

The High Calling

a bimonthly publication of The Francis Asbury Society

Forgiveness: Deeper than the Stain Has Gone

By Stan Key

An oft-repeated anecdote about C. S. Lewis tells of his arriving late to a meeting of theologians who were discussing what makes Christianity distinct. After hours of debate, the scholars just couldn't agree. Supposedly, learning of the discussion, Lewis replied, "That's easy: the forgiveness of sins."

This issue of *The High Calling* is devoted to the topic of forgiveness. The articles treat both the vertical dimension (God's forgiveness) and the horizontal dimension (our need to forgive one another) of this revolutionary possibility. Whether your struggle relates to finding peace with God or to being reconciled with your brother/sister, this magazine has something for you.

Forgiveness reminds us that not even God can change the past. The sins and mistakes we have committed, as well as those perpetrated against us, are now part of the permanent record

of our lives. God did not create a "delete" button to enable us to deal with the damage. He did something much more profound. He sent his Son to take upon himself the guilt, shame, and pain of our past. On the cross, he absorbed it all, like a sponge, so that the poison could be taken out of us! His death on Calvary not only reconciles us to God but gives us the basic tools we need to make broken relationships right with one another.



Continued on page 12

The Most Troubling Part of the Lord's Prayer

By Peter Kreeft



Peter Kreeft is a professor of philosophy at Boston College and the King's College and has authored many books on philosophy, theology, and apologetics. Though writing from the Roman Catholic tradition, Kreeft's works are grounded in the Bible and historical orthodoxy. The following article is an abridged and slightly edited rendition of the chapter "Forgiveness" in his book *Fundamentals of the Faith* (Ignatius Press, 1988: 222–30).

Forgiveness implies sin, for what is forgiven is sin: both sins and sin, both actual sins and original sin, both deeds and doer, what we do and what we are. Without the consciousness of sin, Christianity is meaningless: a needlessly complex divine operation for a nonexistent disease—that is what the modern world thinks of Christianity. Until they perceive the disease (sin), people will not come to the hospital (the church). Or if they do come, they will come for the wrong reason, thinking the church a museum for saints rather than a hospital for sinners.

Jesus says, simply and starkly, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" [see Mt 9:13]. This is deliberately ironic. Jesus is implying that those who think they are well are the sickest of all, in fact incurable. The unforgiveable sin can only be one thing: the refusal of forgiveness.

The way to come to know the first necessary truth about ourselves—that we are sinners in need of forgiveness—is to get to know the all-holy, all-just, uncompromising, unbribable, character of God. This is why the Lord's Prayer begins with adoration. We know God by adoring him, and we know ourselves in light of him rather than him in light of ourselves. Knowing God, we will then know our need for forgiveness. By human standards most of us are "good people," and we wonder "why bad things happen to good people." But by God's standards, there are no "good people": "There is no one righteous, no not one" [see Ecc 7:20; Rom 3:10] and the mystery is rather why good things happen to bad people.

We are to pray for forgiveness in the double conviction that we need it and that God wants to give it. We need it as much as the lost sheep needed the shepherd, and God longs to give it to us as much as the shepherd longed to bring his lost sheep home.

But there's a catch—a necessary catch. If we do not forgive others, God will not—cannot—forgive us. This is the only petition in the Lord's Prayer that Jesus reinforces with a postscript: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" [see Mt 6:14]. The reason Jesus comments on this one petition is evidently that his disciples needed to

Continued on page 9

Forgiving Sin Does Not Mean Excusing Sin

By C. S. Lewis (1898–1963)



C. S. Lewis reminds us that forgiving sin, whether we are talking about God forgiving us or our own need to forgive others, is not the same thing as excusing sin. The distinction is of great importance if we are to fully grasp the reality of forgiveness, both at the vertical and horizontal levels. The following

article (slightly edited) is taken from Lewis' book *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (Simon & Schuster, 1962: 132–36).

We say a great many things in church without thinking of what we are saying. For instance, we say in the Creed “I believe in the forgiveness of sins.” I had been saying it for several years before I asked myself why it was in the Creed. At first sight it seems hardly worth putting in. “If one is a Christian,” I thought, “of course one believes in the forgiveness of sin. It goes without saying.” But the people who compiled the Creed apparently thought that this was a part of our belief that we needed to be reminded of every time we went to church. And I have begun to see that, as far as I am concerned, they were right. To believe in the forgiveness of sins is not nearly so easy as I thought.

We believe that God forgives us our sins; but also that he will not do so unless we forgive other people their sins against us. There is no doubt about the second part of this statement. It is in the Lord's Prayer; it was emphatically stated by our Lord. If you don't forgive, you will not be forgiven. No part of his teaching is clearer, and there are no exceptions to it. We are to forgive all sins against us, however spiteful, however mean, however often they are repeated. If we don't, we shall be forgiven none or our own.

Now it seems to me that we often make a mistake both about God's forgiveness of our sins and about the forgiveness we are told to offer to other people's sins. Take it first about God's forgiveness. I find that when I think I am asking God to forgive me, I am often in reality asking him not to forgive me but to excuse me. There is all the difference in the world between forgiving and excusing. Forgiveness says, “Yes, you have done this thing, but I accept your apology; I will never hold it against you and everything between us two will be exactly as it was before.” Excusing says, “I see that you couldn't help it or didn't mean it; you weren't really to blame.” But if one is not really to blame then there is nothing to forgive. In that sense forgiveness and excusing are almost opposites.

