

**Sunday 13th September –
Morning Worship for
Trinity 15**

Led by Sue Nelms, LLM

<https://zoom.us/j/82311473640>

LORDSBRIDGE TEAM
OF CHURCHES



Gathering Prayer

God in Christ has revealed his glory.

Come let us worship.

From the rising of the sun to its setting
the Lord's name is greatly to be praised.

Give him praise, you servants of the Lord.

O praise the name of the Lord!

Opening Words

We praise you, living God:

you give strength to the earth that sustains us,

you open your hand to feed all living things.

We praise you, Lord Jesus Christ:

you teach us with stories of seeds and weeds and harvest time,

you call us to accept your word and bear much fruit.

We praise you, Holy Spirit, fire of love:

you are the breath of life in every creature,

you refresh our thirsty souls with grace.

Blessed be God,

Source of Wisdom,

living Word,

abiding Spirit,

Blessed be God for ever.

Hymn: Make me a channel of your peace

1 Make me a channel of your peace,
where there is hatred let me bring your love,
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord,
And where there's doubt true faith in you.

O master grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console,
to be understood, as to understand,
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.

2 Make me a channel of your peace,
where there's despair in life let me bring hope,
where there is darkness, only light,
and where there's sadness ever joy.

O master grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console,
to be understood, as to understand,
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.

3 Make me a channel of your peace,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving to us all that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

St Francis of Assisi (One Licence 80478)

Saying Sorry

We confess our sin, and the sins of our society, in the misuse of God's creation.

God our Father, we are sorry
for the times when we have used your gifts carelessly,
and acted ungratefully.

Hear our prayer, and in your mercy:
forgive us and help us.

We enjoy the fruits of the harvest,
but sometimes forget that you have given them to us.
Father, in your mercy:
forgive us and help us.

We belong to a people who are full and satisfied,
but ignore the cry of the hungry.
Father, in your mercy:
forgive us and help us.

We are thoughtless,
and do not care enough for the world you have made.
Father, in your mercy:
forgive us and help us.

We store up goods for ourselves alone,
as if there were no God and no heaven.
Father, in your mercy:
forgive us and help us.

The Lord enrich us with his grace,
and nourish us with his blessing;
the Lord defend us in trouble and keep us from all evil;
the Lord accept our prayers,
and absolve us from our offences,
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. **Amen.**

Readings by Dorothy Morison

Exodus 14:19-end

¹⁹ The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. ²⁰ It came between the army of

Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. ²² The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. ²³ The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. ²⁴ At the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. ²⁵ He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt.'

²⁶ Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.' ²⁷ So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. ²⁸ The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. ²⁹ But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

³⁰ Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. ³¹ Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

For the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Matthew 18:21-35

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew
Glory to you, O Lord.

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

²³ ‘For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵ and, 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. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, “Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.” ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But 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.” ²⁹ Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, “Have patience with me, and I will pay you.” ³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, “You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?” ³⁴ And 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.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection by Rev Clare Coates

Prayer: Lord God, we open our hearts and minds before you now – you know everything. Forgive us for all the times when we have gone wrong or said the wrong thing or failed to act. Through your power and strength empower us to forgive as you forgive us. Amen.

What would a world without forgiveness look like? Be like? Let's imagine for a few moments what it would be like to live in such a world. An unforgiving world is not God like. There would be many angry moments, some potentially violent. It would foster dishonesty and lying. It would lead to putting up dividing walls between people which are permanent. The wonder of forgiveness is that it opens doors to healing and reconciliation. It's not that those who choose to forgive forget, but they choose not to yield to the same destructive forces of revenge and retribution.

Forgiveness is the focus of our Gospel reading today. And it holds a very important lesson for us: always forgive. Without reservation or calculation. This lesson doesn't deny or ignore the wrongdoing. It's not about forgetting what's happened as if it doesn't matter. And it doesn't mean that we are to be a doormat. But it's a real challenge for us because it's not always easy to forgive. We can all think of times and situations in which it would be exceptionally hard to forgive. And yet Jesus's radical teaching about forgiveness is a core principle and value of Christian life and lies at the heart of our faith in God. It should characterise our love for one another. Forgiveness is the bedrock for a civilised world. The alternative is horrendous - and very bleak. Jesus is clear both in his reply to Peter and in telling the parable of the merciful King and the unforgiving servant. We must always forgive, because God is always ready to forgive us. God's forgiveness knows no limit. God is the God of second, third and infinite chances. God is always ready to welcome us with open arms and His promise of forgiveness and mercy. With God, it's always possible to have a fresh start, even if we feel all is lost. In the parable Jesus teaches us today, we see two contrasting attitudes. On the one hand, we see the merciful king, who is exceptionally generous, and spurred by compassion, forgives his servant a huge debt. This is what God is like, merciful, compassionate and generous and always willing to forgive. In stark contrast, on the other hand, the servant who has been forgiven everything is hard hearted, ruthless, harsh and fickle. He is totally unwilling to forgive a much smaller debt, and he forgets just how much

he has been forgiven. Jesus's teaching is clear. God's forgiveness goes hand in hand with our forgiveness of others.

