

## MATTHEW 18:21-35

Peter went up to Jesus and said, 'Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?' Jesus answered, 'Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times.'

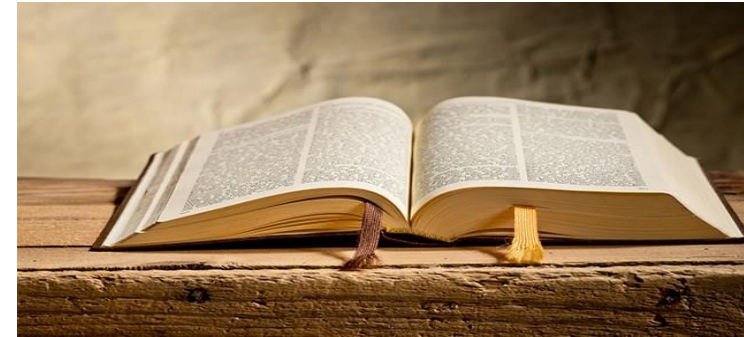
'And so the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who decided to settle his accounts with his servants. When the reckoning began, they brought him a man who owed ten thousand talents; but he had no means of paying, so his master gave orders that he should be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, to meet the debt. At this, the servant threw himself down at his master's feet. "Give me time" he said "and I will pay the whole sum." And the servant's master felt so sorry for him that he let him go and cancelled the debt. Now as this servant went out, he happened to meet a fellow servant who owed him one hundred denarii; and he seized him by the throat and began to throttle him. "Pay what you owe me" he said. His fellow servant fell at his feet and implored him, saying, "Give me time and I will pay you." But the other would not agree; on the contrary, he had him thrown into prison till he should pay the debt. His fellow servants were deeply distressed when they saw what had happened, and they went to their master and reported the whole affair to him. Then the master sent for him. "You wicked servant," he said "I cancelled all that debt of yours when you appealed to me. Were you not bound, then, to have pity on your fellow servant just as I had pity on you?" And in his anger the master handed him over to the torturers till he should pay all his debt. And that is how my heavenly Father will deal with you unless you each forgive your brother from your heart.'

**COMMENTARY: Just before his death on the cross, Jesus cried out: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do". In this he is giving the world an example of what he has insisted on all his ministry. He is affirming everything important in his Jewish faith and laying the foundation for the Church of the future. However, religious or not, being able to forgive and ready to do so, is absolutely needed for anyone who wants to grow in their humanity. It may be difficult, it may need therapy, but it is vital because it either builds when present and destroys when missing.**

# Liturgy of The Word

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

17<sup>th</sup> September, 2023



**The Lord is kind and merciful: slow to anger,  
and rich in compassion.**

My soul, give thanks to the Lord  
all my being, bless his holy name.  
My soul, give thanks to the Lord  
and never forget all his blessings.

It is he who forgives all your guilt,  
who heals every one of your ills,  
who redeems your life from the grave,  
who crowns you with love and compassion.

His wrath will come to an end;  
he will not be angry for ever.  
He does not treat us according to our sins  
nor repay us according to our faults.

For as the heavens are high above the earth  
so strong is his love for those who fear him.  
As far as the east is from the west  
so far does he remove our sins.

### **ECCLESIASTICUS 27:33-28:9**

Resentment and anger, these are foul things,  
and both are found with the sinner.  
They who exact vengeance will experience the vengeance of the Lord,  
who keeps strict account of sin.  
Forgive your neighbour the hurt they do you,  
and when you pray, your sins will be forgiven.  
If someone nurses anger against another,  
Can they then demand compassion from the Lord?  
Showing no pity for a person like themselves,  
can they then plead for their own sins?  
Mere creature of flesh, they cherish resentment;  
who will forgive them their sins?  
Remember the last things, and stop hating,  
remember dissolution and death, and live by the commandments.  
Remember the commandments, and do not bear your neighbour ill-will;  
remember the covenant of the Most High, and overlook the offence.

**COMMENTARY:** Sometimes known as the book of Sirach, this writing is composed roughly 150 years before Christ. What it reveals though is a deep understanding that living with resentment and anger can only lead a person to the death of their humanity. The following may help:

**Anger is not a sin but a reaction to a person or event. Harboring anger is what creates the problem.**

Anger	becomes	Rage	becomes	Resentment
/		/		/
Normal		Reaction to anger (no choice).		Rage festers and takes over.
		So <b>pause, feel, acknowledge, respond.</b>		

- *Harboring resentment is allowing someone else to live inside your head rent free!*
- *Resentment is like drinking poison hoping it will kill your enemy!(Mandela)*

### **ROMANS 14:7-9**

The life and death of each of us has its influence on others; if we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord, so that alive or dead we belong to the Lord. This explains why Christ both died and came to life: it was so that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

**COMMENTARY:** Some people have the gift of radiating a beautiful energy. They are a joy to be around. They are not people who can't spot the weaknesses of others, (in fact the opposite is probably true of such people) but they seem to overlook them. That aspect of life is unimportant. And when you get to know the person a little more, you will probably find they have every reason to be carrying anger and resentment but their approach to life does not allow it.

At then of the day, we only need to ask 'what kind of energy have I given out to those I have encountered?' Then, 'who are the people I know reflect this energy?'