The trouble is that what we call “asking God's forgiveness” very often really consists in asking God to accept our excuses. What leads us into this mistake is the fact that there usually is some amount of excuse, some extenuating circumstances. We are so very anxious to point these out to God (and to ourselves) that we are apt to forget the really important thing; that is, the bit

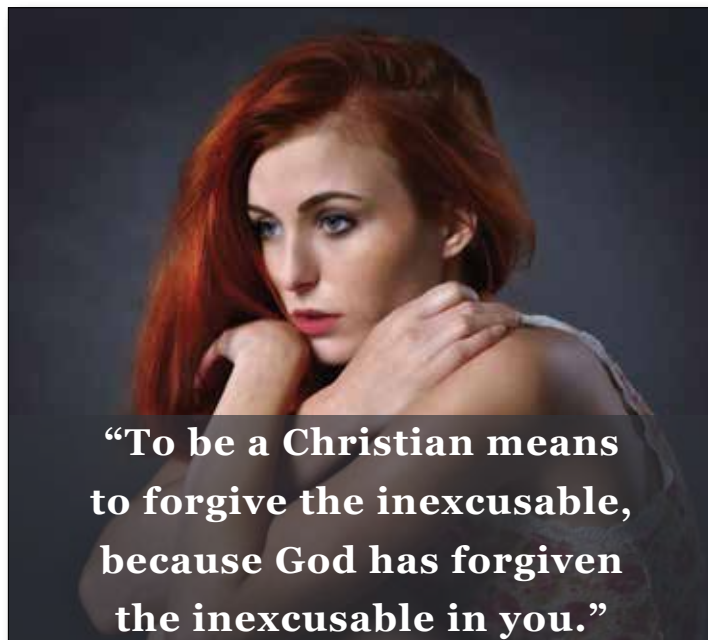
which the excuses don't cover, the bit which is inexcusable but not, thank God, unforgivable. And if we forget this, we shall go away imagining that we have repented and been forgiven when all that has really happened is that we have satisfied ourselves with our own excuses.

There are two remedies for this danger. One is to remember that God knows all the real excuses very much better than we do. If there are real extenuating circumstances there is no fear that he will overlook them. Often he must know many excuses that we have never thought of, and therefore humble souls will, after death, have the delightful surprise of discovering that on certain occasions they sinned much less than they had thought. All the real excusing, he will do. What we have got to take to him is the inexcusable bit, the sin. We are only wasting time by talking about all the parts which can (we think) be excused. When you go to a doctor you show him the bit of you that is wrong—say, a broken arm. It would be a mere waste of time to keep on explaining that your legs and eyes and throat are all right.

The second remedy is really and truly to believe in the forgiveness of sins. A great deal of our anxiety to make excuses comes from not really believing in it, from thinking that God will not take us to himself again unless he is satisfied that some sort of case can be made out in our favor. But that would not be forgiveness at all. Real forgiveness means looking steadily at the sin, the sin that is left over without any excuse after all allowances have been made, and seeing it in all its horror, dirt, meanness, and malice, and nevertheless being wholly reconciled to the man who has

done it. That, and only that, is forgiveness, and that we can always have from God if we ask for it.

When it comes to a question of our forgiving other people, it is partly the same and partly different. It is the same because, here also, forgiving does not mean excusing. Many people seem to think it does. They think that if you ask them to forgive someone who has cheated or bullied them you are trying to make out that there was really no cheating or no bullying. But if that were so, there would be nothing to forgive. They keep on replying, “But I tell you the man broke a most solemn promise.” Exactly: that is precisely what you have to forgive. (This doesn't mean that you must necessarily believe his next promise. It does mean that you must make every effort to kill every taste of resentment in your own heart—every wish to humiliate or hurt him or to pay him out.) The difference between this situation and the one in which you are asking God's forgiveness is this. In our own case we accept excuses too easily; in other people's we do not accept them easily enough. As regards my own sins it is a safe bet (though not a certainty) that the excuses are not



“To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.”

Continued on page 9

The Problem of Forgiveness

By John R. W. Stott (1921–2011)



In his classic book *The Cross of Christ* (IVP Books, 1986), John Stott lays the theological foundation for understanding forgiveness. He explains the divine dilemma God faced in finding a way to show love for sinners and, at the same time, not compromise his holiness. Slightly edited, the following article is taken from chapter four, “The Problem of Forgiveness” (89–91, 110–11).

The Christian claim that the cross of Christ is the only ground on which God forgives sins bewilders many people. “Why should our forgiveness depend on Christ’s death?” they ask. “Why does God not simply forgive us, without the necessity of the cross?” As the French cynic put it, “*le bon Dieu me pardonnera; c’est son métier.*”[†] “After all,” the objector may continue, “if we sin against one another, we are required to forgive one another. We are even warned of dire consequences if we refuse. Why can’t God practice what he preaches and be equally generous? Nobody’s death is necessary before we forgive each other. Why then does God make so much fuss about forgiving us and even declare it impossible without his Son’s sacrifice for sin?”

It is essential to ask and to face these questions. Two answers may be given to them immediately, although we will need much more space to elaborate on them. The first was supplied by Archbishop Anselm in his great book *Cur Deus Homo?* at the end of the eleventh century. If anybody imagines, he wrote, that God can simply forgive us as we forgive others, that person has “not yet considered the seriousness of sin,” or literally “what a heavy weight sin is.” The second answer might be expressed similarly: “You have not yet considered the majesty of God.” It is when our perception of God and man, or of holiness and sin, are askew that our understanding of the atonement is bound to be askew also.

