

# The beautiful bride of Christ

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[ 0 : 00 ] Father, please help us to hear your word and to learn from it. Please come amongst us as the speaking, transforming Saviour. Amen.

Amen.

We looked at baptism and we had a brother and sister baptised in water. Baptism is the entry mark into the visible church. It's the visible sign of entering into the church.

The unseen entry is of course when people have faith and repent and the Holy Spirit comes to live in their hearts. But the baptism is the external sign of it.

And we looked at belonging in the church, union with Christ. When we come to the Lord Jesus Christ we have union with him. And being together in union with him means we belong to one another. And we looked, Daniel led us the other Sunday, in looking at the way the body of Christ operates.

[ 1 : 29 ] The fact that all Christians are joined together and this has expression in a local group like ours where different people contribute in different ways.

It's all meant to fit together. It's all meant to fit together. Parts of the body fitting together. The church is the beautiful bride of Christ. And this togetherness, this salvation, this community has the idea of being happy and beautiful and glorious.

And those of you who know Downton Abbey, I'm a big fan of Downton Abbey. We've been watching it all over again. We'll think of Matthew marrying Lady Mary and how beautiful it all is.

However, the character in this series, soap opera if you like, we all know if we had followed it that Lady Mary can actually be, any guesses on that word?

Obnoxious. Obnoxious. She can be absolutely obnoxious towards her system and she does learn, she does change. But against this beautiful picture of the wedding and all the bells chiming and the confetti being thrown and everything else, we have the capacity of people within it to actually be obnoxious.

[ 3 : 01 ] The Bible tells us that there is a parallel with Christianity. What does it say? Ephesians 5.27 Christ loved the church, gave himself up for her, to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

And that is the idea of the church, to be holy and blameless. But the church starts off as being spotty, blemished, unholy.

And there is a process, a transformation. And God takes his bride from being obnoxious to spotless. But he doesn't do it all at once. So that's what we're looking at, this process of transformation and change in an imperfect community that Jesus loves.

And I thought for sort of convenience, we could think about it as like a jigsaw puzzle. So I've got the picture there with a jigsaw puzzle and pieces that fit together.

[ 4 : 29 ] And I'd particularly like us to think about when it's difficult to fit the pieces together. And that's what we'll come on to. But let's explore the idea first. I want to think about the edges of the jigsaw and outside the jigsaw.

I want to think about why you do a jigsaw in the first place, motivation. I like just to think of the colours of the jigsaw. And I like to think about getting the pieces to fit. And that's the plan.

A bit artificial, isn't it? But anyway, you'll see whether you think it works. So let's think of the church as a jigsaw. And when you're doing a jigsaw, one really good strategy is to put the outside pieces in first.

Is that right? Do you do that? Put the outside pieces in first. And then everything else fits within once you've got those outside pieces in place.

So put the edges first and all the other pieces fit into place. So let's, if we think about, if we'd like to think about it as a jigsaw, what are the pieces that you know are sort of the boundary of this picture?

[ 5 : 36 ] What is it that has, everything else has to fit in with? And I'd like to suggest these are definites and things have to fit in with this.

Number one, the overall plan of God to build a community, a church, if you like, a city, a bride, a people.

This, amazingly, is God's plan. He wants a community of people that fit together. I think that that is rather amazing of God to want to do that.

Because, well, look at us. I mean, we're all sorts of people, aren't we? And God says, I want to build these people into a community together. I'm not going to deal with them as lone rangers.

So it's just that person and me, and that person and me, and that person and me, and that person and me. It's that people and me, and them together. So fitting into a community.

[ 6 : 38 ] So that is one of the sort of outside edges. We know that that must be right. And then these things, the choosing of the Father, the gracious choosing of the Father.

How come there's a jigsaw at all? Because God has chosen it to be so. And if you're a believing Christian this morning, what a comfort to know that you're a Christian, not simply because you have the sense to choose God, but that God had the grace first to choose you.

Why am I a believer? Because I'm particularly faithful, particularly spiritual. No, the exact opposite of that is true. But because God decided he wanted me to be one of his people.

I think that's a really deep comfort for us. The gracious choosing of the Father. The sacrificial love of the Saviour. His redemption.

This is one of the outside pieces of the jigsaw. Everything has to fit with this, doesn't it? That Jesus died for his people. He so loved us that he died for us.

