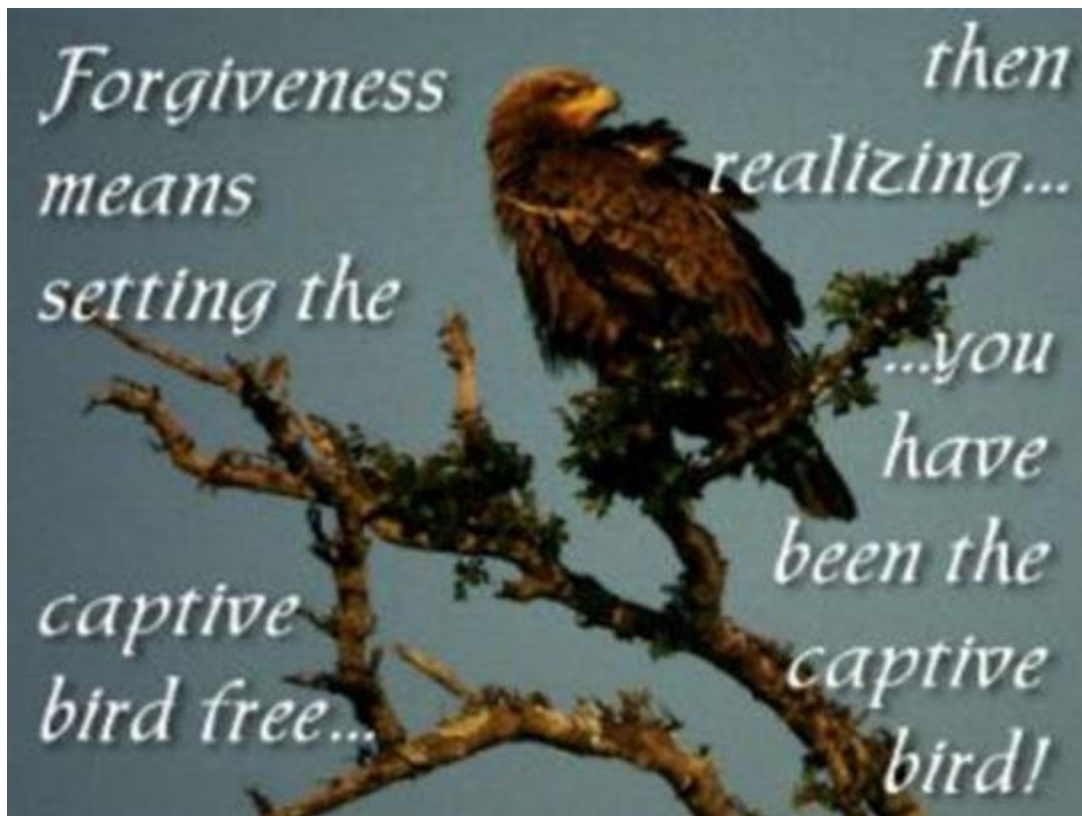


Dear Beloved,

This week's reading is about forgiveness, the forgiveness that we have received, especially from the Lord and the forgiveness that we give to each other.



Blessings

Wendy

Community Day next Saturday

Please encourage any community groups you know to have a stall.

--

Community Day next Saturday Please think about how you can help on the day.

--

Community Day next Saturday Please take some posters and put them up wherever you can.

--

Morning Tea on 24th September to farewell Wendy Followed by lunch at the club at 12.30

Please tell Karen if you are coming to lunch

--

Morning Tea after the Service every 2nd and 4th Sunday please volunteer for the roster.

--

Midweek Services please talk to Lorraine

--

Please volunteer for the church roster, well in advance.

--

Are you interested in joining God in unexpected places?

Kairos Prison ministry St Thomas the Apostle Kambah

Sat 4th Nov 10.30 - 2.30 kocanberrasec@kairos.org.au

--

Prayer and Praise

Wendy

Catherine

Edith and Colin Mayhew

--

Whoever will come to be our Locum after Wendy

Whoever will come to be our new Priest

--

Those on the Clergy Appointment Board that they will have wisdom

--

Glenn Fletcher

Alan Hood

our wardens and Parish Councillors

--

Bernie and Gayle

Scott's wife Jennie.

--

Beattie Russell and Jenni Roberts in Yallambie.

