



# Worship at Home : 13<sup>th</sup> September



## Psalm 136

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good.  
*His love endures forever.*  
 Give thanks to the God of gods.  
*His love endures forever.*  
 Give thanks to the Lord of lords:  
*His love endures forever.*

To him who alone does great wonders,  
*His love endures forever.*  
 Who by his understanding made the heavens,  
*His love endures forever.*  
 Who spread out the earth upon the waters,  
*His love endures forever.*  
 Who made the great lights—  
*His love endures forever.*  
 The sun to govern the day,  
*His love endures forever.*  
 The moon and stars to govern the night;  
*His love endures forever.*



O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder  
 consider all the works thy hand hath made,  
 I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,  
 thy power throughout the universe displayed :  
*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee :*  
*how great thou art, how great thou art !*  
*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee :*  
*how great thou art, how great thou art !*

When through the woods and forest glades I  
 wander  
 and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees ;  
 when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,  
 and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze :

And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,  
 sent him to die, I scarce can take it in  
 that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,  
 he bled and died to take away my sin :

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation  
 and take me home — what joy shall fill my heart ;  
 then shall I bow in humble adoration,  
 and there proclaim : my God, how great thou art :

Stuart K. Hine (1899–1989)  
 vv. 1, 2, 4 based on *O store Gud* 1885 by  
 Carl Gustaf Boberg (1859–1940) CCL 25980

Let us pray.

Loving God, we do not come to prove our own  
 worth to you, or to be accepted because of our  
 good deeds, or the greatness of our faith.

We come simply as we are; small, sinful and weak.  
 We come trusting in your mercy and daring to  
 believe that you can and will accomplish greater  
 things in our lives than we can ask or think.

We come in the name of Christ to worship you for  
 your glory, power and love.

Amen.



He is exalted,  
 the King is exalted on high,  
 I will praise him.  
 He is exalted,  
 forever exalted  
 and I will praise his name !  
 He is the Lord,  
 forever his truth shall reign.  
 Heaven and earth  
 rejoice in his holy name.  
 He is exalted,  
 the King is exalted on high !

Twila Paris (b.1958) CCL 25980

## Matthew 28:21–35

### The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

<sup>21</sup> 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?”



## Worship at Home : 13<sup>th</sup> September

<sup>22</sup> Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

<sup>23</sup> "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

<sup>24</sup> As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him.

<sup>25</sup> 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.

<sup>26</sup> "At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' <sup>27</sup> The servant's master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go.

<sup>28</sup> "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.

<sup>29</sup> "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.'

<sup>30</sup> "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. <sup>31</sup> When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

<sup>32</sup> "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. <sup>33</sup> Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' <sup>34</sup> In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

<sup>35</sup> "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

### Reflection

I sometimes jest that I'm a musician and therefore sometimes struggle to count to the four beats in a bar – or as Tabitha will tell you, rarely are those four beats in a bar even. I would be totally lost by the time I got to 72. Indeed, back in the days when I played music regularly I rarely counted the rests in the music, I was much more tempted to

listen to the other parts and simply feel when my way into when I needed to play again.

In a different way, Jesus' use of seventy-seven times is much the same. Too many to count. Oh, if it were all on one occasion, easy, but life doesn't happen like that. Seventy-seven times, a number designed for us to lose count. Yet all the more demanding in terms of how often we forgive.

It is sometimes said that people should "forgive and forget". Most of the time that is easier said than done. Forgiveness is not the same as forgetting. Forgiveness gives weight and importance to the deed or person that needs forgiveness, and the person forgiven knows themselves forgiven because they remember the deed.

Forgiveness, when not coupled with forgetting, becomes a much more complicated thing. How often do you forgive, when do you draw the line?

The answer it seems to me is demonstrated in the story that Jesus told. Forgiveness is closely related to compassion in this story. Compassion born out of love. Recently I was watching a drama on the tv. In this particular drama the father and mother said to their daughter something to the effect of, 'Well, we've thought about throwing you out several times, but we would never do it, you're our daughter, we love you.' Living with forgiveness, from the perspective of the forgiver and the forgiven, is so often a powerful experience.

Drama on the screen is of course one thing, and very often it gets more real than is comfortable, but I remember an occasion from real life. I was talking to a parent whose child was an addict of one thing or another, and their love, their compassion for their child far exceeded seventy-seven times. The struggle was hard. The frustration was even harder, and the longing for an end or a resolution was heartfelt. But their love – sometimes a tough love – their love saw them through.

