

St John's

Prayers:

'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us'.
Father, help us to learn more about the importance of forgiving others as well as accepting the forgiveness offered to us. Help us to be gentle in our dealing with others especially those who find it difficult to be with.

We pray for all who are struggling with life, especially those who suffer from a mental health condition. Among the sick we pray for Scott Bradley, Helen Elliot, Dawn Forey, Ruth Gillespie, Hanna Lebrato, Jack Mannix, Marion Mason and Sue Ralfe.

Lord, hear us. Lord graciously hear us.

Contacts

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The Parish Office is closed.

**Matthew and Jonny say
Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer each day
Join in [here](#).**

St John's Church Pew Sheet 13th September 2020

Welcome!

The Government has allowed places of worship to open for individual prayer and services.

St John's Church is open for prayer:
10.30am-12.30pm each day

St John's Church is open for services:
9.30am Sundays
10.30am Wednesdays

Our online services will continue for the time being.

**Owe no one anything,
except to love one another,
for the one who loves another
has fulfilled the law.
Romans 13:8**

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST - MISSION STATEMENT

Drawn together by Christ's love, we seek by his grace to live out his commandments to love the Lord our God with all of our being; and to love everyone we come across as we love ourselves.

www.stjohnschurchstanmore.org.uk

Please do check our website for future updates

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The Fourteenth Sunday After Trinity

Collect

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.

Bible Readings (click on links to access passages):

[Genesis 50:15-21](#)

[Romans 14:1-12](#)

[Matthew 18:21-35](#)

Short Sermon from the Rector, Matthew Stone

What is Peter's question to Jesus, "How often should I forgive?" really about? He might be asking how much ill-treatment from a fellow believer he himself should graciously absorb before refusing to forgive any further. Alternatively he might be questioning the value, to a sinner, of repeatedly being forgiven while continuing repeatedly to commit the sin.

Picking the Biblical number of fullness, Peter asks whether seven might be a reasonable number of times to forgive before, presumably, sterner measures are resorted to. "No," says Jesus, "seventy-seven times", and then goes on to tell them a parable.

The parable features a king – a Middle Eastern potentate – who wishes to settle accounts with his slaves. "Slaves" here does not indicate poor people who do menial labour, but more likely wealthy ministers in the king's administration, one of whom owes him 10,000 talents. The figure approximately equates to a day's pay for one hundred million labourers – a vast sum of money. The minister cannot possibly repay the debt so the king judges that he, his wife and children are to be sold into slavery. The minister in desperation falls before the king, crying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything," at which the king does an about-turn and lets him off without sanction!

The story then moves into a second scene in which the forgiven slave, the minister, meets a fellow slave who owes him 100 denarii. This is a relatively small sum, about a day's pay for a hundred labour-

ers. But the minister, who has been forgiven so much, shows himself to have a mean spirit and, in spite of similar pleas for patience, throws the debtor into prison.

When other slaves hear what has happened they report back to the king, who is furious and says to the minister, "You wicked slave". I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you have not had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?" And the wicked slave is marched off to the torture chamber! "So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you," says Jesus, "if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.

This parable does not really touch on the practical questions Peter was asking, a fact that must disappoint some readers. Rather, Jesus approaches the issue of forgiveness in a far more radical way, setting our forgiveness of those who wrong us in the context of God's immense forgiveness of those who sin against him, meaning, of course, all of us too.

Every Christian knows that Jesus instructed us that forgiveness should have no limits. That's exactly what the seventy times seven means. But what is less clear is that forgiveness is a continuing process. You just don't forgive and move on. That sore spot will continue to show up again and again. And in such situations, we must remember to forgive again, and again. "I do not say to you up to seven times," Jesus said, "but up to seventy times seven."

C.S. Lewis put it this way: "*We find that the work of forgiveness has to be done over and over again. We, forgive, we mortify our resentment; a week later some chain of thought carries us back to the original offence and we discover the old resentment blazing away if nothing had been done about it at all. We need to forgive our brother or sister seventy times seven not only for 490 offences but for one offence.*" Forgiveness is not only a struggle, but it's a very important struggle. If we truly want to live in communion with God, then we have to learn to forgive as He forgave. The real lesson to be learned is that the struggle to forgive is an active choice, a disciplining of our minds and not a feeling, and that choice often needs to be made again and again. And so we must persevere. Amen.