[ 7 : 54 ] The redemption of the Saviour. And that, you know, if you think of the outside pieces setting the parameters for what goes inside, the love of Jesus sets the parameters for everything that goes on within his community.

And the life-changing indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Christians are not just human beings that have turned over a new leaf or picked themselves up to make themselves better.

They're people in whom the Holy Spirit has come to live. This Christ died so that the promise given to Abraham would be fulfilled, that the Holy Spirit would dwell in our hearts through faith.

The church is not just human beings left to themselves. There is the presence of the Holy Spirit. So that's part of the recipe for this jigsaw. And then we can put into that the diversity of people.

Different people, as Daniel was referring to the other week. Differences of culture. Different ethnicities. Different gifts. Different talents.

[ 9 : 05 ] Different ways of thinking. All these differences are meant to be unified in the community. Although it's also a source of stress as well. But another thing about what's going on inside this jigsaw.

All these people are not perfect. None of these people is perfect. They still wrestle with indwelling sin. With thoughts that aren't the right thoughts.

Responses that aren't the right responses. Dispatches. Affections that are not balanced properly. We're still sinful people. And so here is the sort of boundary.

Everything else fits within these sort of limits. That makes sense? So we've put the edges in place. Now let me just say as we go on.

I'm going to talk about the idea of bringing something up one to one. As was read. If somebody offends against you. See them one to one. And then take two or three other people.

[ 10 : 02 ] I'm going to talk about that. That's within the jigsaw puzzle. I think there are things that are outside the jigsaw puzzle. Where that would not be the correct advice. If you see a terrorist about to set off a bomb.

You don't go and say to them. Friend. Could I just talk to you one to one about this? Could you do coffee tomorrow? I mean you wouldn't do that. You would say 999.

We'll ring for the police. If there's a risk to harm. Or a risk of harm to children. Or to grown ups.

You wouldn't say. Well this is you know. Let's talk about this over coffee next week. If there's an immediate risk. You know. Safeguarding and all that sort of stuff. It's an emergency. You ring the police.

Or contact safeguarding people. Or whatever. So. There are things that are outside. The boundary of this particular jigsaw. But when it's inside.

[11:01] You know. The normal life of the church. As a sensible person would judge it. Then that's what I'm talking about. Does that make sense? So. Let's go to Matthew 18.

And. Pick up. Some of the. Things that go on. In the New Testament. There's loads of material. About.

Relationships. Within the church. So. It's not. That I haven't got much to say. It's a question of trying to control. The amount that there is to be said. But let's look at. Matthew 18. And I'd like us to think. In verse 21. To think about. Why I should bother. With resolving issues. Forgiving people. Seeking peace. You know.

This. This is a very complicated jigsaw. I don't know if you are a jigsaw person. But what you might look at a jigsaw. And say. That is just so complicated. Let's get.

[12:00] A four year old's jigsaw. With a cow. And a pig. And a train. I'll do that one instead. It needs a little bit of motivation. For a difficult thing like this.

And here is a motivational story. So Matthew 18. 21. Peter came to Jesus. And he asked this question. Okay. There's going to be.

I'm going to get offended by people. Things are going to go. Pear shaped. From time to time. So how many times. Shall I forgive my brother or sister.

Who sins against me. What about seven. Now seven is a good biblical number. Isn't it. It's a good biblical number. What about forgiving them seven times.

And then Jesus tells this story. Verse 22. I tell you. Not seven times. But 77 times.

[12:56] That's a good number. A good number. Sort of. A good number squared. A good number. In three dimensions. If you like. A really big seven.

Way of putting seven. And here's the story. Therefore the kingdom of heaven. Is like. A king. Who wanted to settle accounts. With his servants. As he began.

The settlement. A man. Who owed him. Ten. Thousand. Bags of gold. Was brought to him. Ten. Thousand.

Bags of gold. Is just. Astronomically. Impossible. I don't know what your. Barclay card statement. Looks like. At the end of the month. If you have a Barclay card.

Or a Master card. Or something like that. But if you owed. Ten. Thousand. Bags of gold. You would be in deep trouble. Wouldn't you? That's just impossible debt.

[13:53] And it's disastrous. Verse 25. Since he was not able to pay. The Master ordered. That he and his. Wife and children. And all that he had. Be sold to repay the debt.

This is deep trouble. I don't think Jesus is. Is advocating this. As a way of settling. Debt collection. But in the. Context that he's telling the story.