Each time we pray the Lord's Prayer, we ask that we might be forgiven for our wrongs as we forgive those who wrong us. Mercy and forgiveness is at the heart of all our relationships. We need to be willing to give as well as receive mercy and forgiveness. We cannot ask God, who is infinitely generous and merciful, for his forgiveness if we're not prepared to forgive others. This is the decisive truth of the Lord's Prayer. God asks us to respond to His forgiveness and mercy by being willing and ready always to forgive, not to put it off, or to carry resentment and hatred in our hearts. Because resentment and unforgiveness is a burden and impacts our spiritual lives. It can be like drinking poison, which affects us the worst. When we forgive, we are released from a prison of resentment, and we can experience relief, release and a sense of inner peace. Of course, it's not an easy thing to do. It can be very, very difficult to forgive. It takes a conscious effort and work, and it's an ongoing process, not just a momentary act. The good news is that no one is beyond God's forgiveness. All we have to do is ask.

Jesus's response to Peter shows us that we are not to count the times we forgive others, just forgive. But our Gospel passage ends with a stark warning. If we choose not to forgive from our hearts, we should expect God to judge us by our own standards. God's forgiveness surpasses both our deserving and comprehension of it, and therefore the appropriate response is always to forgive, because God always forgives us everything. Of course, forgiveness doesn't mean that we stand by while evil things happen. If we become aware of a serious and ongoing crime or situation like domestic abuse or human trafficking or domestic slavery, then we have to act and inform the authorities. Forgiveness is balanced with our duty to protect the vulnerable from bad people. Keeping people safe and being a safe space as a church community for everyone is fundamental to our Christian calling and way of life. We must always call out wrongdoing and take appropriate

action when we witness or learn about something that is seriously wrong. Jesus is not talking about ignoring evil or wrongdoing when he talks of forgiveness. Jesus stood up for the vulnerable and oppressed and called out evil for what it was. Jesus was a big champion for fighting evil. He didn't tolerate it. Yet he was a proponent of forgiveness and turning the other cheek, not least on the cross. I think with Peter he's talking about a frame of mind or an attitude where we don't carry grudges. Where we try and give others another chance. Where we love them enough to forgive. Ultimately, Jesus teaches us that God will judge all things and all people in the end. By forgiving and not carrying grudges and anger, we can feel God's peace because we are freed while they're imprisoned by the things done to us. When we choose to forgive, then we are choosing Jesus's way, the way of love, which can completely transform us and our lives.

Affirmation of Faith

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession prepared by Sue Nelms

Let us pray for our own needs and for the needs of others,
following the pattern which Jesus gave
when he taught us to pray to God our Father.

Through our love of the countryside,
through our care for commuters and farmers,
through our care for animals and wildlife,
through our respect for property and tools:
Father, hallowed be your name.

On our farms and in our homes,
in our colleges and schools,
where machinery is made,
and where policy is planned:
Father, your kingdom come.

By our seeking your guidance,
by our keeping your commandments,
by our living true to our consciences:
Father, your will be done.

For the millions who live in poverty and hunger,
for our own needs, and the requirements of our neighbours,
by cooperation, sympathy and generosity:
give us today our daily bread.

Because we have broken your commandments,
doing what we ought not to do and failing as
good stewards of your creation;
forgive us our sins.

If any have injured us by injustice, double dealing or exploitation:
we forgive those who sin against us.

When prosperity lulls us to false security,
or hard times prompt us to despair,
When success makes us boastful,
or failure makes us bitter:
**lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

In the assurance of faith,
in the confidence of hope,
in the will to serve,
help us to love Christ as Lord,
and our neighbour as ourselves.
**for the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever.
Amen.**

Collect

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit
upon your Church in the burning fire of your love:
grant that your people may be fervent
in the fellowship of the gospel
that, always abiding in you,
they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:
**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 forever.
Amen.**

Hymn – O God beyond all praising

- 1 O God beyond all praising,
we worship you today
and sing the love amazing
that songs cannot repay;
for we can only wonder
at every gift you send,
at blessings without number
and mercies without end:
we lift our hearts before you
and wait upon your word,
we honour and adore you,
our great and mighty Lord.
- 2 Then hear, O gracious Saviour,
accept the love we bring,
that we who know your favour
may serve you as our king;
and whether our tomorrows
be filled with good or ill,
we'll triumph through our sorrows
and rise to bless you still:
to marvel at your beauty
and glory in your ways,

and make a joyful duty
our sacrifice of praise.

Michael Perry (1942-1996) © Mrs B Perry/Jubilate Hymns (CCLI 649532, One License 13032)

Notices

Conclusion

Go in strong and growing faith.
Trust in the tenderness of Christ
to heal a bruised and broken world.

Thanks be to God.

Go in eager and refreshing hope.
Work with Christ risen from the dead,
to fulfil the promise of a new creation.

Thanks be to God.

Let us go in peace,
to treasure and to tend the world God made and loves.

In the name of Christ. Amen.