



# Church Alive Worship for Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September



Welcome to our Church Alive service. Whilst we are not all together in church, we are together in spirit. We have tried to adapt our normal service from screen to paper and have provided links to music where possible if you would like to sing. *A big thank you to Debbie Thomson for recording the songs for us. These can be found on our YouTube channel with the links under the title – just hover and click on it*

In our reading today Peter asks Jesus about the extent of forgiveness. Jesus answers with a parable about a man, who is forgiven much but who forgives very little, and is punished by his master for this attitude.

**Opening Song:** Light of the World  
<https://youtu.be/gOpsEzwSEX0>

1. Light of the world  
You stepped down into darkness  
Opened my eyes, let me see  
Beauty that made this heart adore you  
Hope of a life spent with you

*Here I am to worship  
Here I am to bow down  
Here I am to say that you're my God  
You're altogether lovely  
Altogether worthy  
Altogether wonderful to me*

2. King of all days  
So highly exalted  
Glorious in heaven above  
Humbly you came to the earth you created  
All for love's sake became poor

*Chorus*

*Bridge:*  
I'll never know how much it cost  
To see my sin upon that cross

*Chorus*

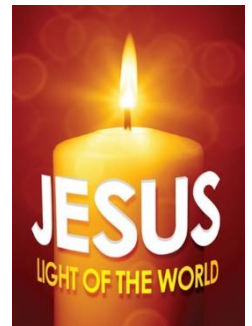


## **Thanksgiving**

We are in the season of creation where we celebrate our relationship with the earth and all living creatures and think about how we can protect and care for them better. Reflect on your favourite flower, animal or bird. Take a moment to say thank you now. Is there one extra action you could take to live more sustainably? Make a commitment to do it going forward.

**Opening Prayer:** *If you are able, and it is safe to do so, light a candle at this point*

Lord, we light this candle, to remind us that you are the light of the world. As we gather together in spirit, make our voices ready to sing your praise; our hearts open to receive your love and our minds alive to your Spirit. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



## **We seek God's healing and forgiveness**

We come to God as one from whom no secrets are hidden, to ask for his forgiveness and peace.

For the times we do wrong and don't think how it affects others:

**Father forgive us**

For our failure to recognise and take responsibility for our poor behaviour:

**Father forgive us**

For our unwillingness to change and to trust in you:

**Father forgive us**

## **We hear words assuring us of God's forgiveness**

May the God of love and power

forgive us and free us from our sins,

heal and strengthen us by his Spirit,

and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## **Bible Reading – Matthew 18:21-35 The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant, New International Version (NIV)**

<sup>21</sup> 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?" <sup>22</sup> Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>23</sup> "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. <sup>24</sup> As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold<sup>[b]</sup> was brought to him. <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> "At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' <sup>27</sup> The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

<sup>28</sup> "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.<sup>[c]</sup> He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. <sup>29</sup> "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.' <sup>30</sup> "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. <sup>31</sup> When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. <sup>32</sup> "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. <sup>33</sup> Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' <sup>34</sup> In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. <sup>35</sup> "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

**Introducing the Theme & Learning Spaces** *Not being able to break out into our learning spaces, here are a few thoughts about the theme for today prepared by Carol. For young people you can use the Children's and Youth sheets that are being sent out separately.*

Today's theme is to forgive and to forgive and then to forgive a bit more! The fact Peter suggested 'seven' as an acceptable number of times to forgive, indicates he was feeling sinned against to a significant level of emotional or physical distress. Jesus replies that the number of times to forgive is not a simple matter of calculation. The parable of the unforgiving servant clarifies that [as we pray in the Lord's Prayer] we should always forgive as we have been forgiven. The penalties and consequences of the parable are severe – to make sense of forgiving in Jesus' name, we need to consider what forgiveness does NOT mean.

Forgiveness does not deny that wrongdoing ever happened, does not make cruelty and harm, bullying and abuse acceptable. Forgiving is not condoning sin, rather it is sharing God's mercy. When we can find it in our hearts to forgive and offer God's love to the one who sins against us, we begin to disentangle ourselves from bitterness, anguish, even hatred.

