

+WEEKLY SERMON

communicate@blackburn.anglican.org



A Tale of Two Brothers

A few weeks ago, I witnessed a familiar scene in my household - my two boys locked in a heated argument over a game of pool. The victor's triumphant cry was met with accusations of cheating, and harsh words flew back and forth. In that moment of conflict, forgiveness seemed as distant as the North Pole.

Yet, as the initial anger subsided and cooler heads prevailed, I saw a transformation. The boys, who moments ago were bitter rivals, were soon laughing together again. This small act of forgiveness, while seemingly insignificant, carries a profound lesson for us all.

In our Gospel reading, we encounter John the Baptist, whose mission was to prepare the way for Jesus. As Jesus approached, John proclaimed, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" This powerful statement reveals the heart of Jesus' purpose - to offer forgiveness and reconciliation on a cosmic scale.

John's testimony continues, describing how he witnessed "the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him". This divine confirmation marked Jesus as the one who would "baptize with the Holy Spirit". Unlike John's baptism with water, Jesus offers a spiritual renewal that can transform us from the inside out.

The beauty of Jesus' forgiveness is its indiscriminate nature. Whether our sins are as trivial as a squabble over a board game or as weighty as the gravest offenses, Jesus takes them all away. He doesn't categorise our failings or rank them by severity - He simply offers complete absolution.

As we reflect on John's role in pointing others to Jesus, we're reminded of our own calling. In a world often divided by grudges and resentment, we're invited to be beacons of forgiveness. By extending grace to others, we mirror the boundless mercy of Christ.

Following the Christmas celebrations, let's embrace the transformative power of forgiveness. Like my boys who moved past their conflict, we too can experience the freedom that comes from letting go of grievances. In doing so, we not only liberate ourselves but also point others to the ultimate source of forgiveness - Jesus, the Lamb of God.

Iain Parks, Director of Education