

The background of the entire page is a light green color with a pattern of various shades of green leaves scattered across it. The leaves are of different sizes and orientations, creating a natural, organic feel.

Forgiveness

RECEIVED FROM GOD ♥ EXTENDED TO OTHERS

31-Day Devotional

The Gift of Forgiveness

Does forgive mean we also have to forget? Some offenses cut so deep that they take years to heal, if at all. The hurt can be nearly impossible to forget. In the parable of the unforgiving servant, Jesus identifies true forgiveness. The master cancels the debt of the servant. The record of the debt may remain on the books, but the debt is marked in red letters “paid in full.” Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross pays our debts. The Father stamps them “paid in full” with the blood of Jesus. Does the Father forget they ever happened? No. Rather, the Father will no longer hold us accountable for the debt, because it has been canceled by Jesus’ atonement. God promises never to bring them up again, to never throw them in our face. The debt is canceled, and the guilt is silenced. You may never be able to forget some wrongs done to you. To forgive is to promise that with the help of God’s gift of forgiveness given for your sins, you will not bring up the offense again, because Jesus has forgiven their debts too.



Forgiveness Is Hard Work

If we’re honest with ourselves, we think it’s fun to hold a grudge. It gives us something to gripe about with our neighbors and gossip about with our spouses. Secretly, or maybe not so secretly, we love the drama. But our Lord would have us cling to something else instead: the forgiveness He gained for us by dying on a rough-hewn cross. “Pray,” He bids us. “Forgive.” And as He does, He knows full well that forgiveness is hard work. Holding on to hurt and pain is easy, but abiding in and by Christ’s forgiveness is a matter of faith, and faith comes by hearing, and hearing comes from spending time in God’s Word. That faithfulness can be quite involved, because it is Christ at work in us. It is how the Word of God works on us. And like anything worth having in this world, it can sometimes seem quite difficult. But work on us He does. And we are able to forgive, willing to forgive, because we have already been forgiven. Holding a grudge may seem like fun for a time, but the joy and peace given in the cross of Christ are enduring and holy. And so we pray, and we forgive, because we have already been forgiven in Him.

Engaged in Whole-hearted Forgiveness

Recently, our school named *Picking Cotton: Our Memoir of Injustice and Redemption* as book of the year. The authors spoke on campus. Jennifer Thompson was raped as a college student. Her testimony identified Ronald Cotton as the rapist. However, after eleven years in prison, he was exonerated by DNA evidence. Later, Ronald met Jennifer and assured her of his forgiveness, an act resulting in an abiding Christian friendship. It led to their joint authorship of this book, which bears witness to Christ's reconciling power. Joseph had reason to seek revenge. His brothers had dealt treacherously. Their bloodthirst seemed to be overcome only by love of money. So, instead of killing the "dreamer," they sold him to Egyptian traders. From then on, Joseph's life was marked by other serious setbacks. Though sold into slavery, falsely accused of rape, thrown into prison, forgotten by those who could have effected his release, Joseph refused to live with an unforgiving spirit. Through Jesus' work, God empowers us to live as free people—free from the need for revenge, free to forgive, free to bring the message of hope.



Repentance and Forgiveness

Jonah was upset. He knew that if he called the Ninevites to repentance, they might do just that. He also knew that God would act the same way God always acts when people repent. "God relented of the disaster that He had said He would do to them" (Jonah 3:10). Yep, sure enough, God did exactly what He told Jonah He would do if they repented. It wasn't fair. These were wicked and sinful people. How many times have we heard of a death-row inmate's last-minute confession, and that a priest absolved him immediately? Unfair, we murmur. Some sins are too despicable to be forgiven. God does exactly what He promises to do to all who confess their sins. Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the whole world, despicable or not. Just as He promised, for Jesus' sake, God forgives any and all who confess their sins to Him and seek His forgiveness in Christ. It's unfair that God would punish His Son instead of us. God expects

us, His forgiven people, to be unfair as well. We too are to readily and eagerly forgive when others confess their sins to us.



