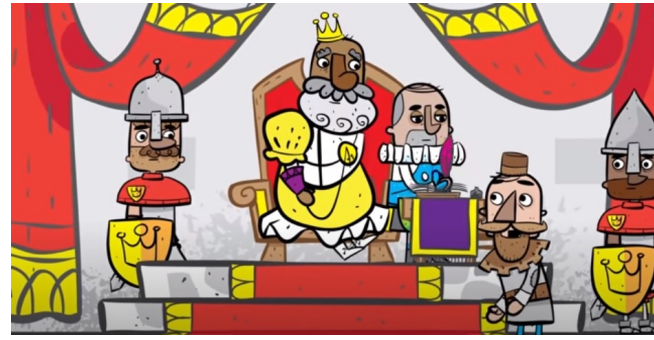




The HOLY FROG Blog

Honour Others, Lower Yourself and Fully Rely On God.



The Unforgiving Servant

When Jameel McGee was wrongly accused of dealing drugs, by corrupt police officer Andrew Collins, he was arrested and sent to prison for 10 years. All he wanted to do was serve the time and then get out and hurt the police officer who had framed him. There was absolutely no way that Jameel would ever forgive that man having lost everything, for a lie.

When Jesus showed His first followers how to pray he focused their attention on the relationship between God and humanity. Get it right between you and God, Our Father in Heaven, and you will **see the difference forgiveness makes to relationships** between you and other people on earth! So, each day ask God for the provision of your needs and make sure you also include a plea for forgiveness: “**Forgive us our sins, as we also forgive those who sin against us**” (Luke 11:4). In some versions, instead of ‘sins’ the prayer refers to debts, trespasses or transgressions. Whichever word is used, the importance of **forgiveness is the key thing** to focus on. But what are we really saying when we ask God to “Forgive us our sins, as we also forgive those who sin against us?”



First of all we're saying, “I've sinned. I've done wrong. I've crossed the line.” In other words **we need to admit, ‘God I messed up’**. We are taking responsibility for what we have or have not done, said or thought. Jesus clearly saw it as important to approach God about dealing with sin because it gets in the way of our relationship with God. However, He knew, as the Bible says, “**If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness**” (1 John 1:9, NIV).

In this act of grace from God, we are restored in our relationship with Him and things continue as they should be. This is not an occasional prayer either; as well as asking for daily provision of our needs, **we need to seek God for forgiveness on a daily basis.**

But notice also that Jesus linked our forgiveness from God to our forgiveness of others. “**Forgive us in the same way we forgive others**”. It's only fair right? To accept God's mercy for ourselves and not give it out to others is asking for trouble. To be blunt, it would be quite selfish and certainly contrary to God's ways. It would be a sin!

It happens in this life that others offend us. People are not perfect. Friends may hurt us by what they say. Family may let us down. Colleagues may act unkindly. People we don't even know, even those we trust, will take advantage of us. As Jameel McGee had found out, We live in a sinful world filled with sinful people, and at times we will be confronted by sinful actions or words. **Why should we forgive others that hurt us?**

Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, struggled with this reality and on one occasion came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how often should I forgive someone who keeps sinning against me?”



As many as seven times?” Jesus replied “Not seven times, but seventy-seven times. **This is how God would want it.** There was once a king whose servant owed him £1m. In order to recover the debt, the master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had. The servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ Out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and **he forgave him the debt.**

But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a £100 and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe.’ His fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ However, he refused to listen and had the man put in prison until he should pay the debt. When the King heard of this, he summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. You also should **have mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you!**’ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”
(Matthew 18:21-35)

Jesus teaches us that as we pray this prayer, we are not only asking God for his forgiveness when we mess up but also seeking His help in order for us to forgive others. Too much to ask? Never going to happen? Look at the story of Jameel and Andrew for yourself and see the difference forgiveness can make in the most unlikely circumstances. **What a difference it would make to our relationships** with others in our families, amongst our friends, with our work colleagues and to the community around us **if we followed Jesus example of how to pray about forgiveness.**



Chaplain' Challenge:

1. What's the largest amount of money you have ever seen? (£5000! but it wasn't mine!)
2. Explain one thing you found really difficult to do and why it was tough to get it done.
3. Watch the story of Jameel and Andrew. How does it make you feel about forgiveness?
4. How would you react if you were the Master or the Unforgiving servant?
5. Create a picture, a model or comic strip based on forgiveness and send it to me*
6. Look for ways to show forgiveness to others this week.

Reflection:

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” (Ephesians 4:32) (Matthew 6:14)

PRAYER: Our Father, no matter how deeply I feel someone has hurt me, I can choose, today, in the light of the grace you have shown me, to show forgiveness to others. I don't have to feel like it. I don't have to drag up any warm feelings for those people. But I can refuse to retaliate. I can wipe the slate clean. I can forgive that debt. I can pray, “Forgive me today as I am forgiving others.” As I do that may I know the healing that comes from releasing others' sins against me and be released of sin's hold on me as well. **Amen**



Send in your stories of Christian faith in action, your prayer requests and anything else!
May we know real life lived out in faith, as individuals and as a community.

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