**Witham United Reformed Church**

**Bible Study for week beginning 14th June 2021**

**Theme: Forgiveness**

Whatever translation of the Lord’s prayer you use, the theme of forgiveness is central to it:

* Matthew 6:12 – ‘And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors’
* Luke 11:4 – ‘And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us’
* Traditional Lord’s Prayer: Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us
* New language Lord’s Prayer: Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us

Note the way that the clauses are put together – the comparison – forgive ***as*** we forgive. Jesus drove this comparison home in Matthew 6:14-15 ‘For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.’

We say this prayer daily, but do we really understand the concept of forgiveness as we pray it?

**Open in prayer**

**Read Matthew 18:21-35**

1. Rabbinic teachers of Jesus time taught that you should forgive another member of the church (brother/sister/neighbour) up to three times. Peter believes he is being overly generous – what is Jesus response and what does that tell us about forgiveness?
2. What or who do the king and the servants represent to you in the parable?
3. Whom do you think Jesus wants us to identify with and why?
4. What is your reaction to the king? Do you like him?
5. What is your reaction to the unmerciful servant?
6. If this story represents the Kingdom of God, then it implies that Jesus believed people owe a great debt to God that he is willing to forgive. What debt do we owe to God that needs forgiveness?
7. Based on this story would you say God’s forgiveness of us is limited or unlimited? Conditional or unconditional?
8. Turning to our forgiveness of others – why should we forgive? What are the alternatives practiced by those who do not forgive? What effect does this practice of non-forgiveness have on our lives?
9. Describe the sort of person who you think needs to hear this story the most.
10. What are some practical examples of situations in modern life where we can put forgiveness into practice? Think big!

**Finish in prayer – preferably the Lord’s Prayer.**