

SERVICE NOTES 13th SEPTEMBER 2020

Lectionary passages:- **Exodus 14 v9-31;** **Genesis 50 v15-21;**
 Romans 14 v1-12; **Matthew 18 v21-31**

Today's passage in Matthew is a parable about two servants. It continues the theme we have already begun about judging others and about forgiveness.

These are important subjects for the Christian; many, if we are honest, do not get it right!

It is natural to want to judge someone, it is normal to seek to put someone down so that we might look better as it were.

We can be so blind to our own sins and wrinkles, yet notice others' sins only too well.

HOWEVER for some this has reversed!

An article in my newspaper recently mentions a number of people going to the hairdressers and the beauticians after lockdown. But there are also a lot of enquiries for plastic surgery on the face. It seems as we zoom, apart from looking at others' bookshelves and bedrooms, we also look at our own faces on the screen and feel we don't look as good as we thought or remember! All those wrinkles and spots! Facial surgery and attention is necessary!

1. The parable is told by Jesus of a servant who owed a lot of money, a real lot! He is apprehended by the person he owes the money to and asked to pay. But the servant does not have the money to pay the debt, so begs for mercy, more time, so he can find it. (In those days if you owed money you could be put in prison until you paid a debt in full!)

He begs not to be sent to prison, for time to go about his normal life so he can come back in the future with the money.

He finds mercy and his creditor lets him off, allowing him more time.

In God's terms he is merciful towards him and the man is grateful.

2. However, the same servant has a servant himself. That servant owes him just a small sum of money. He demands the small debt be paid. The man could not pay even though it is a small debt. He begs for more time.

However, the servant does not show the mercy to his servant he was shown by his creditor.

He grabs the man, physically abuses him, then has him arrested and placed in a prison cell until he pays the debt in full.

3. Jesus says in the Lord's Prayer, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. It can be so difficult to forgive others, putting their sin in context.

We have all sinned, as the Bible says, all fallen short of the glory of God, we all need forgiveness and should not judge others harshly. Our Father God does show us mercy and we should pass it on!

4. It is necessary to see the whole picture as it were, to treat others as we would want to be treated, to be grateful, expressing our gratitude in the way we behave towards others.

This is a hard parable to take on board, but we should seek God's Grace and mercy asking the spirit to help us to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.

Today we are encouraged to look at ourselves clearly, our sins and failure then to book in for "spiritual surgery" to seek God's forgiveness and grace so we might indeed be acceptable to him when we go to him in prayer!