

Time for God – Take 2

Purpose: To assist the congregation with further reflection on the theme of the Sunday service/passage.

Week beginning Sunday 6 October 2019 Faith and Forgiveness

Pray Praise God that he accepts us, not because of our deserving, but simply because he loves us in Jesus. There is no question of us making ourselves “good enough”. Ask that he might give us all the grace to trust him so that we see faith not so much as a quantity of “spiritual stuff” but as a readiness to walk in God’s paths with Jesus, showing his love in action.

Read Read the passage (preferably in an easy to understand version). Luke 17:5-10.

Background Jesus has just had a conversation with the disciples about how many times he expects them to forgive someone who has offended against them. The law laid down – usually up to four. The disciples suggested that perhaps 7 might be better (probably taking account of Jesus’ teaching on being ready to forgive). However, the answer came back 70 times 7 – ie don’t bother counting. Just go on forgiving. In the light of this conversation they ask Jesus for more faith. And that prompts the thought about how even the smallest faith can work wonders. The mustard seed and the mulberry plant are used to illustrate the small beginnings leading huge results. On Sunday we were thinking that we need to think less about faith being a quantity of spiritual stuff (esp if we run down what we have) and more the use we put our gifts to. Faith is a doing word!

Possible questions/points to consider

1. Why is it that many Church people play down the faith they have? Are we inspired by others with “greater faith” or discouraged because we feel we aren’t like them? How can we emphasise that we can use whatever faith we have? If faith is seen more like muscles – how might we make things more difficult for ourselves by not making use of the faith we have? How might we encourage a different outlook?
2. In Greek, faith and trust is the same word. How would you describe the differences in our thinking in modern times? Have we lost something? Faith isn’t just believing things about God, it’s about trusting God. How do you respond to the idea – Faith is a doing word? How should we expect that to work out? How would our lives be different? What impact might it have on those seeing the differences in the way we live? How might it prompt a response?
3. Faith (however it is displayed) is a gift from God. Why do we tend to see it as a possession of the individual, for their benefit? Faith is really for using, rather than having. How might we do things differently if we saw faith less as something we possess, and more as something we are to share? Actions speak louder than words – how might this apply to faith?
4. What lessons are there to be learned from the story about the master insisting on his servant (slave?) seeing to all his needs first? How do you think Jesus might want us to treat employees better? How do we get everybody to change their ideas about work – seeing everyone as having a contribution to make? How do we avoid people looking down their noses at others? Are there steps we as a Church could take?
5. “Jesus isn’t into pecking orders”. What do you think about that comment?
6. Forgiveness works both ways. We need forgiveness. We need to forgive others. How does appreciating that God forgives us freely in Jesus change both of these for us?
7. Feel free to explore any topics from the passage/theme even if they weren’t raised on Sunday.

Prayer: Lord, thank you that give us faith as a gift, not to be stored or simply grasped and prized, but to be used and shared so that it might grow and develop and expand. Remembering that any faith we have comes as a free gift, help us to share our faith freely – not just as ideas, but in practical ways, so that our lives might be a testament to your love for us, for the world, in Christ. May faith grow and achieve great things for your kingdom of love. Amen.