
29 Tuesday

TUESDAY 3rd Week of Lent

Daniel 3: 25, 34-43

Ps 24: 4 - 9

Matt 18: 21-35

When Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray, He gave us our familiar Christian prayer, the "Our Father". One of its petitions is for forgiveness for ourselves. And maybe that's the most difficult thing to pray for sincerely. Not because we don't recognize our need to be forgiven but because Jesus added a "condition". We ask the Father to take our own practice of forgiving others as His measure to forgive us. And even people who are otherwise very good and devout can find themselves unable to forgive someone (often a close relative or former friend) for a particular hurt or injury.

This difficulty evidently worried Peter: later in the gospel he asked Jesus would seven times be often enough to forgive someone? How did Peter react when Jesus in effect stretched forgiveness beyond the range of mere numbers. beyond human calculation? For in answer to Peter's question Jesus launched into telling one of His human-relationship stories, about a king and two debtors. The story is deliberately outrageous. Even the kind generous king who forgives a massively huge debt owed to him turns angry and vindictive when he hears that the man he forgave had afterwards refused to forgive a tiny debt. .But what's the connection between Peter's question and Jesus' story? . Why is it that the Kingdom of heaven "may be likened to a king....." ?

Forgiving and being forgiven is basic to all relationships, with God as with other people. Our being forgiven has come from the heart of God. Our forgiving others, a grace from the "king" (God), likewise has to come from our hearts.