful God.
what a faithful God have I,
faithful in every way.

Robert Critchley (b. 1959) and Dawn Critchley
(b. 1965)

Let us pray

God the faithful listener
is waiting to be found and known
and will answer those who are calling.
Let us bless God's name together

God the patient watcher
is waiting to be found and known
and will meet those who are seeking to
change.

Let us bless God's name together

God the generous provider
is waiting to be found and known
and will reach out to those who are in
need.

Let us bless God's name together

God the wellspring of all life
is present with us now
waiting to be found and known.

Let us bless God's name together

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 forever. Amen

Matthew 18:21-35

New Living Translation

²¹ Then Peter came to him and asked,
"Lord, how often should I forgive

someone who sins against me? Seven times?"

²² "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!"

²³ "Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. ²⁴ In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of pounds. ²⁵ He couldn't pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt.

²⁶ "But the man fell down before his master and begged him, 'Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.' ²⁷ Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.

²⁸ "But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand pounds. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment.

²⁹ "His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it,' he pleaded. ³⁰ But his creditor wouldn't wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full.

³¹ "When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. ³² Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt.

³⁵ "That's what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart."

Let us prayerfully consider our own wrongdoings confessing them to God and asking forgiveness.

In quietness now let us reflect on our own attitudes and behaviour.

Forgiving God, so often our good intentions and our bad actions do not agree. We know there are many times when we fail to do the good we know we should, instead doing the harm we know we shouldn't. We try to make excuses for ourselves but in our hearts we know that there are none to be made.

And so, we repent of all our sins both of omission and of commission. We ask for your strength as we begin again with the clean sheet you always grant to truly repentant sinners.

We are reassured as we read the words of this next psalm.

Psalm 103:8-13

New International Version

⁸ The Lord is compassionate and gracious,

slow to anger, abounding in love.

⁹ He will not always accuse,

nor will he harbour his anger

forever;

¹⁰ he does not treat us as our sins deserve

or repay us according to our iniquities.

¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,

so great is his love for those who fear him;

¹² as far as the east is from the west,

so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

¹³ As a father has compassion on his children,

so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.

StF 423

'Forgive our sins as we forgive,'

you taught us, Lord, to pray,

but you alone can grant us grace

to live the words we say.

How can your pardon reach and bless the unforgiving heart that broods on wrongs, and will not let

old bitterness depart?

In blazing light your cross reveals
the truth we dimly knew,
how small the debts are owed to us,
how great our debt to you!

Lord, cleanse the depths within our
souls,
and bid resentment cease;
then, reconciled by God to all,
our lives will spread your peace.
Rosamond Eleanor Herklots (1905-1987)

In chapter 18 of Matthew's gospel,
which has contained the set readings
for the last few weeks, there has been
much recorded of Jesus' teaching and
guidance on relationships within our
Christian community.

Today we hear a disciple asking about
forgiveness. He is asking how often he
should forgive someone who has done
him wrong more than once. He seems
to be suggesting that 7 times might be
more than generous. I believe that the
accepted number at the time was 3.
Jesus, as usual, comes up with a
surprise. Seventy seven or seventy
times seven, depending on the
translation you read, is perhaps Jesus'
way of saying stop counting, just do it.

There is really no comparison between
what God has forgiven us, either as
individuals or as a society, and the
petty irritations or even the crimes
which fill us with 'righteous anger' when
we try to forgive others.

Once again Jesus illustrates this by
telling a story. He is not showing that
sin doesn't matter but he also balancing
punishment with mercy. It reminds us
again that the forgiveness and mercy
we receive from God should be passed
on and be reflected in our dealings with
those who offend us.
The king in this story shows mercy on
the one who owes an extremely large
sum of money, a sum he probably

would never be able to repay. The
servants' relief must have been great
and, although we don't know, I suspect
that the servant must have known real
fear and perhaps wondered how he
could make himself more secure should
a similar situation with a less happy
outcome arise in the future.

And so, instead of simply showing
gratitude towards the king he decides
to protect himself by collecting in what
is owed to him and, as we read,
showing no mercy.

If you were an observer in this
situation, would you share the
indignation of those who, seeing what
had happened, 'blew the whistle' and
told the king?

Their feelings were shared by the king
who immediately withdrew his merciful
action and meted out what we would
see as just punishment.

You see sin does matter. It matters how
we live in relation to others; rules are
there to protect everyone including the
most vulnerable. God is merciful when
we repent but, as his followers, we
follow his example and must show the
same mercy.

Today we are reminded, as our last
hymn said,
'In blazing light your cross reveals
the truth we dimly knew,
how small the debts are owed to us,
how great our debt to you!'
Let us, when irritated by others
remember that and practise mercy and
forgiveness.

Prayers of intercession

Loving Lord we bring our prayers to you
knowing that you know what is in our
hearts even before we can find the
words to express our deepest needs.
We pray because we need to share our
hopes, our worries and our concern for
others with you.... to ask you to act in

the lives of those we pray for and to show us what you would have us do.

Loving Lord may your will be ours.

Make us channels to help and heal in your name.

To your loving care, Lord, we bring all those we know who are troubled or ill at this time.

Those closest to us especially.....

Loving Lord may your will be ours.

Make us channels to help and heal in your name.

Recently we have seen heartrending pictures and heard stories of earthquakes, fire, flood and war and we have heard the cries of your people. Let our hearts not be hardened by our familiarity with other's grief but show us how we can best work for good in these situations.

Loving Lord may your will be ours.

Make us channels to help and heal in your name.

While helping victims teach us also to forgive and show your love to those who do wrong. Help us to clearly condemn what is evil but be channels of forgiveness – a forgiveness that accepts and supports all those who repent.

Loving Lord may your will be ours.

Make us channels to help and heal in your name.

We pray for ourselves.

We recognise our past pains and our fears for the future

In the quietness now we share them with you and ask you to take each memory and each fear and heal each one of us and, as we relinquish each to you, let us not be tempted to snatch them back.....

Teach us to live as people healed and made whole by you.

And so, Lord, let us walk with you and know your peace.

May our lives speak of you and our whole beings wait on you, to hear your word and do your will Our Lord and our God. Amen

StF 507

- 0 for a heart to praise my God,
a heart from sin set free,
a heart that always feels thy blood
so freely spilt for me;
- 2 A heart resigned, submissive, meek,
my great Redeemer's throne,
where only Christ is heard to speak,
where Jesus reigns alone;
- 3 A humble, lowly, contrite heart,
believing, true, and clean;
which neither life nor death can part
from him that dwells within;
- 4 A heart in every thought renewed,
and full of love divine;
perfect, and right, and pure, and
good,
a copy, Lord, of thine!
- 6 Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart;
come quickly from above,
write thy new name upon my heart,
thy new, best name of love.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Benediction

Gracious God,
send us out into the world
with your eyes rather than ours.
Help us to see not only the bad but the
good,
not simply the ugly but the beautiful,
not just the worst but the best.
Help us to see around us the seeds of
your Kingdom,
and to nurture them lovingly
until the day comes when your will is
done
and you are all in all. Amen