The Forgiveness of Our Sins

We would be most miserable in our daily life without the forgiveness of our sins! If we did not have the sure and certain knowledge and conviction that all our sins have been fully and freely forgiven, we could not have the absolute certain hope that God did not charge our sins to our account and will not punish us for our sins! All of us are sinners in the eyes of God. At the moment of conception, we inherited original sin, the total corruption of our entire human nature (Psalm 51:5). We daily commit sins of commission, doing what God forbids, and sins of omission, not doing what God commands us to do. We all deserve to be punished by God because of our sins (Romans 6:23). No matter how many good thoughts we have, good words we speak, or good deeds we do, God demands absolute perfection (Matthew 5:48). There is only forgiveness through Christ and Christ alone (see Psalm 103:2–3; 2 Corinthians 5:19). It is totally undeserved, with absolutely no cooperation from us! It is a free gift from a gracious God! We are the sons and daughters of God alone by His grace!



A Family of Forgiveness

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Giving Forgiveness

In a high school science class, students were given two identical candles, one lit and one not. The class measured the size of the flame on the lit candle and calculated the light and heat it gave off. Then they touched the wicks of the two candles together, creating two flames. They again measured the light and heat output of the first candle. They found no change in the first candle after igniting the second. The second flame was measured and had similar results as the first. A third candle was lit from the second; the results were still the same. The one change they did find was that the amount of light and heat increased as more candles were lit. Sharing God's forgiveness works much like a candle. Because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, your sins are forgiven and you receive the gift of faith; your candle is lit. As one who has received forgiveness and faith, you are called to share Jesus' love and forgiveness with others. When people hurt your feelings or do damage to you in some way, you are to extend to them the very same forgiveness you have received from Jesus. When you do that, you share the light of God's love with them. And the forgiveness you have from Jesus doesn't shrink at all—it spreads more light to others.

Forgiveness: Past, Present, and Future

Many Christians have wondered, “Did God forgive Adam and Eve?” God covered them with “garments of skins.” Through this first animal sacrifice, God conveyed the concept of atonement—a sin covering—to this penitent couple (Genesis 3:21). God continued to convey forgiveness through the sacrifice of innocent animals, but because they were slain to release only from past sins, animal sacrifices would have to be repeated. These animal sacrifices could bring forgiveness because Jesus “appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” Jesus is the sole source of forgiveness. His sacrifice on the cross flowed with forgiveness, providing forgiveness into all of time—past, present, and future—so that even Adam and Eve, believing in the coming Savior, could receive forgiveness. Into the Old Testament animal sacrifices, Christ’s atoning death provided the gift of forgiveness. Now Christ’s once-for-all sacrifice provides forgiveness so that penitent sinners can be cleansed by the blood of His one sacrifice.



Farmer’s Advice

Have you heard this bit of advice from farmers? “Your fences need to be horse-high, pig-tight, and bull-strong.” Another bit: “Forgive your enemies; it messes up their heads.” Conventional wisdom tells us that enemies grind their teeth at each other and think of the other only in the worst terms. But what if we took the first step and forgave? Would it mess up their heads? In the Lord’s Prayer, our Lord teaches about forgiveness. He tells us to forgive one another as we have been forgiven. The story of the ungrateful servant who is forgiven a huge debt but then demands payment of a much smaller sum gives us a negative image of this principle. Instead of forgiving the smaller amount owed to him, he demands justice. But forgiveness is not about justice. We do not get the justice we deserve. Instead, Jesus trades places with us! He took the punishment for

sins so that we can have the benefits of salvation. Daily, we sin in thought, word, and deed, and rightfully deserve punishment. Instead, God forgives our huge debt, and now, out of gratefulness to God, we turn to our neighbors and forgive those little slights.



From Victim to Victor

When someone does something hurtful to us, we become the victim of his actions. We might believe there is nothing we can do about our victim status, but that's not true. Jesus demonstrated how His forgiveness, flowing through our lives, transforms us from victims to victors. While suffering on the cross, Jesus prayed for His accusers. He refused to let the hatred of His enemies change His heart or dictate His actions. Instead, He willingly suffered indignity and death at their hands. "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57). This victory— although hidden in earthly means—is delivered to you in God's Word and the water of Holy Baptism, and as Christ feeds you His body and blood in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper.



