

May the spoken and written word lead us to the living word Jesus Christ.

What does forgiveness look like ?

In today's reading from Genesis chapter 15, we find Joseph coming to a point of forgiveness with his brothers. He recognises that his journey with God, has led him to this point in his life.

He recognises that because of the betrayal of his brothers, and his life's journey since, that God has worked in and through him, enabling him to be where he is, and what he is at this point.

Joseph recognises that it has been God's forgiveness and mercy in his life, that has brought him to where he is today, and he then reveals himself to his brothers.

From Matthew's gospel we read of Jesus going to Syria, to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And because Jesus's fame for healing all the sick and those possessed by demons, has already reached all of Syria, they now they come to him for healing.

Jesus has been preaching and healing in Galilee, but now he has journeyed to another area, and now we read of a Canaanite woman a gentile who begs Jesus to heal her daughter, who is tormented by a demon. And we read that Jesus tells his disciples ,that he has been sent, first to take the gospel to the Jews!

Can you imagine it, Jesus is with his disciples (all Men), and she is a Canaanite (there is historical enmity between their peoples). And yet this Canaanite woman comes to Jesus, pleading for her demon-possessed daughter, and she is met with Jesus's silence....

You can just about feel the tension. This arises because of the ethnic, religious, and gender differences between Jesus (and his disciples) and the Canaanite woman, and she is met with Jesus's silence. and the disciples' dismissal.

Yet her belief in Jesus pushes her on. This woman changes things. Her respectful persistence, wisdom, and endurance in the face of silence, and her rejection and humiliation, prompt Jesus to change his mind. And the outcome is that Jesus praises her great faith and heals her daughter.

The people of God have long struggled over who is in and who is out; who is worthy to receive mercy and who is outside the Wi-Fi range of God's love. If I am in the range of God's love, given my theological, biblical, cultural, ecclesial, and political perspectives and behaviour in life. Then those people must not be in, and those people must be out.

Romans chapter 11, verses 30–32 explains that God uses the rebellion and turning away of both Gentiles and Jews in history so that **everyone receives salvation through grace alone**. God rejects no one, because we have all sinned, God may be merciful to all.

God is about forgiveness. There is no **Who is in, who is out**. Our Christian faith must be the same as this outcome. There is no longer a them and us, no longer Jew or gentile, no longer slave or free. The disciples were in a learning curve and this Canaanite woman's faith in Jesus has changed that.

So where are we in forgiving others? Do you have some you have forgiven, and not others? We have read about Joseph forgiving his brothers, and sometimes those family dynamics can be painful place.

We know the Jesus gave his life for us, so that we can draw closer to God, and if God can forgive you and I, then we to must forgive others and ourselves.

Imagine what the world will be like then. May it be so.

Let us pray: Lord, wash away my wrongs and give me a clean heart. Pour out Your great mercy on me, and help me freely give that same mercy to others. Heal my hurts, take away my anger, and teach me to love and forgive everyone who has done wrong against me, just as You have forgiven me. Amen.