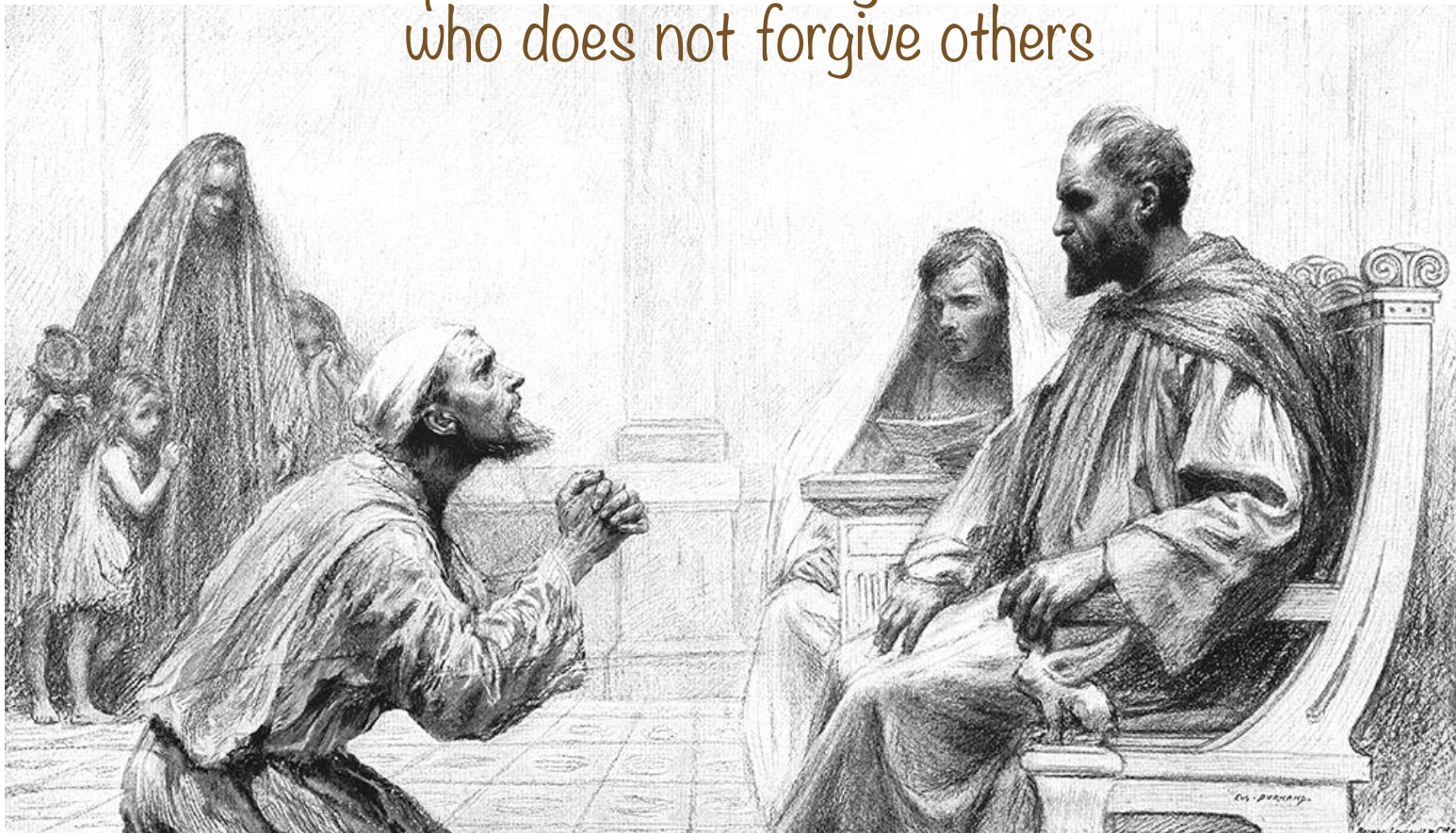


Parramatta City
Uniting Church

Leigh Memorial
Uniting Church

PENTECOST 16

The parable of the forgiven servant
who does not forgive others



**“Forgiveness isn’t acting
as if things don’t have to change”**
Debie Thomas

17 September 2023

WELCOME A warm welcome as we gather together on this Sunday.

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE

Today we light this candle
proclaiming the forgiving and merciful power of God.
Today we celebrate the richness and diversity of life.
Christ is alive and living among us!

The candle is lit

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge the Burrumattagal people of the Darug Nation, the first inhabitants of this place, as the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to their ancient culture, their elders past and present and their emerging leaders. We acknowledge the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now reside within this area. We honour them for their custodianship of the land, on which we gather today.

OPENING SENTENCES

God of forgiveness and abundant mercy,
you are the love
of each living creature.
You are the warmth
of the rising sun!

***You are the whiteness
of the moon at night
You are the the life
of the growing earth***

You are the strength
of the waves of the sea.

***Speak to us this day O God
Speak to us your truth.
Dwell with us in this time O God
Dwell with us in love.***

Adapted: J Philip Newell, Celtic Prayers, Iona

HYMN "Wake, now my senses"

(Tune: Slane, 10 10 10 10, TIS #547)

1. Wake, now my senses, and hear the earth call;
feel the deep power of being in all;
keep, with the web of creation your vow,
giving, receiving as love shows us how.