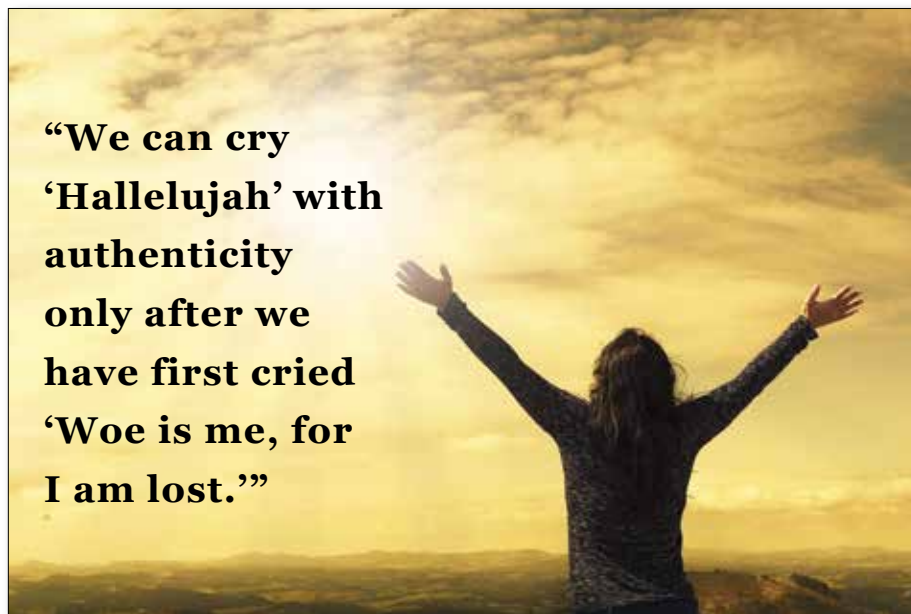
The fact is that the analogy between our forgiveness and God’s is far from being exact. True, Jesus taught us to pray: “Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.” But he was teaching the impossibility of the unforgiving being forgiven, and so the obligation of the forgiven to forgive, as is clear from the parable of the unmerciful servant; he was not drawing any parallel between God and us in relation to the *basis* of forgiveness (Mt 6:12–15; 18:21–35). For us to argue “we forgive each other unconditionally, let God do the same to us” betrays not sophistication but shallowness, since it overlooks the elementary fact that we are not God. We are private individuals, and other people’s misdemeanors are personal injuries. God is not a private individual, however, nor is sin just a personal

injury. On the contrary, God is himself the maker of the laws we break, and sin is rebellion against him.

The crucial question we should ask, therefore, is a different one. It is not why God finds it *difficult* to forgive, but how he finds it *possible* to do so at all. In the words of Carnegie Simpson, “forgiveness is to man the plainest of duties; to God it is the profoundest of problems.”

The problem of forgiveness is constituted by the inevitable collision between divine perfection and human rebellion, between God as he is and us as we are. The obstacle to forgiveness is neither our sin alone nor our guilt alone, but the divine reaction in love and wrath toward guilty sinners. For, although indeed “God is love,” yet we have to remember that his love is “holy love,” love which yearns over sinners while at the same time refusing to condone their sin. How, then, could God express his holy love—his love in forgiving sinners without compromising his holiness, and his holiness in judging sinners without frustrating his love? Confronted by human

evil, how could God be true to himself as holy love? In Isaiah’s words, how could he be simultaneously “a righteous God and a Savior” (Is 45:21)? At the cross in holy love God through Christ paid the full penalty of our disobedience himself. He bore the judgment we deserve in order to bring us the forgiveness we do not deserve. On the cross divine mercy and justice were equally expressed and eternally reconciled. God’s holy love was “satisfied.”



These notions are foreign to modern-day people. The kind of God who appeals to most people today would be easygoing in his tolerance of our offenses. He would be gentle, kind, accommodating, and would have no violent reactions. Unhappily, even in the church we seem to have lost the vision of the majesty of God. There is much shallowness and levity among us. Prophets and psalmists would probably say of us that “there is no fear of God before their eyes.” In public worship our habit is to slouch; we do not kneel nowadays, let alone prostrate ourselves in humility before God. It is more characteristic of us to clap our hands with joy than to blush with shame or tears. We saunter up to God to claim his patronage and friendship; it does not occur to us that he might send us away. We need to hear again the apostle Peter’s sobering words: “Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives . . . in reverent fear” (1 Pt 1:17). We can cry “Hallelujah” with authenticity only after we have first cried “Woe is me, for I am lost.”

[†] “The good God will forgive me; that’s his job!”

Continued on page 11

An Unnatural Act

By Philip Yancey



In his book *What's So Amazing About Grace?* (Zondervan, 1997), Philip Yancey describes why forgiveness is both so difficult and yet at the same time so indispensable. The following article is a slightly edited abridgment taken from chapter eight, "Why Forgive?" (95–107).

Why would God require of us an unnatural act that defies every primal instinct? What makes forgiveness so important, so central to our faith? From my experience as an often-forgiven, and sometimes-forgiving person, I can suggest three reasons.

First, forgiveness is the only way to break the cycle of blame—and pain—in a relationship. I readily admit that forgiveness is unfair. Hinduism, with its doctrine of *karma*, provides a far more satisfying sense of fairness. Hindu scholars have calculated with mathematical precision how long it may take for one person's justice to work itself out: for punishment to balance out all my wrongs in this life and future lives, 6,800,000 incarnations should suffice.