Not to Forget

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Parable of the Two Sons: Attitude Adjustment

The boys in this story from Matthew had attitude. Attitude is that intangible quality that drives parents crazy. A child may say words that are completely acceptable, but with an attitude that exudes disrespect and rebellion. In this case, one boy said the wrong words but later changed his attitude; the other said the right words with a wrong attitude. Which is better? Neither! Both boys were exhibiting the sin that discolors relationships with others and disrespects God. Changing somebody else's attitude is like pushing rope. The more force you apply, the more crooked the shape becomes. Jesus told this story because some Jewish leaders appeared to do right outwardly, but inwardly they did not please God. Others, who outwardly sinned, were declared righteous because God forgave them. God's Word is a warning and a comfort. Beware of thinking you are pleasing God by talking about doing right, and don't give up hope because you have disobeyed and rebelled. God can replace your sinful attitude with the attitude of Jesus, who forgives your sin and makes you His humble and obedient disciple.v

“Which Is Easier?”

Lying before Jesus was a man whose physical paralysis kept him confined to bed and whose spiritual paralysis (sin) kept him from God. Jesus dealt first with the greater problem. He forgave the sin. The teachers of the law, who did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God, accused Him of blasphemy—only God can forgive sins. Jesus had not offered sacrifices and asked God to forgive; no, Christ had spoken the words of forgiveness Himself. Their charge of blasphemy revealed their hearts and their unbelief. Christ looked into their minds, saw the question, and, so that they would see the power of God in Him, healed the man’s physical paralysis. The paralytic became a walking witness to God’s glory. All of us also lie before the Christ of God. Certainly, we may be sick in body; if nothing else, we are day by day getting closer to the grave. But we all have a greater sickness, the sickness of sin. To each of us, Jesus says, “Your sins are forgiven you” (Luke 5:20). Our sins, all of them, are forgiven through no effort of ours but only by the grace and power of God. Our sins, those barriers between us and the love of God, are removed forever. Forgiveness is ours. Salvation is ours. We are God’s own. Let us praise His holy name!



The Ungodly Forgiven?

God appointed Christ to be sin for all. Jesus covered all sins by shedding His blood. That is the heart of the Gospel. It is also true, according to God’s Law, that every sin had to be punished. Therefore, all who believe that their sins have been forgiven and that Christ bore the punishment for those sins have eternal life. Christ’s death and resurrection makes it possible to believe this. Christ suffered the punishment for sin. He was the once-for-all sacrifice for sin. Christ’s resurrection was God’s proclamation that payment was made for sins. God’s wrath against your sin was satisfied. Our death-deserving sins were made Christ’s responsibility. His purity, holiness, and innocence were given to us. What a miraculous exchange! The Father now looks at us through Christ. Covered with Christ’s righteousness, we are able to stand righteous before Him.

His perfect keeping of the Law is credited to us. Even though salvation— forgiveness of sins—was accomplished for all, it becomes ours only through faith. Paul writes, “For by grace you have been saved through faith” (Ephesians 2:8). Through faith, as Christ’s ambassadors, we are charged to proclaim forgiveness of sins to all. What a God! What a Savior! What a privilege!



Repentance Is Hard Work

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I Can't Forgive Myself

We've heard the words more than once: "I know God forgives me, but I just can't forgive myself." Pop culture has displayed the message, and we've fallen for it—we must forgive ourselves in order to move on. But our gracious God has a different message for us: Christ's sacrifice on the cross eliminates the need for us to forgive ourselves for our sin. As the author of Hebrews points out, if our forgiveness relies on our doing something, then that forgiveness really has no effect at all, outside of creating guilt. Will forgiving ourselves free us from our sin? No, it subconsciously puts the focus on us instead of humbling us before our Lord in the knowledge that we don't deserve to be forgiven. Jesus' offering on the cross made us holy once for all time. He fulfilled the first covenant. No more sacrifices, no more of us "do-ing" to gain our cleansing. When David was caught in horrific sin, he professed that he trusted God's forgiveness (Psalm 51:7). If God made him clean, he was clean—no strings attached. Done deal. If God has taken our filth away, what is there left for us to do? Let us not make little the pronounced forgiveness of God.



Do I Have to Share Heaven with Him?