You know. This is. This is disastrous. And what does the servant do? I've called him servant A. At this. The servant fell on his knees.

Before him. Be patient with me. He says. He begged. And I will pay back everything. So he asks for patience.

For more time. I think he's being unrealistic. You know. Ten thousand bags of gold. Is an awful lot. Is he ever going to repay it? And there's the.

[14:49] Servant. On his knees. Begging. The master. He asked for more time. But the. The master.

The servant's master. Verse 27. Took pity on him. You could translate it. Moved with compassion. Moved with compassion. Am I going to sell this poor guy?

Am I going to get him to sell his children? And everything that he has. Poor guy. He's got no. Power to get himself out of this. Deep hole that he's in. No matter how he got into this hole.

He can't get himself out. Moved with compassion. He cancelled the debt. He cancelled the debt. And let him go.

He does more than be patient. He cancels the debt. Gone. What debt?

[15:49] No debt. Off you go. Free. I mean. What he. What that servant must have felt. As he skipped out of the.

Wherever they've been talking. Walking on air. I had that huge debt. And now it's gone. Now then. Second. Next part of the story. Verse 28. When that servant went out. He found one of his fellow servants. Who owed him. A fiver. A few.

Hundred. Silver. Coins. Hundred quid. A little. Trifling debt. Compared with the huge debt. We were talking about before.

What does he do? He grabs. His fellow servant. And begins to choke him. Pay me back. What you owe me. Pay me.

[16:46] The fellow servant. Does exactly what. The first servant had done. He falls on his knees. And begs. Be patient with me.

And I will pay it back. That's exactly what servant A did. Servant B does to servant A. And servant A. Refuses.

Instead. He had the man thrown into prison. Until he could pay the debt. When the other servants. Now let's. Okay. So this is what.

This is servant B. This is servant A to servant B. I'm not going to let you off. What about the other servants.

Servant C, D, E and F. It says. When the other servants saw what would happen. They were outraged. I looked up the word. I don't know whether it's outraged.

[17:47] Grieved. Indignant. What is going on here. How could that happen. And they told their master everything. And it's interesting.

The master's response. The master called the servant in. Verse 32. You wicked serpent. There's something quite wicked.

About the way this guy has responded. I cancelled all that debt of yours. Because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy.

On your fellow servant. As I had on you. In his anger. The master handed him over to the jailers. To be tortured. Until he should pay back all he owed. Which is a pretty dire thing to have. I mean this is disaster again. Isn't it? Disaster this time.

[18:45] Because of. Well what would you say. His hard heart. His. His. Inability to translate. How he had been treated.

Into how he treated other people. And. The sort of sting at the end of the. The tale. Is in verse 32. And this is how. My heavenly father. Will treat each of you. Unless you forgive. Your brother or sister. From the heart. That's the story. It's a motivational story.

It's for Christian people. It says. This is. How you should be thinking. And I ask. Well how does that work? How does it work?

I mean. The first thing to notice. Is what it says. What it says. What the master says. In verse 32. I cancelled all that debt of yours. This is what God says to Christians.

[19:46] I cancelled all that debt of yours. All that. All that huge debt. All the pile of sins that you have worked into your life.

Hour by hour. Year by year. Minute by minute. Thought by thought. Action by action. All of that. Cancelled.

There was a chorus. Gone. Gone. Gone. Gone. Gone. Gone. Yes my sins are gone. Now my heart is free.

And in my mouth a song. Buried in the deepest sea. Yes that's good enough for me. I shall live eternally. Praise God. My sins are gone. Isn't it great that God cancels all that debt?

As far as the east is from the west. So far has he removed our transgressions from us. Brothers and sisters. It would not be tolerable would it. If God only half forgave our sins.

[20:50] If he kept bringing them up again. If he said well. I know I did forgive them. But actually. But now he come to mention it. I mean. That would be just an awful wouldn't it?

But God says to us. As this master says. I cancelled all that debt. Free. Gone. White clean. As far as the east is from the west.

First. That's the first point. No matter. How much we. How much we have offended God. And then you put against that. What our brother and sister might do to us. How trivial.

And small. That is. Compared to what God has forgiven us. Is that right? If you look at it that way. And the story works by fitting.

How can you fit together? Being forgiven all that debt. And not forgiving other people. Who have done such trivial things to you.

[21:51] That's how it works isn't it? And the fellow servants. Are conscious that it jars. You know what I mean by jar? Doesn't fit. It goes. That's not right.