--

Liz Pirie

Leanne Lowery

--

Peter & Julie Harris from Bredbo

all congregations in Cooma

--

The Catholic priest Father Mark Croker as he ministers from Bombala
through to the mountains

--

for each other that we may be salt and light in this community

--

People everywhere who are living through war or disasters of every kind.

17 sept 2023 2.1

Hymn TIS 231 At the name of Jesus

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

And also with you.

Sentence

If you, O Lord, should note what we do wrong, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered. Psalm 130.3–4

Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of the Day O God, you call your Church to witness that in Christ we are reconciled to you: help us so to proclaim the good news of your love, that all who hear it may turn to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Exodus 14.19-31

¹⁹ Then the angel of God, who had been travelling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, ²⁰ coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other; so neither went near the other all night long. ²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, ²² and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. ²³ The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. ²⁴ During the last watch of the night the Lord looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. ²⁵ He jammed the wheels of their chariots so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, 'Let's get away from the Israelites! The Lord is fighting for them against Egypt.' ²⁶ Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen.' ²⁷ Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing towards it, and the Lord swept them into the sea. ²⁸ The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen – the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived. ²⁹ But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. ³⁰ That day the Lord saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. ³¹ And when the Israelites saw the mighty hand of the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant.

Psalm 114

¹ When Israel came out of Egypt: and the house of Jacob from among a people of an alien tongue,
² Judah became his sanctuary: and Israel his dominion. ³ The sea saw that and fled: Jordan was driven back.
⁴ The mountains skipped like rams: and the little hills like young sheep.
⁵ What ailed you, O sea, that you fled: O Jordan, that you were driven back?
⁶ You mountains, that you skipped like rams: and you little hills like young sheep?
⁷ Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord: at the presence of the God of Jacob,
⁸ Who turned the rock into a pool of water: and the flint-stone into a welling spring.

Romans 14.1-14

¹ Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarrelling over disputable matters. ² One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. ³ The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. ⁴ Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand. ⁵ One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. ⁶ Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. ⁷ For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves

alone. ⁸ If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. ⁹ For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. ¹⁰ You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. ¹¹ It is written: "As surely as I live," says the Lord, "Every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God." ¹² So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God. ¹³ Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling-block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. ¹⁴ I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean.

Matthew 18.21-35

²¹ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?' ²² Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. ²³ 'Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. ²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. ²⁶ 'At this the servant fell on his knees before him. "Be patient with me," he begged, "and I will pay back everything." ²⁷ The servant's master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go. ²⁸ 'But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. "Pay back what you owe me!" he demanded. ²⁹ 'His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, "Be patient with me, and I will pay it back." ³⁰ 'But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. ³² 'Then the master called the servant in. "You wicked servant," he said, "I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³ Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?" ³⁴ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. ³⁵ 'This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'

Sermon

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE PRAYERS

Let us pray for all people and for the Church throughout the world.

Christ Jesus, intercede for us and in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray, **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

Jesus said: A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you. John 13.34

Invitation to Confession

God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy, welcoming sinners and inviting them to the Lord's table.

Confession Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, confident in God's forgiveness.

Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in what we have failed to do: we have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves; we repent and are sorry for all our sins. Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith: pardon you and set you free from all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Peace

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.** The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Hymn TIS 216 (i) Rejoice, the Lord is King

OFFERTORY

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.

Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. **Blessed be God for ever.**

Thanksgiving 1

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty Creator, everliving God.

We give you thanks and praise for our Saviour Jesus Christ, who by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary and lived as one of us. By his death on the cross and rising to new life, he offered the one true sacrifice for sin and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people. Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Merciful God, we thank you for these gifts of your creation, this bread and wine, and we pray that by your Word and Holy Spirit, we who eat and drink them may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread; and when he had given you thanks he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup, and again giving you thanks he gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Drink from this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Therefore, we do as our Saviour has commanded: proclaiming his offering of himself made once for all upon the cross, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, and looking for his coming again, we celebrate, with this bread and this cup, his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

Renew us by your Holy Spirit, unite us in the body of your Son and bring us with all your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom, and in whom, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, we worship you, Father, in songs of never-ending praise:

Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen.

As this broken bread was once many grains, which have been gathered together and made one bread:

so may your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.

The gifts of God for the people of God Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life.

Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving.

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for you, and be thankful.

After Communion

Gracious God, we thank you that in this sacrament you assure us of your goodness and love.

Accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and help us to grow in love and obedience that we may serve you in the world and finally be brought to that table where all your saints feast with you for ever.

Father, **we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory.

Hymn TIS 106 Now thank we all our God.

Blessing

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Dismissal

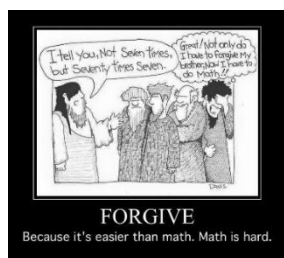
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord: **In the name of Christ. Amen**



As we continue Jesus' teaching on relationships Peter asks how many times, he should forgive his brother. Last week in the gospel passage immediately before this Jesus instructed his followers to reason privately with a brother or sister who might be sliding away and bring them back to the fold just like a shepherd brings back a lost sheep. Our Romans reading included a reiteration of Jesus command to love your neighbour as yourself: ¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbour. Therefore, love is the fulfilment of the law.

Peter's question is in response to Jesus' teaching, he understands that a life following Jesus means forgiving his brother or sister, probably multiple times but being human Peter thinks there ought to be a limit. Peter's proposal to forgive seven times sounds generous, especially since there is no mention of repentance by the offending party, but Jesus' response is far beyond Peter's proposal.

In the Greek their way of saying numbers means that what we have translated as seventy-seven can also mean seventy times seven (490) these numbers, seven and seventy times seven counteract a pronouncement in Genesis (4) about the number of times vengeance will be enacted.



[While I was writing this sermon, I came across a cartoon, in which Jesus is saying; Not seven times but seventy times seven'. A disciple at the back of the group has his head in his hands and is thinking 'Great! Not only do I have to forgive my brother, Now I have to do Math!!' and underneath the cartoon it says: 'Forgive because it easier than math. Maths is hard.']

The difference between Peter's proposal and Jesus' pronouncement is not a matter of maths or linguistics, but the nature of forgiveness. Whoever counts has not forgotten at all but is only biding their time. The kind of forgiveness called for by Jesus is beyond all calculation. Every time you accuse someone else, you accuse yourself. Every time you forgive someone else, through you pass on a fraction of the forgiveness that God has already forgiven you.



From God's point of view, the distance between being ordinarily sinful (what we all are) and extremely sinful (what people we don't like seem to be) is like the distance between Cooma and Canberra seen from the point of view of the sun. It is important not that one should swallow all resentment and 'forgive and forget' as though nothing had happened but that we should never give up making forgiveness and reconciliation one's goal.

My first husband was emotionally abusive and after he left me it was a long process to fully understand what he had done because it was so subtle and devious. Once I understood that it took me years to process and gradually forgive him. I forgave him many years ago but there is no way I would ever give him the opportunity to enter my life and harm me again.



Forgiveness is necessary for our own sake, so that we can move on and live in God's peace but that doesn't mean that we become doormats and allow people to trample all over us. We are sons and daughters of the king, the Lord of the universe, we can stand firm in that relationship and, if necessary, remove ourselves from situations and relationships which would harm us.

In the ordinary small disagreements of life, we forgive and move on but if there is abuse or misuse in a relationship, we are free to move on and then forgive. Sometimes forgiving is easy, we recognise that the other person made a mistake and that they didn't mean to hurt us, so we just forgive in a moment, sometimes the hurt is much deeper, and it takes time, but we keep working on it with the Lord and gradually we can peel away the layers and the hurt is gone, and we have forgiven. God heals but we must allow him to heal and do whatever is necessary for that healing.



The servant in the story, that Jesus tells to illustrate what forgiveness truly is, is a subordinate official who has incurred this through mismanagement of the king's resources not through personal expenditure. The amount he owes is astronomical: a talent is the largest monetary unit equal to a manual labourer's wages for fifteen years and ten thousand is the Greek word from which we get our word myriad and was their largest possible number. This figure is beyond the taxes of multiple nations of the time.

The debt is unpayable no matter how much time was allowed. The servant's situation is hopeless. He asks for mercy and contrary to all expectations, the king responds with compassion. The debt of the fellow servant is microscopic compared to what the first servant had been forgiven, yet it is not an insignificant amount: representing 100 days wages.



The contrast between the way the first servant was treated by the king and the way he treats his fellow servant is not just a contrast of amounts owed. In the first scene there was no way to repay such a debt; one could only be condemned or receive mercy and one would expect the parallel to apply in which the servant having received mercy would give mercy. However, this does not happen which outrages the other servants and us as we hear the story.

