

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2020**  
**Glynde Lutheran Church**  
**Sermon on Romans 8:1**  
**Theme: “God’s ongoing forgiveness”**  
**“I am a new creation ... No more in condemnation...”**

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***Introduction:***

Well, it a rather stark reminder from Jesus that God wants us to freely forgive others, as He freely forgives us....

What does the king in Jesus’ story say to the servant? The King says: **“You should have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had mercy on you”** (*Matt. 18:33*).

***Part 1: God’s free forgiveness of us***

Listen again to how Jesus begins this parable, that he told, a story that is generally called “the parable of the unforgiving servant”. Actually, as I’ve said to you before, I prefer to call this story *the story of “the forgiving King”*: because that’s what the first part of this story is about.

Jesus’ story is about a servant who owed his king an incredibly huge amount of money, more money than he could ever repay in a hundred lifetimes. *We’re told that he owed the king literally “ten thousand talents”: a talent was the largest unit of money in that time, and ten thousand was the biggest number. If we were telling the story today, we would say that the servant owed the king “billions and billions of dollars”.*

Jesus says in his story:

**The servant did not have enough to pay his debt (*of course!!*), so the king ordered him to be sold as a slave, with his wife, and his children, and all that he had, in order to pay the debt. The servant fell on his knees before the king. “Be patient with me”, he begged, “and I will pay you everything!” (*you’ve got to be kidding; there is no way that he could do this!*). The king was moved to compassion for the servant, so he forgave him and let him go (*Matt. 18:25-27*).**

Behind the king in this story, Jesus wants us to see our amazing, wonderful God. And behind the debtor in this story, Jesus wants us to see ourselves....

This is how God treats us.... We are people who have messed up in all sorts of ways. It’s a debt to God, *if you like*, that we can’t possibly repay. But out of love and “compassion” for us, God freely forgives us our debt, *just as the King does with his servant in Jesus’ story.*

This is the wonderful message of Jesus, God's Son, to each of us, a *message that Jesus shouts out in all sorts of ways.*

The forgiveness that God offers to us is free, but it cost God plenty, *just as the King's forgiveness of his servant in Jesus' story cost the King plenty: it cost him 10,000 talents, that is, "billions and billions of dollars" as I said.*

What did it cost God? It cost God the suffering and death of His Son, Jesus, on the cross. As the prophet in the Old Testament said about the Suffering Servant of God, Jesus:

**He endured the suffering that  
should have been ours,  
the pain that we should have borne...**

**...because of our sins he was wounded,  
beaten because of the evil we did.**

**We are healed by the punishment he suffered,  
made whole by the blows he received.**

**All of us were like sheep that were lost,  
each of us going his own way.**

**But the Lord made the punishment fall on him,  
the punishment all of us deserved...**

**...his death was a sacrifice to bring forgiveness...**

**He took the place of many sinners,  
and prayed that they might be forgiven (*Isa. 53:4f*).**

I like telling a story from my own experience as a child to try and explain what God has done for us through His Son, Jesus.... It's the story of me getting 'the cuts' at Primary School in the Adelaide Hills. Back in the dim dark ages, when I went to Primary School, we used to get the cane, 'the cuts', when we did something really wrong, *like hitting a girl....*

We used to have to go to the headmaster, hold out our hand, and get wacked with a cane on our hand a number of times. And believe me, it really hurt....

Imagine, though, me going to the headmaster's office to get 'the cuts', and my class teacher coming with me and *him* putting out his hand for me, and taking 'the cuts' for me! That's what Jesus, God's Son, did for us all, when he suffered and died on the cross for us! He took on himself the punishment that we deserve for "our sins". As Peter puts it in his first letter, quoting Isaiah, chapter 53: "It is by his wounds we have been healed" (*1 Peter 2:24,25; cf. 1:18,19; 3:18*).

## ***Part 2: The result for us***

And what's the result for us as we gladly receive what God has done for us, *like the servant in Jesus' story did, and as I did in my imaginary story about 'the cuts'?* Well, let's hear what Paul says, in our Bible reading, is the result:

**There is now no condemnation for those who live in union with Christ Jesus, Lit. "those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).**

The result is "no condemnation", *that is, God's "ongoing forgiveness"*. When we are linked to Jesus by our baptism and our faith, we go from "condemnation" from God *because of our "sin"*, to "no condemnation" from God, *because we are trusting in Jesus as our Saviour*. As we receive for ourselves what Jesus did for us all on the cross, we are each God's forgiven child.

### ***Family activity:***

Let's now do a family *or group of friends* activity to remind us of how God sees us as we trust in Jesus as our Saviour:

- \* **Give each family a LLL white pad**
- \* **Write "SIN" on it**
- \* **Tear off page and throw into bin (God's forgiveness)**
- \* **With a pencil, trace over indentation on next sheet (we may still 'feel' guilty)**
- \* **Tear off and throw into bin (God's forgiveness is not partial, but complete)**
- \* **Remaining white page is how God sees you (Our status before God)**

### ***Conclusion:***

Let's finish by listening to Dave Bilbrough sing about our status before God, *who we are*, as we trust in Jesus as our Saviour. He sings:

**I am a new creation,  
No more in condemnation,  
Here in the grace of God I stand.  
My heart is overflowing,  
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.***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kwjOLFMZhQo>

As this is sung, I invite you to sing along with it, to give thanks to God for all that He has done for you....

***Appendix:***

**Forgiveness - Taken from Diamonds in the Dust by Joni Eareckson Tada**

Poor memories are a part of the human condition. And so when God tells us that He will remember our sin no more, I'm puzzled. How could God possibly forget? That is our job!...

**Then why do we feel so bad about our past sins? Because we confuse sin with its impression. Got a notepad nearby? Let me show you how this can be so. Write the word "sin" on the page. Press hard. Now tear off that sheet of paper, crumple it up, and throw across the room. That's how God forgets your sin.**

**Now take your pencil and rub it on the new page at an angle, back and forth, over the same location where you wrote. And guess what: the ghost of the word "sin" appears. That's how our flawed memories do. We go back over the deep impression left by the transgressions in our life, and we feel as guilty. It's as if the sin never left. But be encouraged, the impression of sin is not the same thing as sin.**

And with David you can cry out, " I can't forget my scars, it seems, Lord. But you have forgotten their cause. Look upon me with loving, kind eyes". It's your choice. Will you continue to work over forgiven sin as with a pencil? Or will you let the Holy Spirit work His lovingkindness?

**Is there a sin in your past that you keep remembering, regretting, and confessing to God? Decide today to do with that sin what God does with all sin that He forgives - forget it!**

*(Taken from Diamonds in the Dust by Joni Eareckson Tada)*