

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE, RASTRICK

# Welcome to Morning Worship

13<sup>th</sup> September 2020

*Click on the underlined links to take you to safe content on the internet.  
If you are able light a candle as you start the service and if others are in the house  
encourage them to reading some of the service with you.*

## *Introduction*

This is the day that the Lord has made.  
**Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

We have come together in the name of Christ  
to offer our praise and thanksgiving,  
to hear and receive God's holy word,  
to pray for the needs of the world,  
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins,  
that by the power of the Holy Spirit  
we may give ourselves to the service of God.



## *Prayer of Penitence*

Jesus says, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' So, let us turn away from our sin and turn to Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

## *Together we pray:*

**Lord God, we have sinned against you.  
we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and repent.  
Have mercy on us according to your love.  
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.  
Renew a right spirit within us  
and restore to us the joy of your salvation,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## **Hymn: [All hail the power of Jesus name – Keswick version](#)**

All hail, the pow'r of Jesus' name!  
Let angels prostrate fall;  
bring forth the royal diadem  
and crown him, crown him,  
crown him, crown him Lord of all.

Crown him, you martyrs of our God,  
who witness to his call;  
exalt the one whose path you trod,  
and crown him... Lord of all.

Descendants of his chosen race  
You ransomed from the fall,  
hail him who saves you by his grace  
and crown him... Lord of all.

Let every people, nation, tribe,  
on this celestial ball:  
to him all majesty ascribe,  
and crown him... Lord of all.

O that, we then with that great throng,  
We at his feet may fall,  
join in the everlasting song,  
and crown him... Lord of all.

Words: Edward Perronet  
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### **The Word of God**

NT Reading: Romans 14:1-12 read by Julia Tum

Gospel: Matthew 18: 21-35 read by Derek Davis

[For the readings click here](#)

### *Reflection prepared by Rev Stephen Hannam*

Our Gospel reading today is about finding freedom. It's about finding the freedom that comes from having our sins forgiven. Rightly or wrongly from what we read of Peter we assume that he was a practical man and perhaps because he was a practical man it would seem reasonable that sometimes he found it difficult following Jesus and responding in the way Jesus reacted. Difficult doing the Jesus way!

I think we can safely say that on this occasion Peter thought that there was a good case for what we might call "damage limitation." It seems Peter thought that there should be some limitations on forgiveness. Remember he had been brought up with the Jewish teachings which seemed quite simple:- If someone sins, forgive them, once twice, three times. But three times was enough! After that a sinner should be made to face the consequences.

However, Peter saw that Jesus was going way beyond this. So, he asked how often he should we forgive. Perhaps seven times? Surely no one could reasonably ask for

more opportunities. To explain what he means Jesus tells the story of the two debtors.

One owed 10,000 talents. This was a huge debt. I read that it was more than all the tax from Samaria and Galilee put together. It was a huge amount that no one could be expected to pay. In today's money it was about £2,400 million (it makes you wonder what he had done with the money in the first place!!) And yet Jesus says:- the king forgave him this debt out of mercy and compassion for his family.

This same man who had been forgiven such an enormous debt could not find compassion for his slave who owed him 100 denarius. That's still a big number but compared to the first it's small – about £4,000. In comparison this debt was the sort of money that could be carried in your pocket. Nearly loose change!

It seems he had no mercy, so he had the slave put into prison. He was a hard man! He demanded all that was his by rights. I think we all know there are still people like that today. The "I know my rights brigade!" It seems the other slaves saw what had happened so quite rightly they told the king. In the text we read how the king was angry and so had the slave put into prison until he could pay his debt in full. Which of course he could never do.

The amount owed by the first slave is mind boggling! Even the sale of everything he had could go nowhere to paying back that debt. That sort of money is just beyond my imagination. It makes me wonder about the king's finances. If he could afford to lend such a huge amount of money how rich must he have been? And yet he releases the slave from this colossal debt!