"Eeewww!" Children say this when they see something particularly disgusting. Among the Old Testament kings (and ancestors of Jesus!), there is one king who deserves the word particularly well. Manasseh was the son of good king Hezekiah. But what a contrast he was to his father! Idolatry, blasphemy, murder, witchcraft and necromancy, even burning his own children alive as offerings to false gods. Surely if ever a man were a hopeless case, it was he. And yet we are told that in the end, he repented and God forgave and restored him. Eeewww! We might say, "That man's sin is too horrible. Do not forgive him, Lord!" Who wants Manasseh as a neighbor in heaven? Yet, when we see our own evil as God must see it, it is easy to think God should not forgive us either. But God chooses

differently. God offers forgiveness freely to even the worst of sinners—yes, and even to us. No matter how horrible the sin, God removes it from us. Jesus takes it away, nailing it to His cross, where He paid the whole price for our redemption. And now He gives us His righteousness, and we share in His resurrection life.



Why Forgive?

Forgiveness isn't popular today. Getting even is. Suing is. Holding grudges is. Our hearts tell us to get revenge, to make sure we're treated fairly. Don't we have a right to be angry, a right to make others pay? Why should we forgive? The last words of Ephesians 4:32 give the reason: in Christ, God forgives us. Jesus won that right when He died on the cross, and for His sake the Father now accepts us as perfect. And, yes, God really does blot out every evil thought, word, and deed, over and over again. In forgiveness, we who deserve hell get heaven instead. When in faith we cherish that undeserved gift, we can't help but pass it on to others. The amazing thing is that in forgiving others, we're helped too. Bitterness, anger, and hate disappear as our hearts begin to love those who have hurt us. What a surprise for people expecting retaliation! What an opportunity to share God's saving work with fellow sinners in need of God's love! God's grace, given and shared, frees us from evil thoughts and deeds. The world might scorn us for letting go of hurts and following God's path. They don't understand that we who love Christ know an important secret: forgiveness is a gift that keeps on giving.



Forgiven; Forgiving

It is sad when people carry grudges and stubbornly refuse to forgive one another. We all know people who refuse to grant forgiveness. It is simple for us to point at such unforgiving people. However, we need to remember that when we point a finger at someone else, three fingers point back at us! At times, we, whether in thoughts, desires, words, or deeds, have not forgiven our neighbor. Our example for forgiveness is Jesus, who on the cross asked His Father to forgive His enemies: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). The reason we forgive is because God for Jesus’ sake has forgiven us all our sins. On Calvary’s cross, the Father laid upon Jesus all our sins—their guilt and punishment. Because of what Jesus has done for us, all of our sins are no longer charged to our account, but are freely and fully forgiven! They have been hurled “into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:19). God has forgiven us, and His love motivates and energizes us to forgive our neighbor, not unwillingly or grudgingly, but willingly and graciously. When we forgive sins, we do not remember them. We forgive and forget, even as Christ has forgiven and forgotten our sins!



New-Day Forgiveness

Shadows become long late in the day. As nightfall creeps into the sky, the lower angle of the sun casts a longer shadow. Slight shadows at noon become giants in the evening; foot-long shadows in the middle of the day grow to great proportions as the day draws to a close. Similarly, anger becomes stronger later in the day. As nightfall creeps in, something small that occurred in the morning can cast a long shadow in your heart. Small annoyances at the beginning of the day become great offenses the longer they fester. Minor hurts multiply as the day wears on and grow to great proportions as the sun sets on your anger. The power of anger can be far-reaching if you let the sun set without forgiveness. Christ empowers us to forgive and be reconciled. Through His life, death, and resurrection, He has brought a new day of forgiveness into our lives. We are forgiven

and reconciled with God in Christ Jesus. We are now able to forgive and reconcile with others. God did not let the sun set on His anger toward our sin; in Christ, God makes us agents of new-day forgiveness.



Questioning God's Forgiveness

Have you ever doubted God's forgiveness? Have you ever wondered how God could forgive a sin that you have committed repeatedly? or a sin you consider heinous? If Satan cannot stop God from bestowing mercy on us, he will tempt us to question God's forgiveness. Even Job asked God why He had not forgiven him. Was God refusing to cleanse Job of his sins? When we question God's forgiveness, we should go to the objective Word of God. The apostle John declares, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). God forgives us, not because we deserve it, but because Jesus paid the ultimate price for our sins—death and damnation. Jesus cried out in anguish from the cross, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46). He was totally forsaken by the Father because He bore upon Himself the sins of the whole world, including ours. He cleanses us from all unrighteousness. "Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Psalm 32:1). May we bask in the peace and comfort of God's forgiving grace.