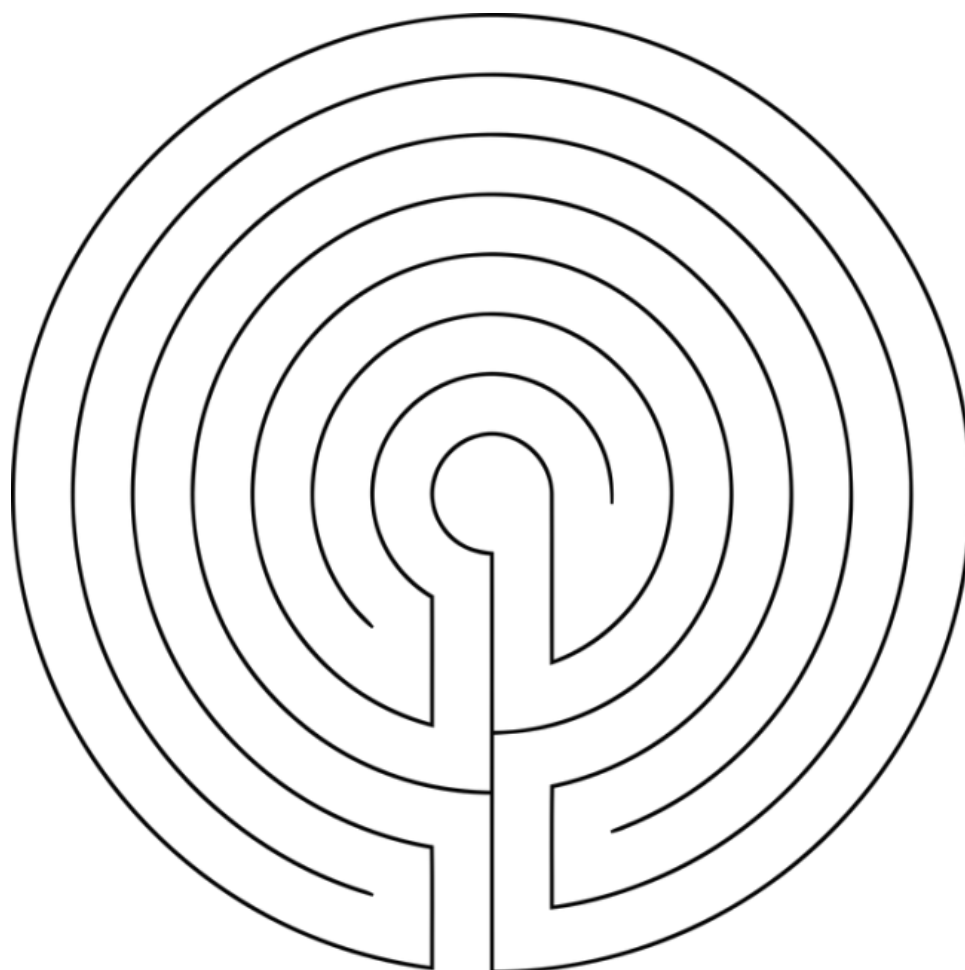
The unforgiving servant failed to reciprocate the mercy he had received. Anger, impatience, bitterness and hatred consumed him. A total lack of mercy and failure to forgive, led to prolonged suffering, leaving him imprisoned in bitterness and hatred.

Undoubtedly, it can take unlimited patience, even years, to reach the place of forgiveness. Through his death on the Cross, Jesus paid the ultimate price: He died for our sins and gifted to us forgiveness, mercy, grace and love so that, through faith, we are set free from the penalties of being unforgiven and unforgiving. Importantly today's parable reminds that for Jesus' sake, we are called to offer the gift of forgiveness to all who sin against us.

When we forgive, we do not necessarily forget, nor do we say that the sin can continue. For Jesus sake, trusting that justice will be done, in faith we can leave the ultimate judgement of the sinner in God's hands and find freedom anew. In forgiving others we share Christ's peace and, God willing, wrongs will be righted and those who truly believe will know His forgiveness and freedom for themselves.