The bishop gave the candlesticks to his guest, now speechless and trembling. "Do not forget, do not ever forget."



Marriage gives a glimpse of the karma process at work. Two stubborn people live together, get on each other's nerves, and perpetuate the power struggle through an emotional tug-of-war. "I can't believe you forgot your own mother's birthday," says one.

"Wait a minute, aren't you supposed to be in charge of the calendar?" replies the other.

"Don't try to pass the blame to me—she's your mother."

"Yes, but I told you just last week to remind me. Why didn't you?"

"You're crazy—it's your own mother. Can't you keep track of your own mother's birthday?"

"Why should I? It's your job to remind me."

The inane dialogue bleats on and on through, say 6,800,000 cycles until at last one of the partners says, "Stop! I'll break the chain." And the only way to do so is forgiveness: *I'm sorry. Will you forgive me?*

The word *resentment* expresses what happens if the cycle goes uninterrupted. It means, literally, "to feel again": resentment clings to the past, relives it over and over, picks each fresh scab so that the wound never heals. This pattern doubtless began with the very first couple on earth. "Think of all the squabbles Adam and Eve must have had in the course of their nine hundred years," wrote Martin Luther. "Eve would say, 'You ate the apple,' and Adam would retort, 'You gave it to me.'"

Forgiveness offers a way out. It does not settle all questions of blame and fairness—often it pointedly evades those questions—but it does allow a relationship to start over, to begin anew. In that way, said Solzhenitsyn, we differ from all animals. Not our capacity to think, but our capacity to repent and to forgive makes us different. Only humans can perform that most unnatural act, which transcends the relentless law of nature.

A second reason that forgiveness is so central to our faith is that it loosens the stranglehold of guilt on us and on others. In recent years audiences worldwide have watched a drama of forgiveness played out onstage and on screen in the musical version of *Les Misérables*. The musical follows its original source, Victor Hugo's sprawling novel, in telling the story of Jean Valjean, a French prisoner hounded and ultimately transformed by forgiveness.

Sentenced to a 19-year term of hard labor for the crime of stealing bread, Jean Valjean gradually hardened into a tough convict. No one could beat him in a fistfight. No one could break his will. At last he earned his release. Convicts in those days had to carry identity cards, however, and no innkeeper would let a dangerous felon spend the night. For four days he wandered the village roads, seeking shelter, against the weather, until finally a kindly bishop had mercy on him.

That night Valjean lay still in an over-comfortable bed until the bishop and his sister drifted off to sleep. He rose from his bed, rummaged through the cupboard for the family silver, and crept off into the darkness. The next morning three policemen knocked on the bishop's door, with Valjean in tow. They had caught the convict in flight with the purloined silver, and were ready to put the scoundrel in chains for life. The bishop responded in a way that no one, especially Jean Valjean, expected:

"So here you are!" he cried to Valjean. "I'm delighted to see you. Had you forgotten that I gave you the candlesticks as well? They're silver like the rest, and worth a good 200 francs. Did you forget to take them?" Jean Valjean's eyes had widened. He was now staring at the old man with an expression no words can convey.

Continued on page 11

Confess Your Sins to One Another

By Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945)



Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German pastor, theologian, and anti-Nazi dissident who understood the indispensable place of the Christian community in the life of the disciple. In his important book *Life Together* (Harper & Row, 1954), he explains that we will never experience true forgiveness until we learn how to confess our sins to one another. This article is a slightly edited abridgment of chapter five: “Confession and Communion” (110–22).

“Confess your faults one to another” (Jas 5:16). He who is alone with his sin is utterly alone. Many churches fall short of true community because, though they have fellowship with one another as believers and as devout people, they do not have fellowship as the undevout, as sinners. The pious fellowship permits no one to be a sinner; everybody must conceal his sin from himself and from the fellowship. We dare not be sinners. Many Christians are unthinkably horrified when a real sinner is suddenly discovered among the righteous. So, we remain alone with our sin, living in lies and hypocrisy. The fact is that we *are* sinners!

It is the grace of the gospel that confronts us with the truth and says: You are a sinner, a great, desperate sinner; now come, as the sinner that you are, to God who loves you. He wants you as you are; he does not want anything from you, a sacrifice, a work; he wants you alone. God has come to you to save the sinner. Be glad! This message is liberation through truth.

You can hide nothing from God. The mask you wear before men will do you no good before him. He wants to see you as you are, he wants to be gracious to you. You do not have to go on lying to yourself and your brothers, as if you were without sin; you can dare to be a sinner. Thank God for that, he loves the sinner, but he hates sin.

Christ became our Brother in the flesh. In him the love of God came to the sinner. Through him men could be sinners, and only so could they be helped. All sham was ended in the presence of Christ. The misery of the sinner and the mercy of God—this was the truth of the gospel in Jesus Christ. It was in this truth that his church was to live. Therefore, he gave his followers the authority to hear the confession of sin and to forgive sin in his name. “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld” (Jn 20:23).

So now our brother stands in Christ’s stead. Before him I need no longer to dissemble. Before him alone in the whole world I dare to be the sinner that I am. Christ became our Brother in order to help us. Through him our brother has become Christ for us in the power and authority of the commission Christ has

given to him. Our brother stands before us as the sign of the truth and the grace of God. He hears the confession of our sins in Christ’s stead and he forgives our sins in Christ’s name. He keeps the secret of our confession as God keeps it. When I go to my brother to confess, I am going to God.

