

Let's Visit

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Reflections on Forgiveness

Imagine being in Jerusalem on that fateful Friday that Jesus died. It was a day that changed the world. No doubt the excitement of that hour was contagious. There was excitement because three men were going to be executed. Three men were about to pay the death penalty for their crimes. Two of them were revolutionists and one was a prophet from Nazareth. The excitement was heightened as they were all well known. The crowd that had gathered was eager for the show because they had a natural love of the gruesome.

Not only were all three well known, they were all three popular. The revolutionists were ardent patriots. Having fought like men, they would die like men. The assembled crowd looked upon them as heroes. The young prophet had also been popular. He still was.

However, most of those around the cross were hostile. Having nailed the young prophet to the cross, they would not let him die in peace. Even the revolutionists added their insults to those of the mob. Yet, something happened that silenced one of the revolutionists. Then, it changed his insults into prayers. He heard the young prophet on the central cross pray. He listened as he talked to the heavenly Father. He said, "*Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.*"

This is one of the most amazing utterances on the pages of history. Jesus had been hounded, betrayed and denied. He had been tried before an unjust court. He was led out of the city and nailed to a cross. Yet, his first word from the cross was not a complaint. It was not a plea for his own innocence. It was not a cry for vengeance on his enemies. Rather, it was a prayer for their forgiveness.

Reading his prayer for forgiveness implies he has forgiven them. You see, only a man with a forgiving soul can pray such a prayer.

The need for forgiveness among folks today is great. There are many whose lives are unstained by sensuality. They are as far from immorality as east is from west. They attend church services with regularity. They are highly esteemed by their fellowman. Yet, often they carry enough malice in their hearts to damn their souls.

God is not cruel, harsh or stern in his dealings with his children. Throughout the Bible He is represented as a God of mercy. He is much more willing to forgive and forget than we are. Blessed is the man or woman in whose heart is found "the quality of mercy". That man or woman who holds no malice. One who has learned to forgive men their trespasses. This man or woman is God like. They are God's man or God's woman. They shall receive God's mercy.

We must have the grace of forgiveness in our hearts. We must show mercy and forgiveness to our Judases who prize us less highly than they do money. Judas must have known something of Jesus' beautiful life, tender compassion and marvelous power. Yet, Judas sold him for 30 pieces of silver. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that

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In Search Of The Lord's Way



Tune in to this Television Ministry
KSLA 12 – Shreveport -7:30 a.m. Sunday
DISH channel 239-6:00 a.m. Sunday
DIRECT TV channel 307 -6:00 a.m. Sunday

Gathered Here and There



Today's Sermon

“Sufficient To Meet Life’s Difficulties”

Our text comes from Job 6:15-17. Job’s friends failed him in his great hour of need. We explore how we can succeed where they failed.

FOR THE PANTRY....

Canned Pasta

Reflections On Forgiveness – continued from page 1

Jesus was ready and willing to forgive a penitent Judas. There are those who would pretend to be our friend that would sell us for a minor consideration. We must not deal severely with them, rather let us lend them a helping hand.

We must also forgive our unfaithful friends. Those that would forsake and desert us in a time of critical need. When the mob entered Gethsemane and laid hold on Jesus, the disciples forsook him and fled. When Jesus saw them after the resurrection, he dealt kindly with them. He called them “my brethren”. There may come a time in your life when you fall into heartless hands in an hour of misfortune. Your friends, some of them, may desert you. Hold no malice against them but rather seek their fellowship. Include them in the circle of “your brethren”.

Forgive the Simons who are too weak to know you in your hour of trial. You remember the boast that Simon Peter made? Yet, just a few hours after making the boast he would never forsake Jesus, he cursed and swore and said that he did not know the Lord. Peter loved the Lord, that is a fact, but he was moved from his loyalty by a concern for his personal safety. The disciple denied the Master, but the Master did not deny the disciple. After Jesus

was raised from the dead, he found Simon and restored him.

There are times that our friends will be what we call “fair weather friends”. They will desert us, they will desert the church when they are needed the most. Though it is our first inclination, we must not deal severely with them. They are in desperate need of forgiveness.

We must forgive because we have been forgiven. Jesus taught a parable about this in Matthew chapter 18. The servant in that story owed his Lord what would be millions of dollars today. His fellow servant owed this servant what would be \$100.00 in our world today. Yet, the servant forgiven of the debt in the millions was willing to extract the \$100 pittance from his fellow servant.

We must forgive lest malice multiply in our soul and stifle every noble impulse. If we do not forgive, hatred will rob us of the joy of the Christian life. If we do not forgive, enmity will embitter us and take from our soul the sweetness that has been planted there by Jesus.

