

ST LUKE'S, PECKHAM, LENT COURSE 2018

WEEK 1 FORGIVENESS IS GOD'S PURPOSE

There are two simple truths:

First - There is nothing that cannot be forgiven

Second – There is no one undeserving of forgiveness

You will need:

Over the coming weeks, you will be asked to reflect on the readings and the lesson you will have heard for the day. So please do try to invest in the book, there is a paperback version available. *'The Book of Forgiving: The Fourfold path for healing ourselves and our world.'* By Desmond M. Tutu and Mpho A Tutu (2014).

Secondly please get some sort of note book or personal journal so you can write down any reflections for your personal use, no one else needs to see or share your notes.

Finally, "please go out and find a stone that appeals to you on some level. It can be beautiful or ugly. It shouldn't be a pebble, nor should it be a boulder. Find a stone with some weight to it. It should be small enough to carry in the palm of your hand and large enough that you won't lose it. Note in your journal exactly where you found the stone and what it was about the stone that appealed to you." (Tutu, page 11)

Reflections: 'Forgiveness is God's purpose':

1. When we think about forgiveness, we tend to focus upon our human efforts to forgive. What can we learn from Luke's starting point: that forgiveness is God's initiative?
2. Why was it scandalous to say that God's forgiveness was being enacted in Jesus of Nazareth? Do people still find this to be scandalous today?
3. Are there some people or groups of people that you really do not want to forgive today? Why do we resist forgiving certain people or groups?
4. Study the metaphors associated with forgiveness in these passages Nehemiah 9.16-20 and Psalm 103.8-14. How do the metaphors shape your understanding of the concept of forgiveness?

Prayer before the Prayer

I want to be willing to forgive

But I dare not ask for the will to forgive

In case you give it to me

And I am not yet ready

I am not yet ready for my heart to soften
I am not yet ready to be vulnerable again
Not yet ready to see that there is humanity in my tormentor's eyes
Or that the one who hurt me may also have cried
I am not yet ready for the journey
I am not yet interested in the path
I am at the prayer before the prayer of forgiveness
Grant me the will to want to forgive
Grant it to me not yet but soon.

Can I even form the words 'Forgive me?'
Dare I even look?
Do I dare to see the hurt I have caused?
I can glimpse all the shattered pieces of that fragile thing
That soul trying to rise on the broken wings of hope
But only out of the corner of my eye
I am afraid of it
And if I am afraid to see
How can I not be afraid to say 'Forgive me?'

Is there a place where we can meet?
You and me
The place in the middle
The no man's land
Where we straddle the lines
Where you are right
And I am too
And both of us are wrong and wronged
Can we meet there?
And look for the place where the path begins
The path that ends when we forgive.

(Tutu, 2014)