Why is it that it is often easier for us to confess our sins to God than to a brother? God is holy and sinless, he is a just judge of evil and the enemy of all disobedience. But a brother is sinful as we are. He knows from his own experience the dark night of secret sin. Why should we not find it easier to go to a brother than to the holy God? If we do find it easier to go to God for confession than to our brother, we must ask ourselves whether we have not often been deceiving ourselves with our confession of sin to God, whether we have not rather been confessing our sins to ourselves and also granting ourselves absolution. And is not the reason perhaps for our countless relapses and the feebleness of our Christian obedience to be found precisely in the fact that we are living on self-forgiveness and not a

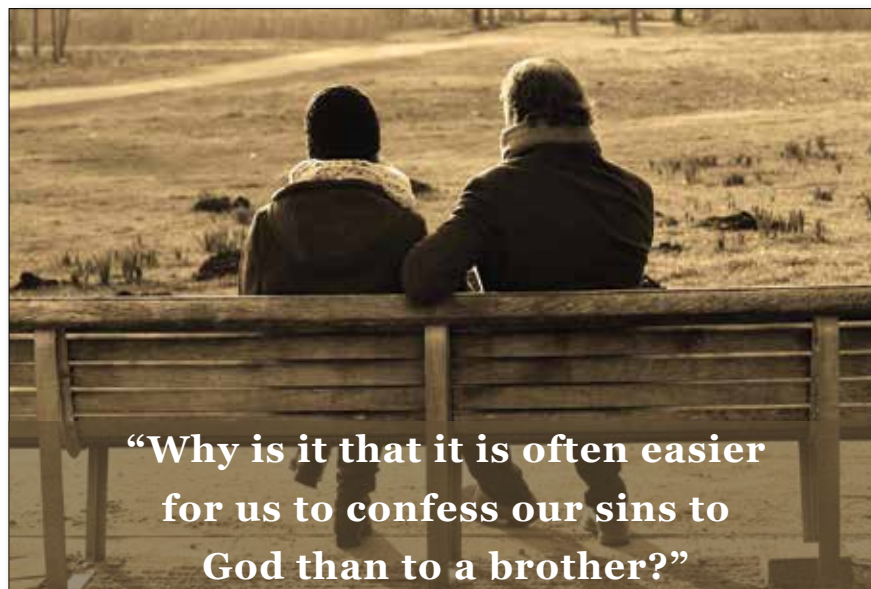
real forgiveness? Self-forgiveness can never lead to a breach with sin: this can be accomplished only by the judging and pardoning Word of God itself.

Who can give us the certainty that, in the confession and the forgiveness of our sins, we are not dealing with ourselves but with the living God? God gives us this certainty through our brother. Our brother breaks the circles of self-deception. A man who confesses his sins in

the presence of a brother knows that he is no longer alone with himself; he experiences the presence of God in the reality of the other person. As long as I am by myself in the confession of my sins, everything remains in the dark, but in the presence of a brother, the sin has to be brought into the light. But since the sin must come to light some time, it is better that it happens today between me and my brother, rather than on the last day in the piercing light of the final judgment.

Our brother has been given me that even here and now I may be made certain through him of the reality of God in his judgment and his grace. As the open confession of my sins to a brother insures me against self-deception, so, too, the assurance of forgiveness becomes fully certain to me only when it is spoken by a brother in the name of God. Mutual, brotherly confession is given to us by God in order that we may be sure of divine forgiveness.

But it is precisely for the sake of this certainty that confession should deal with *concrete* sins. People usually are satisfied when they make a general confession. But one experiences



Continued on page 11

The Seven Steps of Forgiveness

By Stephen Seamands



In his book *Wounds that Heal: Bringing Our Hurts to the Cross* (InterVarsity Press, 2003), Stephen Seamands outlines the actual steps a person needs to take to forgive someone for a wrong committed against us. This article is a slightly edited abridgment taken from chapter eight: “Father, Forgive Them” (130–47).

I cannot overemphasize the importance of forgiveness in the healing of human hurts. Forgiveness unlocks the door to healing, restoration, freedom, and renewal. Until we open that door, we will remain stuck in the past, destined to carry the hurt and burden forever without hope of a restored heart or a renewed future. We will never find healing for our hurts until, like Jesus, we say, “Father, forgive them.” What then does true forgiveness involve?

PREPARING TO FORGIVE

1. *Facing the facts.* Forgiveness begins when we are ruthlessly honest about what was done to us. We don’t cover up what happened, explain it away, blame ourselves, or make excuses for the other person. Squarely and realistically, we face the truth: “I was violated and sinned against. I was hurt. What they did was wrong.” In facing facts, it is important to be specific. General acknowledgements of wrong followed by sweeping generalizations of forgiveness won’t do. For many, the first step in forgiving will involve getting out of denial.
2. *Feeling the hurt.* We must connect with the feelings bound up with the facts—feelings like rejection, loneliness, fear, anger, shame, and depression that still reverberate in us today. Sometimes a person can recount horrendous things done to them without blinking an eye. Their emotions are so painful and threatening they have simply disconnected from them. But we can’t reach the threshold of forgiveness until we recover, at least in some measure, the feelings bound up with the painful facts.
3. *Confronting our hate.* Forgiving involves letting go of hatred or resentment toward the persons who have wounded us. But again, before we can let go of something, we have to acknowledge it’s there. We must admit we resent those who wronged us, for a part of us hates them for what they did. Forgiveness requires the courage to confront our hatred.