And Jesus says this king is a bit like God. It demonstrates how huge is God's goodness. Like the king's unimaginable riches how great, how unimaginable is God's mercy for us. We just can't imagine how great is God's mercy for us. I guess that's why we often use the word "infinite" when we talk about God's goodness. I guess we might as well say God's grace is endless because it's just too big for us to comprehend.

Now remember there is the other debt of £4,000 which the second slave owed – that's tiny compared to the other debt. But if it disappeared from your bank account I'm sure you would soon miss it. Personally I think the behaviour of the first slave tells us a lot about ourselves and about forgiveness. Remember how he demanded?

I think it's still possible for us to receive God's forgiveness on a huge scale for the things we have done wrong and for us to rejoice that Jesus died for all our sins - and yet still hold on to a grudge we still hold.

I wonder how many of us still remember a hurt someone caused us by a hard word or action maybe - a year or ten or twenty years ago. Like £4,000 compared to

£2,400 million the wrongdoing might be very small but maybe we can't let it go because the injustice still rankles. We are human but we are also called to followers of Jesus. This is not an easy Gospel.

I think today's reading forces us to look at the link between the amazing forgiveness we receive from God, and the hard forgiveness we need to practice in our own lives. Both slaves ended up in prison and for us the alternative to forgiving each other is that we become trapped in an endless, vicious cycle of paying each other back. You could say a self-inflicted prison.

Forgiveness sets us free – I believe it is this freedom that that God longs to give us and wants us to give to each other. We all know we need God's forgiveness and I believe we all need to forgive others.

Prayer

Lord of forgiveness,  
may your love wash away our sins  
and the sins of those who have wronged us.  
In Jesus name, may your mercy set us free. Amen

**Hymn:**      [There is a Redeemer – Keswick version](#)

There is a Redeemer,  
Jesus, God's own Son,  
precious Lamb of God, Messiah,  
Holy one.

Jesus, my Redeemer,  
Name above all names,  
precious Lamb of God, Messiah,  
O for sinners slain.

*Thank you, O my Father,  
for giving us your Son,  
and leaving your Spirit  
till the work on earth is done.*

When I stand in glory.  
I will see his face.  
And there I'll serve my King for ever,  
In that Holy Place.

Words: Melody Green  
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## The Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.        Amen.**

*Prayers of intercession prepared by David Marshall [Click Here](#)*

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, you promised through your Son Jesus Christ to hear us when we pray in faith.

Lord we pray for your worldwide Church in all its different forms. Especially do we pray for places where family, cultural and social pressures conspire to make being a Christian difficult and we ask that those under such pressures are filled with your holy spirit and find inner strength to hold fast to your holy name. So we pray for our own church here at St. John's and at St Matthew's; for all who promote outreach into the community or help to maintain here our life of worship and service especially during this interregnum. We pray for Alan, Stephen, Glenn and John and all those that minister here, that they may be reassured, and their work and service blessed by the power of your love.

**Lord hear us – Lord graciously hear us**

Lord we live in a world that seeks to blame and judge with little room for forgiveness. Lives wasted in hate and recrimination on the pretext of 'finding the truth'. Yet, after inquiries are made, and results are known, not one life will have been resurrected, and many more lives will have suffered the trauma of reliving the events, unable to escape the vortex of bitterness and hate. Lord we pray that we understand the principle of forgiving those that make mistakes, especially as it relates to the

emergency services, fire, police and ambulance, who are often faced with reacting quickly to unfamiliar and dangerous situations. We pray for those conducting the inquiry into the Manchester bombing, the continuing enquiry into Grenfell Tower and understand we shall all be judged in the final analysis.