**All Age Creative – Desmond Tutu wisdom – ‘Labyrinth’ and ‘A Gift to Ourselves’**

Desmond Tutu compares forgiving someone to walking a labyrinth path – it can feel like we're almost there, then we end up back near where we started. Think of a situation where you have felt hurt by another person, and meditate on how you can forgive them, as you trace your finger to the centre of the labyrinth.



## A gift to ourselves

We often think of forgiveness as a gift we give to the person we are forgiving, but Desmond Tutu said, 'Forgiveness is a gift we give to ourselves.' How? In what ways can forgiving someone be good for us? What are the consequences of not forgiving someone? Have you had experience of the benefits of offering forgiveness?

**Picture Reflection** – prepared by Brenda



### How many times?

**Matthew 18: 21-35**

Martin Luther King Jr. once said: "Forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a constant attitude."

- Look at the image of the jar full of sweets....think of the different colours and the number of sweets as representing a 'jar of forgiveness' in our lives...
- Forgiveness is challenging....both giving and receiving forgiveness...
- Reflect on when you have forgiven someone who has hurt you and an occasion when you have been forgiven for hurting someone else....
- How can we nurture a forgiving attitude in ourselves and others?

We often find it challenging to forgive ourselves and accept God's forgiveness...we need to remember that God loves us unconditionally. Thanks be to God.

**Song:** God forgave my sin? <https://youtu.be/vt2ZY8yDe4A>

God forgave my sin in Jesus' name,  
I've been born again in Jesus' name;  
And in Jesus' name I come to you  
To share His love as He told me to.

All power is given in Jesus' name,  
In earth and heaven in Jesus' name;  
And in Jesus' name I come to you  
To share His power as He told me to.

He said: 'Freely, freely, you have received,  
Freely, freely give;  
Go in My name, and because you believe  
Others will know that I live.'

God gives us life in Jesus' name,  
He lives in us in Jesus' name,  
And in Jesus' name I come to you  
To share his peace as he told me to.

**O Lord, Hear Our Prayers** *Here are a few suggested pics for you to pray about. If you have specific prayers you would like included in future weeks then do send them to Linda and she will add them in*

We pray for...

*God's world:*

We give thanks for the gift of creation and pray that we may better protect and care for the natural world and all living creatures.

We pray for those affected by the wildfires in Oregon in America and for those displaced and affected by the fire in camp Moira on Lesbos.

*Our communities:*

We pray for the people of this parish of West End, Townhill and Harefield.

For all activities that promote care for neighbour and stranger and for the schools and their staff as they settle into the new school year in these difficult circumstances.

*God's church:* We pray for the global Church, for our diocese of Winchester and all who witness and worship in Jesus' name. In this season of creation we pray that the Christians throughout the world will come together in pray and action to tackle climate change and protect our shared home.

*All who are sick:* We pray for all who are sick in body, mind or spirit. We pray for the pupils of Henry Beaufort School in Winchester following the bus crash especially those injured and their families. We pray for those in hospital and all doctors and medical staff.

*For those who have* We pray for all you have died and all who mourn, especially those unable to attend funerals to say their farewells. May those who have died rest in peace and rise in glory.

*Thanksgiving:* For our friends and family and all who support us. For the many blessings we enjoy that we often fail to notice or appreciate.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

### **We say 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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

**Song:** You Shall Go Out With Joy *sung through three times a little quicker each time!*

<https://youtu.be/1oLQihPKEBc>

You shall go out with joy  
And be let forth with peace,  
And the mountains and the hills  
Will break forth before you.  
There'll be shouts of joy  
And the trees of the fields  
Will clap, will clap their hands.

And the trees of the fields will clap their hands,  
And the trees of the fields will clap their hands,  
And the trees of the fields will clap their hands,  
While you go out with joy.

### **Sending Out Prayer**

Into a world of noise and confusion;  
into a world of delight and regret;  
into a world of hope and fear;  
into a world that is ever changing,  
we go with the message of an unchanging, merciful God  
who gave his all that we might live life to the best of our ability.  
God of all, go with us and within us,  
this and every day.  
**Amen.**

### **The Peace**

Go in the light and peace of Christ

**Thanks be to God**