In the first three steps of forgiveness we face the wrongs, feel the hurt, and admit our hate. Now we stand at a crossroad. We have a decision to make: to forgive or not to forgive. The next two steps are truly the heart of forgiveness.

THE HEART OF FORGIVENESS

4. *Bearing the pain.* When others have wronged us, there is a demanding voice within us that cries out, “What they did isn’t right. They ought to *pay* for what they’ve done.” This is a God-given voice. The desire to see justice in our own—and all—relationships has been planted in our hearts by God. So, when we forgive, do we ignore the divinely implanted desire for justice and set it aside? No. The sin, the injustice, must be taken seriously. But instead of achieving justice and insisting the guilty party pay for the wrong, we choose to pay ourselves. Though innocent, we choose to bear the pain of the injustice. In forgiveness, as the Scripture says, “mercy triumphs over judgment” (Jas 2:13). It triumphs, however, not by ignoring judgment but by bearing it.

In the Old Testament, several different words in the original Hebrew are rendered “forgive” in our English Bible versions. One of the words is the Hebrew verb *nasa*, which in more than a dozen places is translated “to forgive.” In over 150 places, however, *nasa* is rendered

“to carry” or “to bear.” Old Testament writers understood the close connection between forgiving and bearing. Whenever we forgive, we bear pain. That’s why forgiveness is always costly. Theologian H. R. Macintosh says: “In every great forgiveness there is enshrined a great agony.”

Of course, the ultimate example of the costliness of forgiveness is the cross of Christ. The Scripture says, “He himself bore our sins in

his body on the cross” (1 Pt 2:24). He took on himself the guilt, punishment, and shame of our sins. We deserved to suffer for them but instead, God in Christ carried them in his own being. God did not overlook our sins or pretend they didn’t matter but bore the pain and the judgment himself. To a much lesser degree, whenever we forgive others, we do the same thing: we take the punishment they deserve, absorbing it ourselves. We bear the pain.

5. *Releasing those who have wronged us.* Forgiveness seems to run cross-grain to our natural sense of fair play. “Wait a minute!” we protest, “this isn’t fair. You want me to forgive them? But if I do, they’re going to walk away scot-free. They ought to pay for what they’ve done.”

In part, our anger and resentment is our way of regaining control of an unfair situation and getting back at the persons who have wronged us. It’s our attempt to even the score. But forgiving means releasing our offenders and turning them over to God. It’s saying, “I know what they’ve done and I feel the pain of it, but I choose *not* to be the one who determines what is justice for them.” When we forgive,



we relinquish the roles of judge, jury, and executioner and turn them over to God. Thus, forgiveness is an act of faith. We turn the ones who have wronged us over to God. We *entrust* them to God, saying, “Vengeance is not mine, but Thine alone.”

I want to emphasize that forgiveness doesn’t ignore or set aside the demands of justice. In the case of a sexual abuse victim, for example, forgiving the abuser is not incompatible with exposing or pressing legal charges against him or her. Forgiveness doesn’t mean tolerating injustice. “Unfruitful works of darkness” should be exposed (Eph 5:11). Actions have consequences that evildoers must be forced to accept. Bearing the pain and releasing those who have wronged us have to do with our *attitudes* toward those who have wronged us; seeking justice has to do with our *actions* toward them. These attitudes and actions are not opposed to each other.

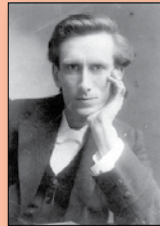
STARTING OVER

6. *Assuming responsibility for ourselves.* As long as we blame others for our problems, we don’t have to take responsibility for ourselves; they’re on the hook. By releasing them, however, we let them off the hook. And where does that leave us? Now we’re on the hook. We must take responsibility and can no longer make excuses for ourselves. Often people hesitate when challenged to forgive because instinctively they know that if they do, they will have no one to blame for their predicament. Unfortunately, we live in a culture of victimization that encourages us to play the blame game. Forgiveness strikes a blow at the root of one’s victim status. We may have been a victim, but we’re not stuck there. By taking responsibility for ourselves, we declare that what happened doesn’t define who we are. We have an identity apart from our pain.
7. *Longing for reconciliation.* The ultimate goal and purpose of forgiveness is reconciliation, or the restoration and renewal of broken relationships. According to some therapists, we should forgive an offender purely on the basis of self-interest. “Forgive,” they tell us, “so you will feel better, get unstuck from your unfair past and stop allowing your offender to exert control over your life. Do this for *yourself*.” And it’s true. Forgiving others *is* in our best interest. But from a Christian perspective, forgiving simply so I can get my hurts healed and get on with my life doesn’t go far enough. It encompasses the negative purpose of forgiveness but fails to include the positive—reconciliation with the person who has offended me. Of course, the nature and extent of reconciliation depend on a number of factors, the most important of which is the offender’s willingness to be reconciled with us and take the costly action necessary for its accomplishment.