2. Wake, now my reason, reach out to the new,
join with each pilgrim who quests for the true;
honour the beauty and wisdom of time;
suffer your limit, and praise the sublime.

3. Wake, now compassion, give heed to the cry;
voices of suffering fill the wide sky;
take as your neighbour both stranger and friend,
praying and striving their hardship to end.

4. Wake, now my conscience, with justice your guide;
join with all people whose rights are denied;
take not for granted a privileged place;
God's love embraces the whole human race.

5. Wake, now my vision of ministry clear;
brighten my pathway with radiance here;
mingle my calling with all who will share;
work toward a planet transformed by our care.

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PRAYER

To forgive you will pass through the sea.
You will leave much behind:
what is owed, obligations,
the heavy chains of your master anger.
Just leave them.

***We will be tempted to turn back and fight
but that is the slavery you are escaping,
the lie of superior and inferior,
the cruel economy of deserving.***

It is a lie. Walk away from it.
You will be afraid of being overtaken
and hurt again
but God's mystery will protect you.
Go, on foot, through the wounded sea,
your tears a wall on your left and on your right.
Take only your love with you.

***We will find ourselves on the far shore
unburdened, free,
in the wilderness of love,
never needing to go back.
We will do this
seven times seventy times.***

(Adapted: Steve Garnaas-Holmes, Unfolding Light)

READING **Matthew 18: 21-35 (Adapted version)**

²¹Then Peter came and said to him, "Jesus, if another member of the community does wrong against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" ²²Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. ²³"For this reason the realm of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵and, as he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷And out of pity for him, the master of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But 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.' ²⁹Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. ³²Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had

mercy on you?' ³⁴And in anger his master handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Parent will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

RESPONSE

In these sacred readings we hear God speak
Thank you O God for your words of life.

REFLECTION

HYMN *Beauty for brokenness (TiS 690)*

1 Beauty for brokenness
Hope for despair
Lord in the suffering
This is our prayer
Bread for the children
Justice Joy Peace
Sunrise to sunset
Your Kingdom increase

2 Shelter for fragile lives
Cures for their ills
Work for the craftsman
Trade for their skills
Land for the dispossessed
Rights for the weak
Voices to plead the cause
Of those who can't speak
God of the poor
Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame
3 Refuge from cruel wars
Havens from fear

Cities for sanctuary
Freedoms to share
Peace to the killing-fields
Scorched earth to green
Christ for the bitterness
His cross for the pain

4 Rest for the ravaged earth
Oceans and streams
Plundered and poisoned
Our future, our dreams
Lord, end our madness
Carelessness, greed
Make us content with
The things that we need
God of the poor
Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame

5 Lighten our darkness
Breathe on this flame
Until your justice burns
Brightly again
Until the nations
Learn of Your ways
Seek Your salvation
And bring You their praise
God of the poor
Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame

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OFFERING

As you have done with us, may we share our lives with others, holding nothing back, but offering our treasures and lives: that hope may be restored, that healing might touch the broken, that we resource the hunger of body and soul, that the suffering might be revived, and that all might know of your steadfast love in their lives. This we pray in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

(Adaped: Thom Shuman)

NOTICES

PRAYER FOR OTHERS

Our Forgiving God and Eternal Friend,
You have gifted us with companions to walk with us on the way.
Loved ones and friends that we carry in our hearts.
They encourage and strengthen us. They inspire and comfort us.
They bring us security and joy.

***We pray that our love for them may be life-giving;
and we long for You to bless them as they have blessed
us.***

You have filled our world with neighbours
who touch our lives with surprising reflections of You.
Through them You call us beyond ourselves,
and teach us the lessons of compassion.

***We yearn to see all people as bearers of Your image.
May the welcome and service we give our neighbours
offer them the dignity You have given us.***

You bring us face to face with adversaries
who challenge and unsettle us.
Their gift is the shaking of our faith
which strengthens its foundations and removes complacency.

***Give us the courage to embrace the discomfort,
and the humility to bless those who curse us.***

May we find and share the healing which forgiveness brings.

Thank You, Friend of Humanity, for connecting us with others.
May our prayers, spoken and performed,
be the gentle fragrance of life to each one who enters our circle.

We now pray for our congregation:

The people pray

Adapted; John van de Laar, Sacrdise

HYMN *We are your people, Spirit of grace (TiS 468)*

1. We are your people Spirit of grace
You dare to make us to all our neighbours
Christ's living voice hands and face
2. Joined in community treasured and fed
may we discover gifts in each other
willing to lead and be led
3. Rich in diversity help us to live
closer than neighbours open to strangers
able to clash and forgive
4. Glad of tradition help us to see
in all life's changing where you are leading
where our best efforts should be.
5. Give us we venture justice and care
peaceful resisting waiting and risking
wisdom to know when and where
6. Christ as we serve you in different ways
may all we're doing show that your living
meeting your love with our praise

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BLESSING

As you have been forgiven,
now go into a world that needs your forgiving, healing touch.
Bring peace and hope to others,
sharing God's love with them.

Amen.

BIDDING *Shalom (TiS 778)*

Shalom to you now
Shalom my friends
May God's full mercies
Bless you my friends
In all your living
And through your loving
Christ be your Shalom,
Christ be your Shalom.

Elise S Eslinger

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