**13th September 2020 Video Service**​ **Trinity 14**
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Hello and welcome to our time of worship together, it’s good to see you. On our website you will find the text version of this service which has the links to the music.

<https://christchurchlille.fr/>

Wherever you are and however good or difficult life is at the moment, and we face challenges every day with Covid-19, we come to meet with God.

As we bring ourselves into God’s presence, we still our hearts and minds in a short time of silence

*Silence*

*Greeting*

​Faithful one, whose word is life:

come with saving power

to free our praise,

inspire our prayer

and shape our lives

for the kingdom of your Son,

Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

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**Opening Hymn** Bless the Lord, O my soul (Matt Redman)

<https://youtu.be/vSxocnIaN0A>

**The Gospel Reading**​

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Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Matthew

***All***   **Glory to you, O Lord.**​

​ **Matthew 18.21-35**

 **Forgiveness**

21 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?’ 22Jesus said to him, ‘Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven\* times.

**The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant**

23 ‘For this reason the kingdom 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 lord 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 lord 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 should pay the debt. 31When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. 32Then his lord 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 lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. 35So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister\* from your heart.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.​

***All***   **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Homily**​

“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us” or ‘Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors’

Ouch! We looked last week at the preceding passage about how to resolve problems and conflict in church communities, and indeed in any sphere of where we work and live. How it is to begin with having a quiet word, then a small meeting or finally for the person who causes upset refuses to listen or to put things right, being asked/told to leave the worshipping community. We also thought about the possibility that it might be **us** who causes a problem.

This week we see how God, who is present always and in all places, looks at the question of forgiveness. The Bible tells us repeatedly that we ought to forgive those who have hurt us.

We know that. We know it from the phrase in the Lord’s prayer that we say so often. We ***know*** we should forgive, we ***know*** we will feel better, released, lightened from a burden we didn’t realize we were carrying, when we forgive. But suppose that we find it almost impossible to forgive someone, someone who may have been our business partner who has double-crossed us, trodden all over us; maybe a life partner who has cheated on us, told us lies, broken our trust. Friends we trusted with our secrets, who we find out told them as a joke to others. And we must forgive? Simply telling ourselves or others that we must forgive and let go of the pain doesn’t work unless we choose to do it, to forgive.

What does Jesus have to teach us about forgiveness? In this passage Peter has asked how many times he should offer forgiveness? Once is quite good, several times is testing his ability to be nice, and for seven times, well! Jesus’ answer was *‘Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven\* times,* or seventy times seven*.* Seventy times seven is Jesus’ way of saying that forgiveness is not a commodity to be calculated. Not just a lot of times but always, each time, every time. The actual number of times is irrelevant.

Peter was no doubt shocked to hear this answer. He thought he was being very generous offering as many as seven times. So why are we asked to forgive and keep on forgiving?

‘ *23 ‘For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves.*

In the parable that Jesus then told, the king called one of his servants to repay an impossible debt. Ten thousand talents were the equivalent of 150,000 years wages! Here again the actual numbers are irrelevant, it is the concept of an unimaginable debt. The servant begs for patience and he will repay every penny. The king knows that he can’t repay the debt, so the king shows mercy and forgives the servant his debt, it is cancelled out and forgotten.

On the way out, the forgiven servant grabs a fellow servant by the throat and demands instant repayment of a small debt, refuses to listen to the same plea he just used himself and he throws the fellow servant into prison until the debt is paid in full. Enter an incredibly angry king who revokes his forgiveness and throws him into prison.

What does genuine forgiveness look like? Will God revoke his forgiveness of us if we refuse to forgive others?

The king forgives the servant an incalculable debt. Our King forgives us his servants an incalculable debt. Divine forgiveness cannot be measured any more than seventy times seven or 10,000 talents.

Look at the servant in the parable, he doesn’t rush home to celebrate with his family, instead he leaves the king’s presence and demands repayment of a relatively small debt from a fellow servant. He only knows intellectually that his debt is forgiven, he has not understood that instead of justice, he has been shown mercy and generosity by the king. We can see he hasn’t understood by his behaviour towards the other servant.

*32Then his lord 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 lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. 35 ‘So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister**\** *from your heart.’*

***From your heart.***

When you have serious issues with someone, when they have hurt you, forgive; when they have betrayed you, forgive; when they have deceived you, forgive. Forgive from the heart.

You have been forgiven all your debts to the King, you have been shown mercy, shown incredible kindness by God. We are simply forgiven debtors living alongside fellow debtors.

The gospel message is one of forgiveness. St Paul writing to the Ephesians (4:32) *‘Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you’*

We have been forgiven much, forgiven everything; and we are called to forgive as we have been forgiven, and to do so from the heart.

However hard you find it, however justified you may be, forgive from the heart. Show mercy, forgiveness, compassion as you have been shown mercy, forgiveness, compassion. Luke 6:36 **‘***Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.’* And nothing less.

​*Prayers* <https://youtu.be/t4Svh-9ohg4>

​We begin with prayers for our world

We pray for our world: places of conflict, years of war, the struggle to find food or clean water.

In this Season of Creation, the COVID-19 pandemic reveals how deeply the globe is interconnected. We realise more than ever that we are not isolated from each other and that conditions related to human health and well-being are fragile. The impact of the pandemic forces us to take seriously the need for vigilance and the need for conditions of sustainable life throughout the earth. Especially considering the environmental devastation and the threat of climate change. Help us to step up and help protect your gift of creation for as the psalmist tells us *“The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it,” (Psalm 24:1).*

And now a prayer of penitence.

​Reconciling God,
we would rather gossip
about those who sin against us,
than speak to them privately;
we would rather parade our wounds
for all to see,
than quietly work toward forgiveness
and reconciliation.
Help us choose the harder road,
the road that opens possibilities
for real healing, real forgiveness,
and real growth in your Spirit.
Help us place the best interests
of our community of faith
above our own need
for public vindication. Amen.

**The almighty and merciful Lord**

**grant us pardon and forgiveness of all our sins,**

**time for amendment of life, and the grace and strength of the Holy Spirit.**

**Amen.**

The Collect​ Trinity 14

​ Merciful God,

your Son came to save us

and bore our sins on the cross:

may we trust in your mercy

and know your love,

rejoicing in the righteousness

that is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

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***All***   **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.**

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*The Blessing*​

The Lord has done great things for us,
 and we are filled with joy. *(Psalm 126:3)*

The blessing of God almighty,​

the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,​

be among you and remain with you always.​ **Amen.**​

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**Notices**​: Services in church have resumed both at 10:30 and 6:30. Please check our website for groups you may wish to follow online.

We are planning online workshops beginning in a few weeks. The first one relates to this Season of Creation and is entitled ‘Mission and Creation Care for Christian Disciples’

I know I say this every week but we really do appreciate your support by prayer and finance, it helps us to continue our ministry and mission.

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**Hymn ‘Great is thy faithfulness’**

[**https://youtu.be/ErwiBz1QA4o**](https://youtu.be/ErwiBz1QA4o)