We live in a world of conflict and competition. If the grace of God is not in our heart and soul, malice will mount up, pile on pile until our hearts become dark and dead. We cannot yield to the temptation of wanting to dispose of those who wrong us. The heaviest of all hearts is the unforgiving heart and we cannot live together, work together and enjoy the Christian life together until we learn to forgive.

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On The Lighter Side....



Miscellaneous

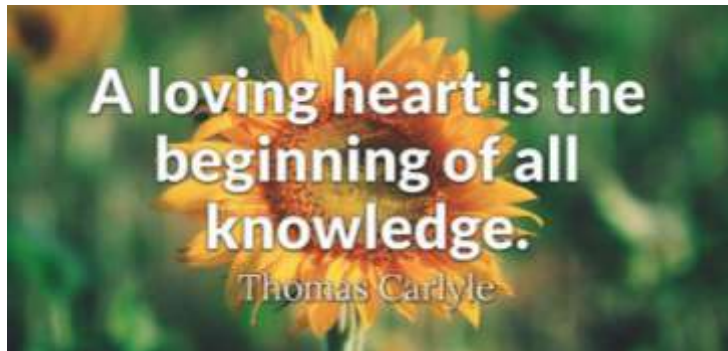


Save The Date!
Sunday June 6th

Tentatively, this will be our next Covered Dish Luncheon.

Remember-

We are collecting toilet paper for the Children's Home of Lubbock. There is a basket in the foyer for you to place the toilet paper in. They will be here the end of May to pick up what we have collected. Let's make sure they have a trailer load!



Remember, while we are not requiring masks, we still want to be respectful of others "personal space" and also we will still sit "socially distanced" for the time being. Hopefully, as the number of cases locally declines and the number of people vaccinated increases we can return to a more normal way of doing things!



Those To Remember In Prayer

CONGRATULATIONS to Gene and Martha Bradshaw on the birth of a new great grandson. Benjamin Dale Bradshaw, 20 inches long and 8 pounds plus. Proud great-grandparents!

Betty Miller is scheduled to receive the results of her CAT scan this week.

Wayne Sims got a good report from his biopsy and is cancer free at this point.

Debra Pate will be having further tests at CHI Health in San Augustine April 7th.

THOSE WITH ONGOING NEEDS:

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Roxie Bostick (back issues) **Gene Bradshaw** (recovering from surgery), **Martha Jean Golden** (recovering from a fall) **Debra Pate** (waiting for more tests from a recent mild stroke) **Jerry Pate** (knee replacement surgery scheduled for April) **Wayne Sims** (cancer);

"EXTENDED FAMILY" AND FRIENDS

Cody Butler (Debra Pate's grandson) **Paul Cocklin** (co-worker of Norma Perkins) **Peytin Cook** (Betty Miller's great-granddaughter) **Gracie Elam** (6 month old baby recovering from heart surgery) **Dalton Hendrix** (Joyce Holt's great-great nephew) **Lamar McCormick** (friend of Sarah Fletcher, multiple health issues) **Jared and Natalie Tate** (Mike and Roxie's son and daughter-in-law) **Pat Tate** (Jana O'Brien's mother)

THOSE IN THE MILITARY AND FOREIGN SERVICE

Amanda Bradshaw, Leland Bradshaw, Lucas Tate

If you want someone added to the prayer list, please fill out a card and put it in the offering plate.

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It isn't the things in the Bible I don't understand that worry me, it's the things I do understand.

To reform some people, you would have to begin with their grandfather.

Worry is putting the sunshine of today behind the clouds of tomorrow.



Across The Preacher's Desk

We read in Mark chapter 6 that Jesus and the disciples were trying to get away from the crowd of people for a little peace and quiet. They needed some R & R as we would say. Yet, Mark tells us the multitude followed and Jesus spent the day teaching them. The "day was far spent", evening was coming and the great crowd of people needed to be fed. In Mark chapter 6 and verse 38 Jesus asks the disciples, "How many loaves have ye?"

Jesus was not asking for information, he knew how many loaves they had. Neither was he asking because he could not feed the multitude without their loaves. Jesus wanted those disciples then and all disciples of all ages to know that He is to bless others through them. He wanted them to know, and he wants us to know, that we must be willing to use what we have or give it into his hands that others might be blessed.

The disciples in that far off day did not have enough for themselves, but when they surrendered what they had to Jesus, it increased sufficiently to feed themselves and the multitude with more left over than they had at the beginning. It is not how much we have, but how much faith we have in what Jesus can do with what we have.

Jesus says to us, "How many loaves have ye?" We must never say or think "not enough". When we surrender it all to Jesus, when we commit it to Him, we have more than enough.

it's something to think about. . . .tlp

**Great Churches are built with
Commitment!**