

**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

**Opening Affirmation**

Disciples and doubters,  
foolish and fearless,  
we are all God's people,  
and He welcomes us all  
We draw near Him and worship.

**Hymn: [Lord, the light of your love is shining](#)**

Lord, the light of your love is shining,  
In the midst of the darkness, shining;  
Jesus, light of the world, shine upon us;  
Set us free by the truth you now bring us,  
Shine on me, shine on me.

*Chorus:- Shine, Jesus, shine,  
Fill this land with the Father's glory;  
Blaze, Spirit, blaze,  
Set our hearts on fire.  
Flow, river, flow,  
Flood the nations with grace and mercy;  
Send forth your word,  
Lord, and let there be light!*

Lord, I come to your awesome presence,  
From the shadows into your radiance;  
By the blood I may enter your brightness,  
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness.  
Shine on me, shine on me.

*Chorus*

As we gaze on your kingly brightness  
So our faces display your likeness.

Ever changing from glory to glory,  
Mirrored here may our lives tell your story.  
Shine on me, shine on me.

*Chorus*

**Let us pray together**

Lord you have created a world full of people  
A universe full of planets and stars  
You sent us your Son Jesus  
To show us how to live in our world  
May we have the grace to follow Him. **Amen**

Loving God, we are sorry  
when we have wandered far from you.  
when we have not listened to your voice  
and listened instead to other voices –  
the voices of greed, and selfishness,  
you have offered us abundance of life,  
but we have settled for so much less.  
Forgive us

**Assurance of pardon**

In Jesus we have been forgiven  
So let us live as one who is forgiven,  
in the name of Christ. **Amen.**

**Today's Reading from the Old Testament:** [Genesis 50:15-21](#)

**Today's Gospel Reading:** [Matt 18:21-35](#)

**Time to Reflect – think about**

***Unlimited forgiveness, - how easy is it to forgive, - can we move on from the hurt we feel***

In our gospel reading Peter wanted to know what he must do about forgiveness. We may find the word 'sorry', is easily said, often used and sometimes it is not really meant.

Peter thought he was being very generous by saying that a person should forgive 7 times.

The number seven was thought to be the perfect number. Jesus answers Peter that this is not enough, and even seventy times seven would not be enough. Seventy times seven at that time was thought to be an infinite number.

What Jesus is guiding Peter and us to understand is about forgiveness that it is not a worldly thing, but something that is at the heart of His teaching. Jesus told Peter the parable of the King and his unmerciful servants to illustrate that his followers should be willing to forgive and the consequences if they do not. In parts of the world they find it is difficult for people to forgive because their honour is at stake. When someone is hurt, they want to hurt back. They want revenge for what has happened, but that is an endless route.

Revenge or retaliation is the way of the world and Jesus shows us that forgiveness starts from God. By accepting His forgiveness, we are transformed in His likeness so that we too should offer forgiveness to others in the same way.

To forgive someone when you have been hurt, or had your life affected is not easy. During this time of lock down, people will have been hurt, disappointed, and maybe angered by neighbours or people taking more food than they need. We need to let go of those feelings and embrace God's love. It is said that when a victim forgives, it stops the bitterness hardening their heart and ruining their life, that by forgiving, a person is changed from being the victim into a survivor. The generosity of what the victim has done may touch the life of the offender, to the extent that in some cases; the act of forgiveness, has changed their ways and in some cases made them friends. Some people have been surprised by their neighbour's help during the lock down, neighbours they have never spoken to.

In the reading from Genesis we heard how Joseph's brothers were afraid. They were afraid of what Joseph would do to them. When they saw Joseph, they fell on their knees and said they were his slaves. Joseph is disturbed by their sadness and says the most amazing thing; "God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives". By this statement Joseph showed that he had not allowed his hurt to corrupt him, he had taken his suffering and seen that through it God had led him to help others. Had he stayed with his brothers, Joseph would not have become such an important person, and would not have been able to help thousands of people from starving. God asks us to let go, and to lay all our burdens at His feet, this includes the hurt and suffering that we have received. By forgiving we are showing others God's love.

### **Take a time to sit quietly**

#### **A time of prayer**

Loving and forgiving God

We pray for our world today

As we bring the virus under control

Help and guide Prime ministers, Presidents, Kings and Queens, all types of workers around the world

Parents and children

And all who have lost loved ones

may they feel your love this week as they go about their work. **Amen**

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

*Our Father .....*

#### **Hymn: [Listen to 'Lord I come to you'](#)**

Lord I come to You,

Let my heart be changed, renewed

Flowing from the grace

That I've found in You

Lord I've come to know  
The weaknesses I see in me  
Will be stripped away  
By the power of Your love

*Chorus - Hold me close  
Let Your love surround me  
Bring me near  
Draw me to Your side  
And as I wait  
I'll rise up like the eagle  
And I will soar with You  
Your Spirit leads me on  
In the power of Your love*

Lord unveil my eyes  
Let me see You face to face  
The knowledge of Your love  
As You live in me  
Lord renew my mind  
As Your will unfolds in my life  
In living every day  
By the power of Your love

*Chorus*

### **A prayer of blessing**

May the love of the Lord rest upon your soul  
May his love dwell in you throughout every day  
May his Countenance shine upon you and be gracious to you  
May His Spirit be upon you as you leave this place. Amen