



June 1st, 2025
Pelham Flowerdew
Soul Care, Preparing to Thrive
Wrestle and Release
Matthew 18:15-35

Forgiveness is central to a life following Jesus

We are called to radical unlimited forgiveness

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. - Matthew 18:21-22

We forgive because God has forgiven us

“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. – Matthew 18:23-25

But what is forgiveness?

Forgiveness is not: ignoring, forgetting, endorsing, condoning or even reconciling

Painful relationships require wisdom and boundaries

“If your brother or sister sins against you, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. ¹⁶ But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’¹⁷ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

- Matthew 18:15-17

Reconciliation is not always possible, but forgiveness is

Who is forgiveness for?

“Don’t let the sun go down on your anger” – Ephesians 4:26

Our enemy: a strange gift, a divine invitation, the way to God



Poem: WHAT IF?
By Stacey Sullivan

Anxiety builds in my body
feels as if my source of air has been cut off
the room around me seems to spin
reality blurred
I feel ...
trapped
responsible
shame
grief
...SILENT!

“You must forgive”
“Extend the grace that God gives to you”
“Turn the other cheek”
“Love those who give you grief”
“Open your heart to forgive”

Yes, this is how our Lord lived His life
and He calls us to do the same
His work in me....
...IN PROGRESS

But...what if this happens AS I heal?
and what if words either spoken or unspoken
within the walls of the church...
hinder more than help?
hurt though intended to heal?

What if opening my heart would once again damage?
What if my words are silenced?
words that need to be spoken...
anger from being expressed...
tears from flowing?
...HEALING!

And what if it is healing
that allows me to receive love?
and love leads me to more fully forgive?
What if FOR NOW, we, the hurting
who struggle to heal and yes, even to forgive
need You, His Church
to stand with us
to be Jesus to us
to listen
call for Justice
...not just speak the words?

For we know we are called to forgive
but what if for now, forgiveness looks like feeling the anger?
a safe space for the burning ache to leak out?
and what if that anger leads to...
words that need to be voiced
to be heard...
the grace to shed long held back tears?
...to HEALING!

New life birthed
new found freedom
seeds of God's love sown
spreading out to others
who also need His love
hope blooming
...KINGDOM LIVING!

What if forgiveness...
does not always arrive
neatly packaged?
What if it messy?
What if it takes a long time?

What if forgiveness does not always look
as we think we know it to be...
what if it comes
...IN UNEXPECTED WAYS?