The Gift of Repentance

The pastor was explaining repentance to his class: “Luther defined repentance as consisting of contrition, that is, sorrow for sins, and faith in the Gospel.” One bright eighth grader asked, “How much sorrow is enough?” There are sins over which we are genuinely sorrowful. But others, not so much. Some sins we do delightedly, and our sorrow over them might not even register on the contrition meter. Truly, we are never completely sorrowful over all our transgressions. If forgiveness were dependent on our feeling a certain intensity of contrition, we would never reach a level sufficient to satisfy God’s expectations, and that would make forgiveness the result of a human work and cancel out Christ’s death for us. To repent is to be sorrowful for our sins, however slight or grave that sorrow is, and to confess that we have sinned against God and others. Once confession is made, faith receives the gift of grace our heavenly Father offers us in Christ, whose suffering, death, and resurrection has purchased the forgiveness for all our sins. John promises, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).



Casting a Shadow of Grace

A shadow points to something real. Lanky limbs of a tree cast a sprawling shadow across the ground. Tall towers slice through the sunlight and spread shadows across the cityscape. Silhouettes follow people as they walk through the park in the afternoon sunlight. Without the presence of something real, there is no shadow to be cast. Shadows need something of substance in order to exist. There are shadows of Christ in many places. The Old Testament feasts are a shadow of Christ’s mercy seen on the cross. The love you share with others is a shadow of Christ’s love shown to His people. The forgiveness you offer to your neighbor is a shadow of Christ’s forgiveness offered to all. To be certain, our hope is not in the shadows. Rather, our hope is in the One casting the long shadow throughout all time and eternity: Jesus Christ. Without Christ, we are merely chasing after shadows. Without His mercy, love, and forgiveness, we have nothing. We

not only recount His deeds, but also through us, He enacts deeds of mercy, love, and forgiveness. His presence in our lives lets us cast God's grace into all things.



Hope for Relationships

“It’s all about relationships!” the seasoned CEO lectured his brash young executive. The MBA marvel managed to wow everyone with brilliant, out-of-the-box strategies and impressive results, but he usually left people in his dust. His Christian boss wanted him to know that relational virtues are important. Virtues such as love, kindness, and patience must characterize all of our relationships—even at work. Where Jesus is, there is hope for relationships. No one learned that more directly than Simon Peter. Three times, Peter denied knowing Jesus at the crucial moment of Jesus’ trial and Passion. After His resurrection, Jesus gave Peter three opportunities to affirm his love. With Jesus’ forgiveness, Peter was readied for renewed service and leadership in the Church. His role of shepherding God’s flock would flow from his personal relationship with his risen Lord. Today, Jesus still asks, “Do you love Me?” To answer “Yes” makes one’s life carefully shaped by God’s grace and forgiveness a life He has perfected for you. In turn, your earthly relationships are characterized by your forgiving others.



“Father, Forgive Them”

The words had barely slipped out of Carrie’s mouth when she wanted to take them back. She knew they were cruel, and they weren’t even true! But at the moment, in the heat of the argument, she wanted to injure this friend who had betrayed her. Contrary to the “sticks and stones” childhood rhyme, words do hurt us. We rehearse them over and over in our heads. The thoughtless comment a stranger made about your weight. The words of anger spoken by those closest to you. That tiny tongue gets us into mighty trouble. James compares the tongue to a horse’s bit and a ship’s rudder. In both cases, something small directs the movement of the larger entity. One wrong turn could lead to a wreck. That’s similar to the way our words direct our lives. Are our conversations filled with the grace of Christ, or are they cruel and sarcastic? No one is perfect in his speech. From our sinful hearts come all sorts of nasty things. Yet there is One whose words were perfect. Jesus’ life-giving words from the cross, “Father, forgive them,” spoke that forgiveness into action as He gave Himself for us. Jesus, the Word of God, forgives our stumbling, bumbling ways, and in His words we continue to find comfort and peace.



