

THE PAIN STOPS HERE:



Learning the art of forgiveness...

The parable of the unmerciful servant

- Matthew 18:21-35 (NIV)
- Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, **"I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times..."**
- The servant's master took pity on him, **canceled the debt** and let him go.
- "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. **Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?**'"

When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals... Jesus said, "**Father, forgive them, they do not know what they are doing.**" ... they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One."

The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."

Luke 23:33-37 (NIV)



Forgiveness is not:

1. Forgetting
2. Condoning
3. Reconciliation

Our Response :

1. We pass it back (revenge)
2. We pass it around (Anger)
3. We carry it (Burdened)

Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord (Romans 12:19 NIV)

“Dying” to ourselves...

- Tim Keller:
- “The first option is to **seek ways to make the perpetrators suffer for what they have done**. You can withhold relationship and actively initiate or passively wish for some kind of pain in their lives commensurate to what you experienced[...]
“There is another option, however. **You can forgive**. Forgiveness means refusing to make them pay for what they did. However, **to refrain from lashing out at someone when you want to do so with all your being is agony**. It is a form of suffering...Many people would say it feels like a kind of death.
“Yes, but **it is a death that leads to resurrection** instead of the life-long living death of bitterness and cynicism...Forgiveness must be granted before it can be felt, but it does come eventually. It leads to a new peace, a resurrection. It is the only way to stop the spread of the evil”
- (The Reason For God 188-89)

The Pain Stops Here

- [*A Hidden Wholeness*](#), Parker Palmer writes:
- ...the cross says "**the pain stops here**". *The way of the cross is absorbing pain, not passing it on, a way that transforms pain from destructive impulse to creative force. When Jesus accepted the cross, his death opened up a channel for the redeeming power of love. When we accept the crosses and contradictions in our lives, we allow that same power to flow.*
- *But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because **Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps ... they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. (1 Peter 2:20b-25 NIV)***

Reflective Questions:

- How do I respond to being wronged?
 - Pass it back (are you playing revenge pong with anyone?)
 - Pass it around (are you easily irritated and letting a past wrong dictate your attitude towards those around you?)
 - Carry it (Are you shouldering a heavy burden?)
- Am I holding on to bitterness and resentment?
- Do I believe God can free me?
- ***"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.***
 - (Matthew 5:23-24 NIV)