

Service for Week 7th – 13th Sept 2026

By Chaplain Andy

Our Opening Prayer.

Lord, grant us the strength to forgive as You forgive, even in the face of deep sorrow.

Bring healing to the families and all hearts broken by tragedy.

Let their witness of grace shine as a light of hope in a hurting world.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven.....

Amen

Bible Reading Matthew 18:21-35

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him.

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. "The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

"But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He

grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'

"But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.

When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.

"Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

Holy words, Holy wisdom,

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

Peter asked Jesus about forgiveness, - 'how many times should I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Jesus answers 'seventy- seven times' meaning a very large or infinite number. Jesus then illustrated his answer by telling a story about a servant who was forgiven a debt by his Master but then refuses to forgive a fellow servant who owed him money. On learning this the Master insists the debt is repaid after all.

In the bible there are several accounts of God forgiving men and women for sins they have committed. In Exodus we read how Moses killed an Egyptian foreman yet God forgave him and chose Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. In the book of Acts, we read how Paul persecuted and was responsible for the death of many early Christians until he encountered God on the road to Damascus which changed his life and Paul became one of Christ's greatest missionaries.

Recently I read a news account of a father in Australia, three of whose children were killed in a car accident caused by a drunk driver. The father, a Christian spoke about why he forgave the man responsible. He said he had forgiven him not only through his faith but also through his desire to save his marriage and help and support his other children who had survived. He said "I am told 65 per cent of marriages fail after losing one child, let alone three,"

The driver who had caused the accident said "I'm really sorry to you and your whole family for what I've done. I'll regret it for the rest of my life," The father replied "I've forgiven you already," The forgiven man described the forgiveness as life-changing. "It meant that I've got a second chance at life... he's given me everything," he said.

It is hard to let go of something which was said or done to you in the past. Perhaps you have never been able to forgive a person who was responsible for hurting you. It may be something that happened years ago but it still hurts. Our belief, like that father whose children were killed in a car accident is that we can choose to forgive, and if we can manage to forgive then the ongoing cycle of pain for not only the person that did us wrong but also for ourselves is broken. In that way their lives and our lives can be transformed. That father in faith decided that in order to cope with his grief and really support his surviving family he would forgive.

If there is something like that in your life, something that is maybe half forgotten that you have never been able to forgive, bring that to an end and offer forgiveness, even if you are no longer in touch with that person or they have died since.

Jesus Christ after the beating, wounding and suffering while hanging on the Cross said "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" **Amen**

Closing prayer

Loving God, help me to forgive others as you forgive me and put a new heart and right spirit within me, in Christ's name. **Amen**

Prayers inspired by Prayerfully Yours by Nick Fawcett