

The Watford Word

www.watfordchurchofchrist.org

What's on

Monday 1st September:

Mentoring training

Sunday 07 September: 10:30

AM. Malcolm speaking

Saturday 13 September:

SCIENCE & FAITH:

ENEMIES OR ALLIES?

(<https://www.malcolmcox.org/saturday-13-september-science-faith-enemies-or-allies/>)

Sunday 14 September: 10:30 AM. Malcolm speaking

Sunday 21 September: 10:30 AM. Church service

Sunday 28 September: 10:30 AM. Church service

3-5 October: Young Professionals' retreat

Sunday 05 October: 10:30 AM. Harvest Sunday

Sunday 12 October: 10:30 AM. Church service

Sunday 19 October: 10:30 AM. Announcing our annual gift for HOPE worldwide.

Sunday 26 October: 10:30 AM. Church service

Sunday 21 December: 10:30 AM. Carol service



are different, but the message is the same.

Forgiveness isn't a quota to meet. It's a habit to develop. A way of life.

Jesus isn't setting an upper limit—he's revealing the radical nature of life in his kingdom. He's teaching that his people should reflect God's character: grace upon grace, mercy without measure. Apparently, Pharisees taught that forgiving three times was sufficient (based on a strange interpretation of Amos 1.3), but Jesus turns that idea inside out. His followers are to practice maximum grace, not minimum decency.

Why? Because this is how God deals with us.

Again and again. Time after time. We confess, stumble, repent—and God forgives. This is who He is. And if we're serious about following Jesus, that kind of grace has to shape our own relationships.

Forgiveness isn't just a private virtue; it's the glue that holds the church together. Without it, community breaks down. People retreat. Trust erodes. But when forgiveness flows freely, it makes space for healing, honesty, and hope. The church becomes a place not of surveillance and suspicion, but of mutual support and restoration.

Tom Wright notes, "When you forgive someone, you are making yourself their servant, not their master." That's a powerful shift. Forgiveness isn't lording your moral high ground over someone. It's laying down your right to pay them back and choosing instead to seek their good.

And let's be honest—sometimes it's harder to forgive inside the church than outside. When a fellow Christian hurts us, it cuts deeper. We

"Grace to the Max"

We're finishing our series about Jesus' vision for his church. As we look at Matthew 18.21-35 today let's explore the idea of grace to the max.

When Peter asks Jesus how many times he should forgive someone—"Seven times?"—he probably thinks he's being generous. But Jesus responds, "Not seven times, but seventy-seven times" (Matthew 18.22). In other words, stop counting.

Luke's Gospel offers a similar moment: "Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying 'I repent,' you must forgive them" (Luke 17.4). The numbers

expect better. It feels personal. But that's also why forgiveness within the church is so vital—and so beautiful. It shows that grace isn't just a theory we preach but a reality we live.

Jesus' parable of the unmerciful servant drives the point home: if we've been forgiven an unimaginable debt, how can we withhold mercy from others? Our capacity to forgive doesn't come from sheer willpower—it comes from knowing what we ourselves have received.

Grace is the air we breathe in the kingdom of God. It's what keeps the church alive.

Let's not count offences or dole out grace in teaspoons. Let's be known as a people who forgive and keep forgiving, not because it's easy, but because it's how Jesus loves us.

God bless, Malcolm

P.S. I love this paragraph from "Jesus and the Disinherited" by Howard Thurman.

"In Jesus' insistence that we should forgive seventy times seven, there seems to be the assumption that forgiveness is mandatory for three reasons. First, God forgives us again and again for what we do intentionally and unintentionally...Second, no evil deed represents the full intent of the doer. Third, the evildoer does not go unpunished. Life is its own restraint. In the wide sweep of the ebb and flow of moral law our deeds track us down, and doer and deed meet. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." At the moment of injury or in the slow burning fires of resentment this may be poor comfort. This is the ultimate ground in which finally a profound, unrelieved injury is absorbed. When all other means have been exhausted, each in his own tongue whispers, "There is forgiveness with God."

Watford Contribution Details

Church bank account: Three Counties churches of Christ HSBC

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Faith-Building Quiz - Answer



The picture is of the Sergius Paulus inscription from Pisidian Antioch. It bears the name "Sergii Paulli", referring to the Sergius

Paulus family connected to the biblical proconsul who became a Christian (Acts 13.7). The fact that Sergius Paulus or his family held property in the region explains why Paul and Barnabas travelled there immediately after Paphos (Acts 13.13-14).

How does this help our faith? It strengthens our confidence in the biblical record. When Luke wrote the book of Acts, he was very careful to check his facts. Over the centuries, people have questioned whether Sergius Paulus existed. However, this and a number of other inscriptions referencing Sergius Paulus and his family have subsequently been discovered.

While inscriptions like this, and other evidence from archaeology, cannot *prove* that the Bible is the word of God, they can give us confidence that what we are reading is an accurate and reliable record of real events from 2000 years ago.

Watford Media

