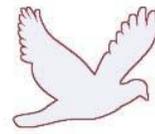




Borders Mission Circuit

Part of the Methodist Church of Great Britain



The **Methodist** Church 

Dear Friends in the Borders Mission Circuit

Message for 13th September 2020

Bible Reading - Genesis 50.15-21

Most people will relate to the situation of small children fighting or snatching things, the fun of trying to get them to stop, say sorry to one another and even forgive each other! Forgiveness isn't an easy thing, and neither is saying sorry and meaning it. I often find myself saying to the kids 'and now say sorry and mean it!'

The Bible reading from Genesis is a passage that concludes what has been a tumultuous time for Joseph and his brothers. There has been betrayal, murder and evil behaviour. Jacob, a great patriarch, has just died and Joseph's brothers are now afraid that Joseph will punish them for their wickedness. They plot together to claim that their father wished Joseph to forgive their wrongs. Regardless of the deception, Joseph weeps and forgives. In not insisting on retribution, Joseph is revealing God's intention to preserve life not to destroy it.

Joseph's forgiveness shows God's intention not just for the House of Israel, but indeed the whole world. Genesis is a rich book; within it we have a story of the whole of creation. Genesis begins with the Garden of Eden and finishes with reconciliation and God providing for numerous people abundantly. As Joshua says to his brothers, 'Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people.' God is able to bring good out of evil and to change our hearts from deception to desiring loving relationships. With these few verses, a rift at the heart of a pretty dysfunctional family is finally healed. Just maybe, they start to trust one another. God's intention as it was then, is still the same for us here today.

We so often in worship talk of forgiveness but the challenge is to really mean it. When we say the Lord's Prayer we know it by heart, it is easy to say the words, but we can forget the power of them. When we say 'forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us' are we truly sorry for the things we have said and done? Do we really know in our hearts and minds that we are forgiven? Do we forgive those who have wronged us? As we adults urge children to say sorry to

another child, which they so often do that and take it as read. Do we adults truly know that forgiveness and restoration?

This version of the Lord's Prayer helps me to think afresh on the words of the Lord's prayer.

Our Father in heaven,

remind us constantly that you are parent to all your children, whoever & wherever they are or come from;

hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come,

establishing peace and justice, hope and life for all peoples.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread,

Disturb us into an awareness of the needs of others.

Forgive our sins,

our pride and also our prejudice,

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation,

especially keep our hearts and minds open to see the good in others.

Deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom

just and true,

the power

gentle and fair,

and the glory

shot through with the colours of love,

are yours, for ever and ever.

Amen.*

Every blessing, Deacon Sam.

On behalf of Rev Robert, Rev Ann, Rev Nicola & Rev Pete.

*From Shore to Shore A collection of liturgies, litanies and prayers from around the world. Pub. by USPG and SPCK.