The other servants report to the king and the king takes back his forgiveness; the servant is condemned. This is a parable and should never be read literally. God does not 'take back' forgiveness but there are realities here that we need to understand. If we do not forgive God cannot forgive us.



Jesus says at the end of the story 'This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.' That seems incredibly harsh when we consider the rest of the gospel and Jesus' whole ministry so what is going on here. What does Jesus mean? This is not a typo or a mishearing, it is reiterated several times in the New Testament.

Forgiveness is not like a gift that you are given whether you deserve it or not, it is more like breathing. There is only so much room in your lungs, you cannot inhale the next breath until you have breathed out the previous one. If you insist on holding your breath, you won't be able to take in any more fresh air and you will suffocate. If our spiritual heart is open, able, and willing to forgive others, it will also be open to receive God's love and forgiveness. But if it's locked and unable to forgive it is also unable to receive God's love and forgiveness.



This same principle of love applies to what Paul was saying to the Romans. We are each accountable to God for the way we live, if the

Lord has convicted us to live in a certain way, we need to do that, but we have no right to judge others who don't live that way. There are many disputable matters but unfortunately throughout the ages we have ignored Paul's advice and not accepted the one whose faith is weak, and we have quarrelled over disputable matters both in the larger and smaller spheres of the church. That is why we have so many denominations and why people leave churches.

Whenever people pass judgement on each other there is no forgiveness, and they are not living for the Lord. For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. ⁸ If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. ⁹ For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

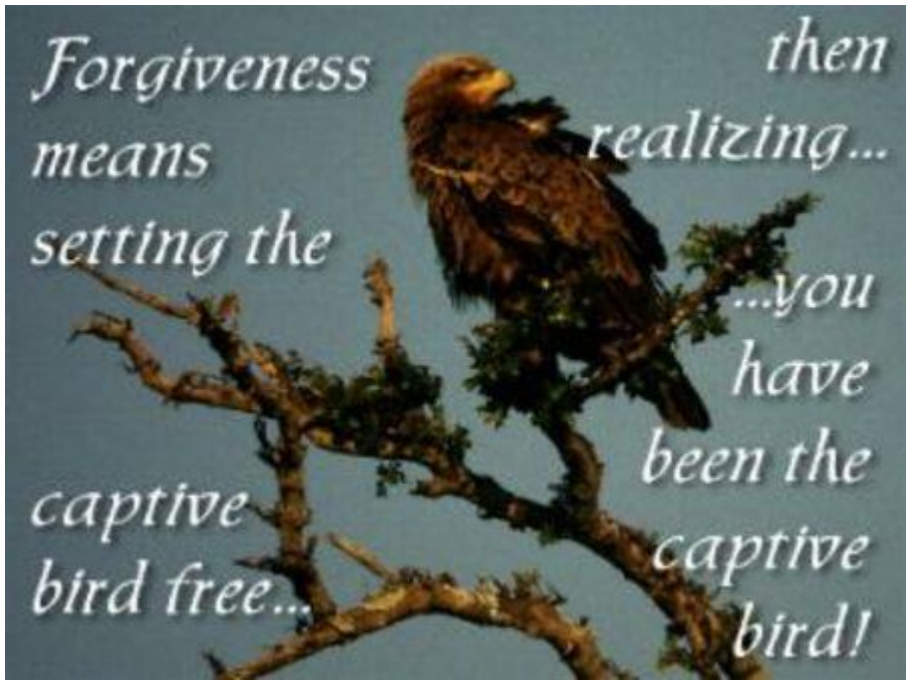


Jesus spent his time on earth establishing God's new covenant with Israel and the world, this covenant is marked by forgiveness. Jesus had

already taught them to pray for forgiveness (6:12) and has clearly stated that if you want forgiveness you've got to be prepared to give it (6:14-15) and in this passage he returns to the theme.

Peter's question and Jesus' answer says it all: if you are still counting how many times you've forgiven someone, you are not really forgiving them at all, but simply postponing revenge. 'Seventy times seven' is a typical bit of Jesus teasing. What he means is 'don't even think about counting, just do it'.

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Eph 4: 32)



*Forgiveness
means
setting the
captive
bird free...*

*then
realizing...
...you
have
been the
captive
bird!*