For somebody not to forgive. Somebody who's committed. In what is now a relatively trivial thing. Against them having been forgiven.

All that. All that by God. Does that make sense? If I had. It just makes sense. If you have tried to explain it. You think. Well. Shouldn't.

If you're a Christian. Shouldn't you just understand that? Shouldn't that. That just be that instinctive. There is a Christian heart. If we have been forgiven.

Surely. Surely. Surely. It motivates us. To be forgiving towards other people. I remember that. Christian person from Northern Ireland.

[ 22 : 50 ] This lady must forgive me. If I've taken what she said out of context. But in a Northern Irish context. Which is surely difficult enough. She said. Well I'm a Christian.

Therefore I can't forgive them. I'm a Christian. Therefore I can't forgive them. Isn't that the wrong way around? If I'm a Christian.

I must have a motivation to forgive. Because I've been forgiven. Okay. That's the point I was trying to make. Let's now look at the colours of the jigsaw. When you do a jigsaw puzzle.

You look for the colours. The blue of the sky. The green of the leaves. The ripples on the water. And you put them all into little piles. And yes.

This is how you do jigsaw puzzles. So. Sometimes. If the. You know. If you had a jigsaw puzzle of a snowstorm. Where it's all white. I mean.

[ 23 : 44 ] That would be just very very difficult. Wouldn't it? But let's look at the colours. In this picture. Because I. I think there are colours that are repeated.

In this jigsaw puzzle of the church. And one of the colours. Is the colour love. So I've got some verses. You might like to look them up or not. But I'm. I'm going to look them up.

So the John 13. This colour crops up all over. This jigsaw. John 13. 34. A new command. I give you. Love one another. As I have loved you. So you must love one another. By this. Everyone will know. That you are my disciples. If you love one another.

Is there a repeated theme there? Yes there is. Love. Is it optional? No. It's a command. How many commands does Jesus give? Actually just one.

[ 24 : 40 ] Pretty much. And this is it. Love one another. Fairly inescapable. Isn't it? This colour. Colours. All the way through. This jigsaw puzzle.

And. It is a sacrificial love. As I have loved you. So you must love one another. There's one colour. And let's pick out this colour again. In 1 Corinthians 13.

I told you there was loads of material on this. And it's worth reading. What it says here. In 1 Corinthians 13. About love. Love. 1 Corinthians 13.

I'm going to pick up from verse 4. And just while. If you're finding it. While you're finding it. To say that. When this was read in Corinth. I think there were probably people shuffling.

And feeling uncomfortable. And getting red faces. Because this describes the opposite. Of what the Corinthians were doing. 1 Corinthians 13.

[ 25 : 37 ] Verse 4. Love is patient. And remember. They went to head with the Lord's Supper. Without waiting for one another. They were impatient. And he said. Actually love is patient. Love is kind.

They weren't always very kind. To one another. It does not envy. It does not boast. It is not proud. That proud thing is going to come up.

As a colour. It does not dishonour other people. It doesn't try to put them down. It is not self-seeking. It doesn't say me first.

It is not easily angered. It is not easily angered. It is not easily angered. It keeps no record of wrongs.

It doesn't go back and say. Well actually now you come to mention. I remember five years ago. It doesn't say that. It forgets. In the right sense.

[ 26 : 36 ] Love does not. Keep a record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil. It is very easy. In human nature. To be a little bit pleased.

When you see other people do things wrong. It is a horrible thing. Isn't it? But it is part of human nature. Sinful human nature. Love does not delight in evil. But delight. Rejoices in the truth.

It always protects. It wants the best for people. It always trusts. I don't think that is meant naively. But I think the first reaction of love. Is to trust.

Rather than suspect. It always hopes. It always thinks. You know. There is a possibility of change. In this situation. It always perseveres.

There is a sort of stickability. About love. And this is part of the jigsaw puzzle. I think it is a very beautiful colour.

[ 27 : 35 ] To have in this jigsaw puzzle. And. I think not easy. Needs the work of God. In people's lives.

To develop this. But I think it is a great. Great thing. In this puzzle. And here. Some other colours. Ephesians 4 verse 2.

Picking up again. On the life of the church. Ephesians 4 verse 2.

Be completely. Well. He says. I urge you to live a life. Worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble. And gentle. There is a humility again.

Be patient. There is patience again. Bearing with one another. Bearing with one another. That is. Forbearing is another translation of that.

