

Lent 3 Sermon Repent Jesus longs for forgiveness.



I saw some kids spray painting the rubbish bin thing down at sturt reserve.
I tooted and yelled and they were off.
I said, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do”.
Actually, this is not true. I can’t tell you what I really said.

Jesus looks at those who pulled his beard out, who spat on him, who laugh at him, who stuck a crown of thorns on his head.

It’s an ugly crowd – the main figures are the executioners.

Jesus is limp, disfigured, bashed, humiliated.

Isn’t it funny how Isaiah knew how Jesus looked 700 years before it happened?

people were shocked when they saw him.

He was so scarred that he no longer looked like a person.

His body was so twisted that he did not look like a human being anymore. Isa 52:14

The soldiers seemed to be satisfied: “A job well done”.

A final laugh “Let’s roll the dice for his clothes.”

We know what Jesus said, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do”.

Surely, they knew what they were doing?

I would expect him to curse them.

But he prays for them: “Father forgive them for they know not what they do”.

Funny again Isaiah knew what Jesus was going to pray 700 years before he did it:
“For he bore the sin of many and prayed for the transgressors.” (Isaiah 53:14)

Jesus, is tied, nailed, wounded, crowned, and thirsty.

He can’t hold the children anymore.

He can’t heal the lame and the blind anymore.

He can’t teach, he can’t talk, he can’t even wipe the blood from his eyes.

But he can pray. “Father forgive them for they know not what they do”.

He asks the Father to forgive the unforgivable.

He wants to save people we would send to hell.

How do you forgive the unforgivable?

How do you forgive someone who has done the worst of the worst – to you?

For 99.9% of us forgiveness is a pay-back thing.

“I’ll only forgive you if you know how bad your hurt me”

“I’ll only forgive you if you make up for the wrong you did to me”

“If you only understood how many sleepless nights I have had because of you”.

If forgiveness depends on the other being aware of your pain, and saying sorry, then you may never have forgiveness.

You are 100% in control of what you give – you have no control of what you are going to get.

Forgiveness depends on what you give.

If forgiveness depends on what you get – and you don’t get it then you have the perfect excuse to hold on to resentment, and blame the other.

You, the innocent one can become the self-righteous one full of hate and bitterness because you’re waiting around for the other to make up to you.

You have no control of the other - you only have control of you – of what you are going to give.

But

We want the other to know about our tears.

We would forgive them if *they* only knew what they did to me.

Here is the simple truth – and Jesus leads us to it: **They do not know what they do to you.**

I can hear you object through the air.

I am an expert in this – I have long conversations with Ilona. But sometimes I swear she doesn’t hear a thing that I think.

I can hear you thinking – that people know full well what they do to you.

When she told that lie she knew what she was doing.

When he robbed me he knew what he was doing.

When he went with her he knew exactly what he was doing.

She knew what she was doing. They both knew what they were doing.

How can I say they didn’t know what they were doing?

How can Jesus say that they didn’t know what they were doing?

Let me put it to you, only you alone know how you really felt when you were sinned against?

Someone may have Cheated on you to hurt you – a revenge thing – or to send you a message – or it may have been an unfortunate misjudgement.

But what they did may have hurt your childhood, your career, your respect. It may have destroyed your faith in people, in men, in women, in the future.

They don't know what is in your skin and feel as you feel.
They can never enter into your pain.
Only you know your true sorrow – your mental darkness.
They do not know what they are doing to you – you.

Here are a bunch of soldiers, pulling beards, and bashing a man they are about to kill – routine.

“Father forgive them because they do not know what they are doing.” How true.

They are doing their job.

But in God's eyes they are fulfilling scripture – they don't know that.

They are representing the sin of you and me – they don't know that.

They are killing the Son of God – they don't know that.

They need the forgiveness of God - they don't know that.

Jesus says with the greatest of Compassion “Father forgive them because they do not know what they are doing.” How true.

If we refuse to forgive because we want the other person to feel what we felt when they hurt us so badly- we will never be forgiven.

It's tit for tat.

It depends on a another – you have no control of another.

“Father forgive them for they know not what they do”, who is “them”?

The soldiers, the mob, the women, the disciples, Pilate, Peter, the Jewish leaders, the crowds who came for a sticky beak.

He was praying for you and me.

But I'm different?

I'm not like those people.

I'm not that kind of person.

Hear this (no one like this) Roman's 3:

'There is no one righteous, not even one;

there is no one who understands;

there is no one who seeks God.

There is no one who does good, not even one.'

Their throats are open graves;

Their tongues practise deceit.'

'Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.'

'Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know.'

'There is no fear of God before their eyes.'

....for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Tonight this will be your challenge – it's mine.

We think we're better than – the soldiers, and the murderers on the other cross's.

We think are better people than they are.

*We think we know who should be forgiving who.
We don't like to put our selves in and among them.*

*We think we have one up on those who hurt us.
We get angry because we know that we would never do what they have done to us.*

How foolish. How deluded.
Our false pride keeps us from the hard step of forgiving the unforgivable.

Would you like to become more like Jesus?
We have to start where Jesus started—by forgiving the people who have hurt us so deeply – forgiving those you believe to be unforgivable.

As Malcolm Fraser said: “life wasn't meant to be easy”.

To forgive us cost Jesus his life. To forgive others will cost us something too.

If we long for forgiveness as Jesus does – the cost is nothing – it's what we do – it's what we are.

The Holy Spirit is the key in all this – the key to unlock hurt and unforgiveness.

But the Holy Spirit is gentle. As gentle as is the dove – so they say.

Abuse, all kinds of abuse, humiliation, ridicule, pain, shame, make us as hard as nails.

There is a prayer that can make us as soft as butter – so long as you believe with all you heat that this prayer is not for him or her but for you.

*Once the prayer was for Roman thugs – now it's for you and me: “**Father forgive them for they know not what they do**”,*

Father, show us the truth about ourselves. Forgive us for not forgiving others. We long for the freedom that comes from letting go of our bitterness. Break the chain of remembered hurts that binds us to the past.

Soften our hearts so that we can hear your voice speaking to us. Show us what we must do and then give us the courage to do it.

We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.