In the story that Jesus tells, the king is very aware of all the debt that has mounted up. He has every right to demand repayment. Yet the king is merciful and compassionate. This, Jesus tells us is what the Kingdom of Heaven is like. What it is not like, is the servant who then shows no compassion on those who owed him money.



## Worship at Home : 13<sup>th</sup> September

Is it any surprise that in The Lord's Prayer, we find the lines: 'forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us'?

This does not come easily to us, our sense of justice seems to override this regularly, as God already knows. Yet our hope, our trust, our faith rests with God who accepts us for who we are. God loves us even when we are far from perfect, and he demonstrates this to us all through Jesus Christ.

Some would say, "Oh, that's great, we can do anything we want, then." But that is simply not the case. If that were true then we, as the forgiven person, just demonstrate that we do not understand forgiveness. It is the power of being forgiven that leads us to take a path in life that chooses to be as loving, as compassionate as our experience of God's compassion to us has been.

To be a forgiven people, forgiven by God, is to be a people reflecting that same forgiveness in and through our lives. A challenge? Certainly. But one in which we have the gift of God's Holy Spirit and the community of the Church to help us with, to draw closer to God and learn from and experience his love in our lives each day.

God's economy and rule is so very different to ours. Thanks be to God, and may we take inspiration from this story and live in ways pleasing to him.



The kingdom of God  
is justice and joy,  
for Jesus restores  
what sin would destroy ;  
God's power and glory  
in Jesus we know,  
and here and hereafter  
the kingdom shall grow.

The kingdom of God  
is mercy and grace,  
the prisoners are freed,  
the sinners find place,  
the outcast are welcomed  
God's banquet to share,  
and hope is awakened  
in place of despair.

The kingdom of God  
is challenge and choice,

believe the good news,  
repent and rejoice !  
His love for us sinners  
brought Christ to his cross,  
our crisis of judgement  
for gain or for loss.

God's kingdom is come,  
the gift and the goal,  
in Jesus begun,  
in heaven made whole ;  
the heirs of the kingdom  
shall answer his call,  
and all things cry glory  
to God all in all !

Bryn Rees (1911–1983) CCL 25980

Let us pray.

All gracious God, we thank you, we praise you that you are a forgiving God. Yet more than that, you give to us the power of your Holy Spirit to help us to live in new ways, to direct us away from those things in life that require your forgiveness.

Lord, asking you to forgive us sometimes sounds easy. To hear those words of Jesus say, "Your sins are forgiven" sounds easy. Help us to understand the depth of these words. Help us to accept the forgiveness you offer. Help us to forgive ourselves, for sometimes that is the hardest part.

Above all, Lord our God, forgive us and teach us to live as new creations liberated and changed by the forgiveness you alone can offer.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Lord, we pray for your world, particularly in this time of global pandemic. A time when circumstances can change by the hour. A time when livelihoods have been crushed and sudden uncertainty hangs over families through no fault of their own.

We pray for those who have suffered the effects of the virus. We pray too for those who have had illnesses requiring hospital attention and for those unable to visit, unable to do what every fibre of their being tells them to do.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**



## Worship at Home : 13<sup>th</sup> September

Lord, we pray for your church as it seeks to navigate its way through these times. Pour out your wisdom on all involved in leadership and guide them through the steps that need to be taken.

Remind us all of your love and compassion for each individual and may that care inform our Risk Assessments and our opening of buildings.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Lord, in an ever changing world, guide those who seek to lead our country, and those who lead the world's leaders, especially as they navigate changes.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Finally, Lord, we pray for those whom we love, but see no longer. We thank you for their lives and all they shared with us. May our memories of them enrich our living.

Heavenly Father, we bring these and all our prayers together in the prayer Jesus taught us, saying:

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.



I am a new creation,  
no more in condemnation,  
here in the grace of God I stand.  
My heart is over-flowing,  
my love just keeps on growing,  
here in the grace of God I stand.  
*And I will praise you, Lord,  
yes, I will praise you, Lord,  
and I will sing of all that you have done.  
A joy that knows no limit,*

*a lightness in my spirit —  
here in the grace of God I stand.*

Dave Bilborough (b.1965) CCL 25980

May God bless us this day.  
May we know God's blessing upon us.  
May we share God's blessing with all those we  
meet, this day and for ever more.  
Amen.

