



Call to worship - Psalm 100 : Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Hymn STF499 – Great God, your love has called us here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hN7acvRxMmo>

Great God, your love has called us here,
as we, by love, for love were made.
Your living likeness still we bear,
though marred, dishonoured, disobeyed.
We come, with all our heart and mind
your call to hear, your love to find.

but by your gracious love alone.
We strain to glimpse your mercy seat
and find you kneeling at our feet.

We come with self-inflicted pains
of broken trust and chosen wrong;
half free, half bound by inner chains;
by social forces swept along,
by powers and systems close confined;
yet seeking hope for humankind.

Then take the towel, and break the bread,
and humble us, and call us friends.
Suffer and serve till all are fed,
and show how grandly love intends
to work till all creation sings,
to fill all worlds, to crown all things.

Great God, in Christ you call our name
and then receive us as your own,
not through some merit, right, or claim,

Great God, in Christ you set us free
your life to live, your joy to share.
Give us your Spirit's liberty
to turn from guilt and dull despair,
and offer all that faith can do
while love is making all things new

The Lord's Prayer : Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Hymn STF51 – Great is thy faithfulness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NQKHHP-CI>

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father
There is no shadow of turning with Thee
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love

Great is Thy faithfulness
Great is Thy faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside

Bible Reading - Matthew 18:21–35 : Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who 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 bags of gold^[b] 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. “At this 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, cancelled the debt and let him go. “But when that servant went out, he found one

of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. 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 it 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 outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I cancelled 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 handed 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 or sister from your heart."

Sermon - What Do You Do When Someone Wrongs You?

When someone wrongs us, we often ask: How badly did they hurt me? Do they deserve forgiveness? How many times must I forgive? Peter asked Jesus a similar question: "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?"

Peter probably thought seven was generous. But Jesus replied, "Not seven times, but seventy-seven times"—or, in some translations, "seventy times seven." Jesus was not giving Peter a number to calculate. He was teaching that forgiveness in God's kingdom is not about keeping score.

Jesus then tells the story of two servants. The first servant owes the king an enormous debt—so large that repayment is impossible. He falls before the king and asks for patience. But the king does more than give him more time. He cancels the entire debt. This servant then meets another servant who owes him a much smaller amount. The second servant also begs for patience, but the first servant refuses. Although he has received complete mercy, he will not show mercy to someone else.

When the king hears what happened, he is angry. The servant's problem is that he received grace without allowing grace to change him. The parable teaches us that forgiveness is central to the Christian life because we ourselves live by God's forgiveness. We are not people who have earned mercy. We are people who have received it as a gift through Jesus Christ.

However, forgiveness does not mean pretending that wrongdoing did not happen. It does not mean ignoring abuse, avoiding justice, or returning to an unsafe situation. Forgiveness is not the same as immediate reconciliation. Reconciliation requires truth, repentance, changed behaviour, and the rebuilding of trust.

Therefore, Christian forgiveness does not call evil good. It means that we refuse to allow evil, bitterness, and revenge to control our lives. We can forgive while still establishing wise boundaries and seeking justice.

Nelson Mandela offers a powerful example. After spending twenty-seven years in prison under South Africa's apartheid system, he was released into a country filled with anger and division. Mandela could have encouraged revenge, but instead he worked toward reconciliation and a new future.

This did not mean that apartheid was excused or that injustice was forgotten. Truth still had to be spoken, and responsibility still mattered. But Mandela understood that South Africa could not become free if it remained trapped in hatred. Forgiveness became a way of breaking the cycle of violence and building a different future.

Theologian Miroslav Volf writes, "Forgiveness flounders because I exclude the enemy from the community of humans and I exclude myself from the community of sinners." This does not mean that the victim and the offender are equally responsible. It means that we must see the offender truthfully, while also remembering our own need for God's mercy.

The servant in Jesus' parable wanted grace for himself but judgment for someone else. He wanted the king to cancel his debt while demanding full payment from his fellow servant. Jesus warns us not to separate God's mercy received from mercy extended.

So, what do we do when someone wrongs us?

First, we tell the truth about what happened. Forgiveness does not require denial.

Second, we bring our pain and desire for justice to God. We release revenge into God's hands.

Third, we establish appropriate boundaries where necessary. Forgiveness is not foolishness, and love does not require continued exposure to harm.

Fourth, we ask God to free us from hatred and resentment. Forgiveness may be a decision we make repeatedly before our emotions begin to follow.

Finally, we remember the mercy we have received. We stand before God not as people who have paid every debt, but as people who have been forgiven.

The question is not whether the wrong was real. The question is whether that wrong will control our future. In Christ, forgiveness declares that sin and suffering will not have the final word. May God give us courage to seek truth, wisdom to pursue justice, strength to maintain healthy boundaries, and grace to forgive from the heart.

Amen.

Prayer of Intercession (using the Methodist Worship book page 282)

Let us pray.

Glory to the Father, the God of love, who created us; who continually preserves and sustains us; who has loved us with an everlasting love, and given us the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. **Blessèd be God for ever.**

Glory to Jesus Christ our Saviour, who, though he was rich, yet for our sake became poor, and was tested in every way as we are, yet without sin; who proclaimed the good news of the kingdom, and was obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross; who was raised from the dead and is alive for ever, and has opened the kingdom of heaven to all who trust in him; who is seated at God's right hand in glory, and will come to be our judge. **Blessèd be God for ever.**

Glory to the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, by whom we are born into the family of God, and made members of the body of Christ; whose witness confirms us; whose wisdom teaches us; whose power enables us; who will do for us more than we can ask or think. **Blessèd be God for ever.**

To the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be praise and glory for ever. **Amen**

Hymn STF777 – Jesus remember me.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-A967WZKNMg>

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

Dismissal.