

Prayers 16 08 28

Living God – center and circumference of all that is – we gather to express our joy that you saturate and surround all of life ... we gather to be reminded that you saturate and surround our lives making them beloved. We gather to declare that we live and move and have our being in you. That nothing can separate us from you.

That nothing can separate us from your forgiving love.

Your forgiving love enfleshed by Jesus ... crucified by the religious as a rogue rabbi.

Your forgiving love set lose by the untamable Holy Spirit.

Your forgiving love that is breath of our breath.

Your forgiving love that pursues us even as it holds us.

Your forgiving love that resists our resistance of your forgiveness.

Your forgiving love that refuses to be hardened by our hardness of heart.

Your forgiving love that even gives us the freedom not to love you – though it causes you immeasurable anguish.

Your forgiving love that doesn't have to ever decide to forgive us because your love by its very nature is forgiving.

And your forgiving love that longs for us to know that we are forever forgiven and grieves when we don't.

In fact Lord, is this not what grieves you the most – our ignorance or blatant rejection of your forgiving love? Is this not our gravest sin? Our deadliest sin? To deny your forgiving love? To imagine that our lives exist beyond your forgiving reach or alternatively that our lives are without need of your forgiving hold. And is our inability or refusal to accept your forgiving love not the source of so much more that grieves you?

That when we fail to realise our lives and living are saturated and surrounded by your forgiving love we grow anxious – anxious about our worth – and out of this anxiety we birth so much death. For you know living God how when we doubt our priceless worth we seek to secure it in ways that often demean the priceless worth of others.

When we are anxious and insecure – we push others down in order to lift ourselves up.

We blame others instead of taking responsibility ourselves.

When we feel broken we cut others to pieces.

To make up for the lack we have inside of ourselves we acquire more and more stuff to prop up the outside of our life ... And then trying to protect all this stuff makes us even more anxious and threatened.

Failing to realise we are permanently carved on your loving palm we carve out images of ourselves that are based on the fashionable definitions of success and when they change we are caught in the constant spiral of having to prove ourselves. The goal posts of a fulfilled life keep moving – ever escaping our reach. Lord no wonder we get tired.

Lord when we fail to take your forgiving love as the true north of our living we spin around aimlessly becoming dizzy and directionless. No wonder we spend much of our life feeling lost.

Lord in this moment gift us with the realisation that our rejection of your forgiving love is already forgiven. Overwhelm us with the good news that this forgiveness is the result of your grace – your gift of undeserving love that we are incapable of manufacturing or manipulating and powerless to destroy.

Set us free from the desire to pay for your gift of freedom.

Release us from the need to punish ourselves.

Instead open our hearts to welcome your forgiveness. To offer it hospitality ... that your forgiving love may have a permanent seat around the table of our living.

For this we ask in Jesus' name who loved to eat with sinners. Amen.