

Forgiveness Friday #10

12 November 2021



Last Sunday I attended worship at Holy Evangelists' Anglican church in Goolwa, a small township not far from home. My Sunday church attendance has been sporadic recently, but I felt called to go – not just to church, but to that church in particular – and so I did. Two gifts awaited me.

The first gift came in the form of a further teaching on forgiveness, and the second in meeting up with a friend who also happened to be at the service.

The first gift was delivered early, just at the end of the introit hymn, and I confess that I was distracted for much of the time afterwards in unwrapping it, as it was in the form of a teaching on honouring.

Like blessing, honouring can be a powerful way of changing negative habits of mind and, from my experiments so far this week, another tool to 'set' forgiveness. (See [FF#4](#) for more on 'setting'.) And, just like a blessing, honouring brings its own rewards to the giver, not the least being an easing of the journey toward self-forgiveness.

Let me give you an example. Say, for instance, the only thing you can find to honour in a person is that they are loved by God: "I honour you because God sees you as worthwhile and honours you with His love." In honouring in this way, you simultaneously affirm that you also are worthy of honour and that God honours you with His love. If we understand that we are worthy of honour, it is easy to entertain the notion that we must therefore also be worthy of forgiveness.

I discovered last Sunday that, while I may not seem to be actively dishonouring someone, I am very ready to withhold honour. And, of course, I then saw that withholding honour is just a form of dishonouring that hides behind the deceptive screen of supposed neutrality.

As part of my job, I have to read a substantial amount of political material. With federal electioneering well underway (although the 2022 election has not yet been officially called), I have found a lot of what I read upsetting and the task therefore burdensome. On the one hand, there is the continual punishment of reading day after day various iterations of the wholesale public character assassination of political leaders that is so popular this year. It's vicious. Added to that are my own judgemental thoughts! I decided this week to begin by honouring those in office, as they are the target of the worst remarks: "You hold a position of high honour and are meeting the demands of that position to the best of your ability. I honour you for your willingness to accept such a difficult role in service to the nation."

It has helped. There has been a marked reduction in the noise in my head and a revival of the curiosity that is essential if I am to do my job well. I've had sparks of the old joy. This coming week, I aim to continue the experiment by honouring those I've blessed. Double whammy? We'll see.

Love, Lyndal

PS Printable pdfs of each week's letter are posted [here](#).