**Lord hear us – Lord graciously hear us**

We pray for a world seemingly in never-ending conflict with itself. We are faced with once-stable nations in crisis due to factional divisions or struggles for justice and representation, or just a failure to live with others of a different culture or faith. Lord Jesus, you taught much about loving our neighbour and of forgiveness - help and guide those that try to ease the suffering of peoples caught in the middle of conflict and of those who promote peace by seeking mediation and dialogue. We think of the continuing problems in Hong Kong, Belarus and Lebanon. We remember also, the plight of so many displaced families and those who flee conflict and become refugees. We especially think of those 13000 refugees suffering in Lesbos when their camp was destroyed by fire. We pray for all aid agencies and those trying to help in difficult circumstances. We also remember those suffering through natural disasters, caused by global warming, like the fires raging in California and pray for all those trying to control them.

**Lord hear us – Lord graciously hear us**

We pray for our own country and its peoples, for the Queen and all who hold authority and power that through Christ's love and mercy all may strive in seeking what is best for all regardless of origins or status. We think of the differences between Britain and the European Union and pray that those issues may be resolved. We think of ourselves, Lord, and give you thanks for all you have given to us. We ask you to bless our homes, our families and our friends with your presence, love and peace. We pray also, for homes where there is unrest, fearfulness and violence, and for all who have suffered abuse or neglect – for children who have been taken into care and for those who are left at risk. We ask that you will be with all who walk in darkness; may your love and light protect the depressed and the despairing: may your strength and hope be known to the discouraged. We pray for people whose lives are insecure, for those whose relationships, homes or work are at risk and for those who have become captive to vice or drugs.

**Lord hear us – Lord graciously hear us**

We ask for your blessing on all those whose health is failing and who are ill at home or in hospital; for those whose powers are waning and are becoming dependant on others. Give them strength and courage to deal with each new day knowing that you love them. We pray especially for those known to ourselves who are in need of our

prayers and those on our prayer list: Holly Donohue, Barbara McLaren, Mary Lake, Muriel Coop and Bernard Shaw, Stephen and Jean Hannam, Doreen Clark, Douglas Hartley, Keith Redfearn, Helen Hearson, Glynice Lord, David Williams, Jane, Wendy Rachael and Phillipa, Anne and John Milnes, and those in local residential provision.

May the light of your love shine upon them and bring them your peace. We also pray for all those who are mourning the loss of a loved one and we give you thanks for all who have triumphed over the troubles of this world and are now at rest and at peace in your kingdom.

**Lord hear us – Lord graciously hear us**

And so we offer you these prayers Lord, and rejoicing in the fellowship of St John and all your Saints we commend ourselves and all people to your unfailing love.

**Merciful Father Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

*A Prayer for Church Growth*

**God of Mission**

**Who along brings growth to your church,**

**Send your Holy Spirit to give**

**Vision to our planning**

**Wisdom to our actions**

**And power to our witness.**

**Help our church to grow in numbers,**

**In spiritual commitment to you,**

**And in service to our local community,**

**Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

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 for ever. Amen.**

*The Collect for today*

Almighty God,

whose only Son has opened for us

a new and living way into your presence:

give us pure hearts and steadfast wills  
to worship you in spirit and in truth;  
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

**Hymn:** [Jesus is the name – Keswick](#)

Jesus is the name we honour;  
Jesus is the name we praise.  
Majestic Name above all other names,  
The highest heaven and earth proclaim  
That Jesus is our God

*We will glorify, we will lift him high,  
We will give him honour and praise.  
We will glorify, we will lift him high,  
We will give him honour and praise.*

Jesus is the name we worship;  
Jesus is the name we trust.  
He is the King above all other kings,  
Let all creation stand and sing  
That Jesus is our God.

Jesus is the Father's splendor;  
Jesus is the Father's joy.  
He will return to reign in majesty  
And every eye at last will see  
That Jesus is our God.

Words: Philip Lawson Johnston  
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**Final Prayer**

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

*Our service ends with the Grace,*

**The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the Love of God,  
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with us all evermore. Amen.**

[Fanny Mendelssohn: Organ Postlude in F](#)

She composed it for her own wedding after her brother Felix (who was writing the wedding music) fell out of a carriage, injured himself and had to miss the wedding! Played by Gordon Balmforth on the Conacher organ at St John the Divine, for the congregation during lockdown.