[ 28 : 32 ] What have I put there? Having patience with one another. Putting up with one another. Uncomplainingly. Yeah. We know so and so. They are always late. But we don't. You know. That is.

We work our way around that. So and so sometimes says things they don't mean. We work our way around that. Being patient with one another. Bearing with one another in love.

And making every effort. To keep the unity of the spirit. Through the bond of peace. Peace is another color. But the making every effort. It sort of picks up on the motivation. Doesn't it?

No. Let's work at this. And Ephesians 5. 31. Some more colors. In this jigsaw puzzle.

Have I got this right? I don't think I have. Somebody help me. Is it 5. No. It's not 5. 31. Is it? Is it? Is it 4.

[ 29 : 33 ] 31? 4. 31. Yes. That's right. Get rid of all bitterness. Rage. And anger. Brawling.

And slander. Along with every form of malice. Be kind. And compassionate. To one another. Forgiving. Each other. Just as in Christ.

God forgave you. Forgiving. One another. Just as. In Christ. God. Forgave you. Think how much. God's. Forgiveness. Is. How big. How comprehensive. Canceled all that debt. And he says.

That's how we should. Forgive one another. I remember a long time ago. When. Back in the 1970s.

[ 30 : 29 ] Talking to Pastor Les Hill. About forgiveness. And he said. He said. When he first came to the church. There were people who would say.

I've forgiven. But I haven't forgotten. I mean. We don't be naive about it. But there's something. Not quite right about that. Isn't there. Forgive. One another. As the Lord forgave you. Where are we?

And live a life of love. Verse 2. You could translate that. Walk. In love. I like that translation. Walk. In love. Just as Christ. Loved us. And gave himself up for us. As a fragrant offering. And sacrifice. To God. So again. There's the colour of love there.

[ 31 : 23 ] So I just tried to pick out some. Sort of. Constants. In. The life of the church. Things like. Love. Kindness.

Compassion. Forgiveness. Patience. Forbearance. These things. Should. Just mark. All the. Relationships.

And interactions. That we have. Now. Let's go. And. Let's. Do the next bit. Which is about. Fitting. Bits of jigsaw together. If they don't.

Fit very easily. I realise. This. Analogy. Doesn't break. It breaks down a bit. Really. Doesn't it. Because if the jigsaw. Puzzle's right. All the pieces. Fit together. Very easily. But let's.

Just imagine. Where. You're trying to fit. Something that doesn't. Fit very well. So let's go to. Matthew's gospel. And. Chapter seven.

[ 32 : 17 ] Chapter seven. So here's something from the Lord Jesus. About.

Fitting together. Where. There is. Some. Conflict. Some. Mismatch. Something. Going. Wrong. Matthew.

Seven. Do not judge. Or you. You too. Will be judged. For in the same way as you judge others. You will be judged. And with the measure you use. It will be measured to you.

Why do you look at the speck of sawdust. In your brother's eye. Okay. So. We're doing some. Eye. Procedures. Here. I've been to the dentist.

Recently. I don't really like people. Poking around in my mouth. With metals. Things. And. Things that buzz. Don't like that at all. By God's grace. I've never had to have.

[ 33 : 20 ] Any sort of eye procedures. I know. A number of people have. I really wouldn't like that. It's a very sensitive thing. Isn't it. And here. In Matthew. Seven. Somebody is about to do.

An eye procedure. On somebody else. Removing a speck. Let's put the speck in. There's the speck. Now. It needs removing.

It needs removing. But it is. Not something. That you just. Charge in. Without. Preparation. And Jesus says. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust.

In your brother's eye. And pay no attention. To the plank. In your own. So we've got a plank. Yeah. There's a plank. In your own eye. You hypocrite.

He says. First. Take the plank. Out of your own eye. Then you will see clearly. To remove the speck. From your brother's eye. So this is a little bit.

[ 34 : 13 ] Of a caution. Isn't it. It's saying. We are. To help. One another. Particularly. If. If we've got. Issues. Sins. Shortcomings.

We are to help. One another. But he says. Now. You must do this. Really carefully. Because. While you are looking. At the speck. In someone else's eye. You could be. Completely overlooking.

The plank. In your own. Check yourself first. And so this. This sets us up. Doesn't it. If we're going to. Do this. Demanding.

Thing. Of correcting. One another. Because it is demanding. We should. First look at ourselves. You know. I'm going to. Tell that.

