

Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

**Sunday 13 September 2026
Trinity 15**

Welcome to this week's prayers and reflections. This week, Peter seeks Jesus' advice on forgiveness. As the keyholder of our Lord's to be Church, it is a vital question. Our Lord's answer is a thought-provoking and very challenging parable. Forgiveness – being forgiven and being forgiving – is not an easy topic. Go gently.

May our Lord walk with you as you ponder the art of forgiveness.

Every blessing,

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*As we prepare to ponder our Lord's teaching on forgiveness,
we are drawn to the words in the prayer our Lord gave to his church.*



'Forgive our sins as we forgive',
you taught us, Lord, to pray;
but you alone can grant us grace
to live the words we say.

Rosamond Eleanor Herklots (1905-1987)

CCLI reported

Prayers and Reflections
for use at home on Trinity 15
Forgiven Forgive

PREPARING OURSELVES

Take a moment to be still in God's presence and feel his love. If you are indoors, you may wish to light a candle as a sign of God's love - here, in your room. You may also wish to have a bowl of water ready for the time of letting go. When you are ready, say this opening prayer.

Lord, as I sit and wait in silence,
I place my hopes and dreams,
my fears and concerns,
into your safe and loving hands.
Enfold me with your love,
make my heart beat in time with yours;
in Jesus' name,
I pray. **Amen.**

LETTING GO

If you come to this time of prayer and reflection with any regrets, with things that you wish you had not said, done or been, offer them to God in the silence of your heart. And then, reflect on the words of this next verse.

How can your pardon reach and bless
the unforgiving heart
that broods on wrongs, and will not let
old bitterness depart?

*Rosamond Eleanor Herklots (1905-1987)
CCLI reported*



*If you wish, dip your finger into a bowl of water and make the sign of the cross on your palm.
Feel God's forgiveness.*

Our verse speaks to us of the challenge of forgiveness. We need to be ready to forgive the one who has hurt us. What can get in the way? Sometimes, it is because the harm done to us is too deep or devastating to be forgiven with a simple 'I'm sorry.' We, and the one who has hurt us so very badly, have to work carefully and tentatively towards genuine forgiveness. It takes time – open conversation – a recognition of the hurt – real remorse – baby steps towards finding a resolution and/or letting go of the wrongs done to us. Our relationship may never be the same again but, at least, we are no longer being eaten up by unforgiven sins.

If the one who has hurt us does not acknowledge what they have done, does not enter into a restorative conversation, the most that we may be able to do is let go of the hurt inside and try to move on. Our relationship is broken but we don't have to be.

If any of this speaks to your heart, ponder what it is you are holding onto. What might you do to let go of your burden? Prayerfully seek our Lord's loving and wise advice.

If any of this speaks to you of a loved one who is struggling to forgive, or be forgiven, share what is on your heart with our Lord and, in stillness, listen to him and receive of his peace.

The cross reminds us that Jesus fully understands the depth of harm done to us and how hard it can be to let go or forgive. Yet, it can be possible, even when the debts owed to us are not trivial ones.



*In blazing light your cross reveals
the truth we dimly knew:
what trivial debts are owed to us,
how great our debt to you!*

*Rosamond Eleanor Herklots (1905-1987)
CCLI reported*

PRAYING TODAY'S PRAYER

(The Collect)

Across our villages and the worldwide Church, this prayer is being said today. Add your voice to this earthly circle of prayer to our God whose love is unbreakable.

Lord God,
defend your Church from all false teaching
and give to your people knowledge of your truth,
that we may enjoy eternal life
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Our prayer points us to our bibles. It is there we find God's teaching on how to live at one with him and with all our neighbours, locally and globally. If we open our bibles anywhere in the Old Testament, it is easy to find an example of God's leaders and his people breaking his core commands to love him and to love others as themselves. In his warnings to them, we see God's willingness to forgive if only. If only they will stop being selfish, self-serving and status seeking and repent of their sins. He forgave, forgave, and forgave again and again, his wayward people. Why? Because he loved them. It is why his Son's coming to be with God's people is such a powerful sign of how much God wants to forgive them – his children – individually and collectively, so that we might have a close and loving relationship with him. Forgiveness restores – rebuilds – renews. Forgiveness is a key step on the path to peace. True and lasting peace. It is why it was such a key lesson for Peter to learn.



Lord, cleanse the depths within our souls,
and bid resentment cease.

Then, bound to all in bonds of love,
our lives will spread your peace.

Rosamond Eleanor Herklots (1905-1987)

CCLI reported

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

The parable of the unmerciful servant

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 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.'

Matthew 18:21-35

Forgiven forgive...

Our Lord's parable is designed to open Peter's eyes to God's desire – the forgiven should be forgiving. Our Lord has forgiven all of the mistakes Peter had made before he called him – all the mistakes that he has made during his training to be Peter the Rock – and he will forgive the mistakes that he has still to make. Not least of these will be those three denials on the eve of the Cross. As one who has been forgiven, Peter should be forgiving towards those who will hurt him.

This thought reminds me of what Jesus does as he is nailed to the cross, when he says, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' Peter will go on to experience similar trials to Jesus – he will be put in prison more than once, flogged before his release, and then – finally – he will be condemned to death in Rome. Did Peter utter these self-same words as he was nailed to his own cross? As one of God's forgiven, did he forgive those who executed him?

If he did forgive the Roman authorities, I imagine that he would have done so because, in his heart of hearts, he knew the depth of God's love and the breadth of God's forgiveness. It will have brought him peace in those agonising final moments. It will have reminded him of Jesus – how he looked as he told today's parable. May we be as forgiving too.



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.*

*Sebastian Temple (1928-1997)
from a prayer attributed to St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226)*

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OUR PRAYERS

Feel free to use one or more of these prayers and to add your own.

Lord Jesus, your story invites me to contemplate the cross,
to wonder at your love and your grace to forgive all my failings.
Forgiven, I can be forgiving. Help me, Lord, when I struggle with this.
Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, forgiveness has the power to heal the hearts of the hurting
and their hurters. It can set both parties free – free to live alongside
each other with a peace built on deeper understanding. I pray for...
Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, being unable to forgive or being unforgiven is a burden,
a huge burden. It can have a big impact on our personal wellbeing.
Your loving answer is to say, 'Turn to me.' In love, I pray for...
Lord, hear my prayer.

Offer your own heartfelt prayers and yearnings, praise and thanksgivings.

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.**

PRAYER OF BLESSING

A closing prayer of blessing for this week.

O God, you search me and you know me,
all my thoughts and feelings are open to your gaze,
you see the paths I will take before I take them. Guide my daily living.
Bless me and keep my loved ones safe, I pray. **Amen.**