The process of forgiving someone who has wronged us brings us once again to the cross of Christ. As we stand at the cross, we must remember that initially forgiveness is more about a decision than an emotion. First and foremost, it is a matter of the will. We come to a place where we choose to forgive. We might be struggling with negative feelings toward those who have hurt us, and we may continue to do so for a considerable time. What is most important at first is our willingness. In forgiving, you send your will ahead by express; your emotions generally come later by slow freight. ✨

The Cost of Forgiveness

By Oswald Chambers (1874–1917)



Taken from his classic devotional book *My Utmost for His Highest* (Dodd, Mead, & Company, 1935), the following article (slightly edited) reminds us that though salvation is free, it is not cheap. Forgiveness comes to us neither because God loves us nor because we are really sorry for what we’ve done. We are forgiven only because Jesus suffered the penalty our sins deserved (see November 20–21 devotionals).

Beware of the pleasant view of the Fatherhood of God—God is so kind and loving that of course he will forgive us. That sentiment has no place whatever in the New Testament. The only ground on which God can forgive us is the tremendous tragedy of the cross of Christ; to put forgiveness on any other ground is unconscious blasphemy. The only ground on which God can forgive sin and reinstate us in his favor is through the cross of Christ, and in no other way. Forgiveness, which is so easy for us to accept, cost the agony of Calvary. It is possible to take the forgiveness of sin, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and our sanctification with the simplicity of faith, and to forget at what enormous cost to God it was all made ours.

Forgiveness is the divine miracle of grace; it cost God the cross of Jesus Christ before he could forgive sin and remain a holy God. Never accept a view of the Fatherhood of God if it blots out the atonement. The revelation of God is that he cannot forgive; he would contradict his nature if he did. The only way we can be forgiven is by being brought back to God by the atonement. God’s forgiveness is only natural in the supernatural domain.

Compared with the miracle of the forgiveness of sin, the experience of sanctification is slight. Sanctification is simply the marvelous expression of the forgiveness of sins in a human life, but the thing that awakens the deepest well of gratitude in a human being is that God has forgiven sin. Paul never got away from this. When once you realize all that it cost God to forgive you, you will be held as in a vice, constrained by the love of God.

There is no room for looking on Jesus Christ as a martyr; his death was not something that happened to him which might have been prevented: his death was the very reason why he came.

Never build your preaching of forgiveness on the fact that God is our Father and he will forgive us because he loves us. It is untrue to Jesus Christ’s revelation of God; it makes the cross unnecessary, and the redemption “much ado about nothing.” If God does forgive sin, it is because of the death of Christ. God could forgive men in no other way than by the death of his son, and Jesus is exalted to be Savior because of his death. The greatest note of triumph that ever sounded in the ears of a startled universe was that sounded on the cross of Christ—“It is finished.” That is the last word in the redemption of man. ✨

How to Erase a Nightmare

By Johann Christoph Arnold (1940–2017)



In his book *Seventy Times Seven: The Power of Forgiveness* (Plough Publishing House, 1997), Johann Arnold, an elder of the Bruderhof Communities, tells stories of real people who have been deeply wounded by tragic events. Yet these people tell how forgiveness is the only way out. The following article (slightly edited) is taken from chapter eleven (126–29).

John Plummer, a Methodist pastor whom I have gotten to know, lives a quiet life in a small Virginia town today, but things weren't always so. A helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War, it was he who organized a napalm raid on the village of Trang Bang in 1972—a bombing immortalized by the prize-winning photography of one of its victims, PhanThi Kim Phuc.

For the next twenty-four years John was haunted by the picture, an image that for many people captured the essence of war: a naked nine-year-old girl, burned, crying, arms outstretched, running toward the camera, with plumes of black smoke billowing in the sky behind her.

For twenty-four years his conscience tormented him. He badly wanted to find the girl, to say that he was sorry—but could not. At least as a country, Vietnam was a closed chapter for him; he could never bring himself to go there again. Friends tried to reassure him. Hadn't he done everything within his power to see that the village was cleared of civilians? But still he found no peace. And so he turned in on himself, his marriage failed, and he began to drink.

Then, in an almost unbelievable coincidence, on Veterans Day 1996, John met Kim at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Kim had come to Washington, DC, to lay a wreath for peace; John had come with a group of former pilots still searching for freedom from the past. In a speech to the crowd, Kim said



Vietnam veteran John Plummer with Pham Thi Kim Phuc

that she was not bitter. Although she still suffered immensely from her burns, she wanted people to know that others had suffered even more than she: “Behind that picture of me, thousands and thousands of people... died. They lost parts of their bodies. Their whole lives were destroyed, and nobody took their picture.”

Kim went on to say that she forgave the men who had bombed her village, and that although she could not change the past, she now wanted to “promote peace.” John, beside himself, pushed through the crowds and managed to catch her attention before she was whisked away by a police escort. He identified himself as the pilot responsible for bombing her village twenty years before, and they were able to talk for two short minutes.

Kim saw my grief, my pain, my sorrow. . . . She held out her arms to me and embraced me. All I could say was “I’m sorry; I’m sorry”—over and over again. And at the same time she was saying, “It’s all right, I forgive you.”

Later the same day John met Kim at her hotel; Kim reaffirmed her forgiveness,

and she and John prayed together. They have since become good friends, and call each other regularly.

Did John find the peace he was searching for? He says he has. Although his emotions are still easily stirred by memories of the war, he feels that he has now been able to forgive himself and put the event behind him.

John says that it was vital for him to meet face-to-face with Kim, to tell her that he had truly agonized over her injuries. All the same, he maintains that the forgiveness he has received is a gift—not something earned or even deserved. Finally, it is a mystery: he still can't quite grasp how a two-minute talk could wipe away a twenty-four-year nightmare. ✦

Should Donors Support the Ministry or the General Fund?