Your Sins Are Forgiven

Why, it’s as easy as 1, 2, 3, as easy as shooting fish in a barrel, as easy as pie. In other words, it’s easy! However, when it comes to forgiving others, well, that can be as hard as a rock. Especially when they don’t care or think they’ve done nothing wrong. So, we’ll cling to our hurt, harden our hearts, and relive the act over and over again only to wind up paralyzed in anger. And just like the paralytic, we cannot cure ourselves. We need to do what the paralytic’s friends did for him— carry our hurt and anger to Jesus. Then hear Him say to us as well, “Your sins are forgiven.” That’s right, our sins. The sinful thoughts, words, and deeds that we have done, not just to the one who hurt us, but also to those whom we ourselves have hurt, are forgiven. Our greatest need, like that of the paralytic, is our Lord’s forgiveness. Only then are we able to rise up from the bed we our-

Forgiven

Jesus tells the story of two men who enter the temple to pray (Luke 18:9–14). One of them enters with his head high and chest puffed out. As he moves confidently down the center aisle, Jesus says he prays with himself: “Thank You, God, for making me, me.” The other man enters the temple by a side door and stands back in the shadows, as if frozen in place. He doesn’t deserve to come any closer to the altar of a just and perfect God. With head held low, he pounds his chest and quietly whispers, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” Today, the Church remembers Peter and Paul. Both of these men knew how to walk in the shadow of their past, in need of forgiveness. They also came to know God’s mercy and forgiveness in a Savior. The same Savior is ours—Jesus Christ. A friend told me of a visit he made to a cemetery out East, where he came across a gravestone with just one word engraved on it: “Forgiven.” In Christ Jesus, that word is God’s word to us, in life now and forever.



Forgiven and Living

Habakkuk’s strong, prophetic voice spoke against violence, oppression, lying, vanity, idolatry, injustice, theft, robbery, lawsuits, and disputes. “I preach and show them their wickedness; I call them back from violence and injustices, but they hardly listen.” Is there such a strong prophetic voice speaking today? Or has even the Christian Church become silent? The few righteous people in Judah were surrounded by the wicked, who thwarted any efforts to reestablish the authority of God’s Law. God’s Law was paralyzed, a dead letter. Today is little different, as the authority of God’s Law is hardly acknowledged. Habakkuk was patient. God answered in a vision that the promise of a Savior given to Adam and Eve would be fulfilled in saving the people of Judah. He says clearly, “If you believe it, you will live, because the righteous lives by faith as long as you wait for the Lord.” These words cannot be understood by our sinful nature, but by faith alone we understand and believe. Godly people waiting for the Lord live. By faith, they receive what has been promised: the gracious forgiveness of sins

given through Christ's saving work on the cross. Yes, the righteous shall live by his faith.



The Past That Equips

The records of our pasts often speak to us. Aren't we all too familiar with the voice that condescends, telling us that we are not "properly" equipped to serve Jesus? No seminary schooling, no résumé of outstanding Christian service, no picture-perfect high school yearbook in our closets. Perhaps we feel much more like the immoral woman. Instead of olive oil, we have garish perfume left over from our shameful nights on the street. No water to wash our Lord's feet, just tears of repentance from a broken heart. No towel to dry them, just our hair—each strand numbered by our Lord. The things we think should disqualify us from serving the Lord can be the very things that do qualify us for what God is calling us to do. Just as the immoral woman used the pieces of her past life to wash her Savior's feet, we, too, can let past events be as tools to Christ. The incredible depth of God's forgiveness toward us for the sake of His Son creates our loving response to Him. Let us come weep over His feet and anoint them with our repentance. He will equip us for His holy service.



Forgiving and Forgetting

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Chasing the White Whale

One of the classic New England sea stories is Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick*. It’s the story of a captain named Ahab, whose quest for the whale that maimed him ends in disaster. His desire for revenge became so consuming that everyone around him, save one, perished. Too often, our faith is challenged by an unkind remark, a betrayal, or some other perceived injustice. Our first, and often lasting, reaction is to get even, or to inflict on someone else the pain and hurt we feel. The willingness to forgive comes at a great price. However, so is the price for the unwillingness to let go of a wrong. With eyes turned out from the cross, Jesus once gazed upon all who screamed for His blood. In those eyes, and blood, was forgiveness for all who had sought to bring Him, and us, harm. So how joyous the freedom, when sins, both our own and another’s, are forgiven! Moreover, how joyous the day when in His name our expressions of forgiveness would release another. In so doing, we rejoice in the redemption that makes all of us whole.