Person. You jolly. Well. Don't you. Let's make sure. I'm not. Jolly. Well. Myself. So that's.

[ 35 : 13 ] That's the first thing. Only then. Can you do the operation. This means. We've got to care. We've got to. Just check ourselves. I guess. We're going to pray. And do this.

In a measured. Way. Okay. So. That's one thing. Let's go to. Matthew 18. And. This passage. In verse 15.

Which was read to us. So this is. Jesus. Outlining. The. What you would say. The discipline. Of the church. In our church.

Membership service. We talk about. The formal discipline. And the informal discipline. The formal discipline. Is a procedure. Which in the end. Can.

Be ramped up. To. Excommunication. To. To say. I'm sorry. We cannot. Any longer. Treat you. As if you are. Within the jigsaw.

[ 36 : 09 ] As if you are. Within our community. You're not. Inside. Anymore. But there's an. Informal process. Of people. Just talking to one another.

As we should see. And telling it. To the church. Is the final stage. That's the nuclear option. And this process. That Jesus.

Describes. Goes. Incrementally. And doesn't go straight. To the final point. It goes. Incrementally. You don't do this. If there's a terrorist. But this is.

Within. Normal church. So let's look at it. Verse 15. If your. Brother or sister. Sins. Now in my. Version. It doesn't say.

Sins against you. I think. That in the. Version I used to have. It says against you. Well I don't know. But anyway. There's a fault. On the part of brother or sister. What he says is.

[ 37 : 03 ] Go. And point. Out. Their fault. Just between. The two of you. That's what it says. So you just go. And just between.

The two of you. And if. In that conversation. Your brother or sister.!!!!!!!!!!!!

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[ 38 : 48 ] !

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any chance of you. Meeting. Stepping forward to us on that. No I still go. I was right. You're wrong. Well if he.

[ 41 : 30 ] If you. You gain. If the person listens. Yeah. Now you put it that way. Yeah. I was out of order. You've gained. So we've. We've sort of.

Ramped it up a little bit. I don't think. Jesus means. To sort of. Follow these steps. Slavishly. but I think the principle is of ramping it up starting off low key so that nobody else knows and then moving it out a bit and then moving it on a bit further and where do the elders of the church come in?

well maybe they can help you maybe they can help you to address this person it's not the elders who have to sort this out first of all it's you and they can help you but it's you who must sort it out with your brother or sister well if that doesn't work then the final stage I mean maybe there's some more stages in between of a similar sort but there is a final stage and it says if they refuse to listen tell it to the church so when there is the assembly of the church and I think if we were doing this properly we would assemble a church meeting we would pray about it we would come very seriously we've come to hear this person saying what they think has been an offence against them and we're going to decide whether we agree this or not and if we agree that it was an offence we will call on the person who has committed the offence to repent and if the person doesn't listen now this is the fault now of this person they don't listen even to the church if they won't respect the church if they won't respect the verdict of the properly constituted spiritually convened prayerful church of Jesus Christ then treat them as no longer part of this community that's church discipline and the person ends up being expelled from the church and notice that in this

Jesus himself gives the authority to the church to do so I tell you whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven the verdict of the church in this is not simply a human opinion it is actually the highest court that there could be Jesus from heaven endorses and guides the decision of the church in this so I've been through the various parts of the the jigsaw the different colours how you try and fit the pieces together where there's a conflict which is what we've just been looking at and here is the looking at the picture on the box there's the beautiful picture that we're aiming at brothers and sisters we pray the Lord's prayer this morning forgive forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us that's an important prayer and a failure to do that actually puts our own spiritual lives at risk when we pray that we we assume that people around us will have rough edges we assume that there will be bumps and scrapes in our relationships with people we assume that there will be from time to time differences and misunderstandings we assume that all the people in the church have the same problem as I do which is indwelling sin which occasionally comes out from inside and bursts out but we also assume that there is healing of relationships possible we also assume that there is reconciliation and people can forgive one another and brothers and sisters can be won over we assume that the love that Christ puts in the church is a real thing and actually does work we assume that the compassion that the Father has had on us will be in our hearts for one another we assume that people will be patient with us and we will be patient with them and we assume above all that we can forgive one another as God in Christ forgave us and that's a beautiful picture and I say brothers and sisters let's make every effort to make our church something of that beautiful picture  
Amen Amen Thank you Amen