

WITNESS – Reaching out to others ***(Aim for 20 – 30 minutes)***

Heavenly Father we take upon ourselves the mantle of authority that Jesus delegates to us and in His name we speak to every household in Hungerford and say to you:-

1 Relationships

We bless you in the Name of the Lord. We bless your marriages that they may be strong and whole. We bless the relationship between each marriage partner that it may be loving, forgiving, merciful and strong. We bless every intergenerational relationship within each household that there may be peace and love and understanding flowing between each one.

In Jesus' name we bless every network of wholesome and supportive friendship.

2 Health

We bless your health that you may be strong and well. In Jesus' name we resist any sickness or disease which seeks to invade this parish and to every person in the parish we say, be well, be strong, be healthy. To any who are sick right now we say we bless you in Jesus' name with a speedy recovery.

3 Wealth

We bless your wealth that you may have plenty to replace poverty. We bless you to have enough to live and enough to give. We bless the work of your hands that whatever you turn your hand to which is wholesome may be profitable. We bless every wholesome enterprise that is conducted by you that it may prosper and be successful. We bless the local businesses that they may be successful and profitable.

4 Education

We bless the local schools that they may be secure, safe places for teachers and pupils alike. We bless the children's capacity to learn and develop relationships and we bless their simple trust in Jesus that their trust may grow and become enriched.

5 Church

We speak to the Church and we say we bless you in the Name of the Lord that the Holy Spirit and the Word of God may flow out from you in power. We bless the hearts of all who live in the parish that they may be quickened to hear and respond to the Voice of the Living God. We bless all who live and work here, that the overflow of the blessings of the presence of the kingdom of God may fall upon you. **Amen**

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Matthew 18:21–35

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4 Patience

Purpose: To understand why we should be patient and forgiving toward others.

Patience refers to the prolonged restraint of anger. In English we speak of certain people as being “short-tempered.” A patient person is “long-tempered.”

WELCOME – Breaking the ice ***(Aim for 10 minutes)***

What kinds of things make you impatient?

WORSHIP – Meeting the Lord ***(Aim for 10 – 15 minutes)***

What has been the best thing that has happened since our last meeting?

OR

When have you felt closest to God since our last meeting?

Pray your “thank yous” to God

WORD – Applying the truth
(Aim for 40 – 45 minutes)

Let's face it. Some people drive us up the wall. We try to pour out love to them, but they are totally insensitive to us. We try to be genuine, but they misunderstand us and subtly knife us in the back. How should we treat such people? Jesus tells us in the parable of the unmerciful servant.

1. Why is it hard to keep forgiving people who do the same thing wrong over and over?
2. Read Matthew 18:21–35. Jesus had just been talking about forgiveness when Peter approached him (v. 21). What had Peter been wondering as he listened to Jesus?
3. The rabbis taught that a repeated sin should be forgiven three times. (Peter's offer seems generous!) What was shocking about Jesus' reply (v. 22)?
4. Jesus' reply to Peter is enlarged by the parable in verses 23–35. What is the first servant's problem in this parable?
5. How was his problem solved far beyond anything he could have hoped for?

6. How does the master illustrate God's patience and forgiveness toward us?

7. How does the way the first servant was treated contrast with the way he treats his fellow servant (vv. 28–30)?

8. Why do you think he failed to be patient or forgiving after having been forgiven so much?

9. If we fail to treat others with patience and forgiveness, how will God treat us (vv. 34–35)?
Why is his judgment so harsh?

10. How can a deep appreciation for God's patience and forgiveness help you with the kind of person mentioned in question 1?

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