By Charlie Fiskeaux, Special Assistant to the President for Development

In supporting the Francis Asbury Society, should a donor contribute to ministry or the General Fund? While the ministries of the Francis Asbury Society occur in the areas of speaking, discipling, and publishing, each of the three categories involves several distinct ministries. For example, speaking encompasses 26 different speakers. Discipling includes Covenant Fellowship, Hemlock Inn Retreats, Pastor's Uplift, Shepherds Watch, Titus Women Ministries, and more. Publishing includes *The High Calling*, *Ministry Matters*, and individual books. However, the General Fund is separate from ministry funds but supports all the varied FAS ministries, as well as general administration. In fact, the General Fund

enables the Francis Asbury Society to exist and carry on its various ministries.

So, should a donor support a specific ministry or the General Fund? Some donors support a specific ministry. Some support the General Fund. Some support both. Then, is the donor's decision “either-or” or “both-and”? In fact, both ministries and the General Fund are worthy of your contributions. With either decision, you participate in proclaiming the scriptural message that we can be “wholly devoted to God” through means of speaking, discipling, and publishing. Thank you for engaging with the Francis Asbury Society in ministry. ✦

know something they didn't know. This is the surprise, this is the catch.

It's not an arbitrary but a necessary catch. It's not that God decided to make this one thing the qualification. Rather, it's intrinsically impossible for us to receive God's forgiveness if we do not forgive our neighbors. All things may be possible for God, but not all things are possible for us. And here is one thing that is not possible for us. It is no more possible for a person who is in a state of unforgiveness toward his neighbor to receive the forgiveness of God than it is possible for someone who ties his hands behind his back to avoid giving gifts to receive any.

We cannot receive God's forgiveness when we do not forgive others because God is forgiveness. Forgiveness is the only way we can understand God. Imagine the heart of someone who believed he received God's forgiveness while he refused to pass it on to others; that person would immediately crush the life out of that gift of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is like water: if you refuse to pass it on, it becomes stagnant. Look at a map of Israel. You will notice that the very same water, the Jordan River, flows into the Sea of Galilee and into the Dead Sea. The Sea of Galilee is fertile and full of life; the Dead Sea is as dead as its name. The difference is that the Sea of Galilee passes the water on. It has an outlet, while the Dead Sea does not. God's grace in our soul is like the water of the Jordan River: it lives only if it is passed on. The gift can be received only if it is also given.



“Quite simply, if we refuse to forgive our neighbor, we will go to hell.”

This realization is wonderful and terrible. All other sins can be forgiven if sincerely repented, but this one cannot, for it is impenitence itself. Quite simply, if we refuse to forgive our neighbor, we will go to hell. Please do not call me a fundamentalist for saying that, unless you call Jesus one too. It is terrible, but it is reasonable, for no unforgiving soul could possibly endure the light of heaven, which is forgiving love.

Now notice how lovingly clever Jesus is in framing the words of this petition for us. We are to ask God to forgive us exactly as we forgive others. Thus, if we do not forgive others, we are asking God for our own damnation every time we pray the Lord's Prayer! We cannot pray for forgiveness without forgiving others if we realize what we are saying.

Forgiving Sin Does Not Mean Excusing Sin *continued from page 2*

really so good as I think; as regards other men's, since against me, it is a safe bet (though not a certainty) that the excuses are better than I think. One must therefore begin by attending to everything which may show that the other man was not so much to blame as we thought. But even if he is absolutely fully to blame we still have to forgive him; and even if ninety-nine percent of his apparent guilt can be explained away by really good excuses, the problem of forgiveness begins with the one percent of guilt which is left over. To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.

No duty has ever been so seriously commanded as this. We absolutely, unqualifiedly, immediately must forgive everyone, with no ifs, ands, buts, or delays. If you have not done so, please do not read another word; get down on your knees and ask God's forgiveness for your unforgiveness to your neighbor and then get up off your knees and give it to him. Free him in order to free yourself. Lose not a minute.

It is not wrong to speak so urgently. Our urgency pales compared with that of Jesus. His is the urgency of infinite love, of a father watching his child dancing on the brink of the abyss. There is an abyss, and many have already perished in it. It is not the work of love to refuse to shout "Danger!" where there is thin ice for fear of upsetting people. The most compassionate thing we can do, the greatest work of charity, is to tell the truth.

Jesus' forgiveness of sins was one of his clearest claims to divinity. He forgave all sins, whether against him or against God. I have a right to forgive you for harming me but no right to

forgive you for harming someone else. Yet that is what Jesus did: he acted as if he was the one who was hurt in every sin—because he was. You do not understand that? Have you never seen a crucifix? There, on the cross, all the sins of the world came together to be forgiven. That was the worldwide convention of sins. The Holocaust was there and the Gulag and Sodom—every sin since we lost Eden. How could such a thing really happen? How could all times be present at once? Because Christ, as God, is eternal and thus can in a moment of time suffer all the sins of history, for

his eternity intersects all time. Thus, we were there too, all our sins were there, in awful concert.

*Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble!
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*

The price of forgiveness was infinitely high. But it was paid. "It is finished," and we are free [Jn 19:30]. To ask God for his gift of forgiveness now is to receive it. There is no gap, no delay, not for a second. Like the thief on the cross, we are in paradise the very day we repent and receive his forgiveness. The plant of paradise, the tree of life, grows in the most unlikely place: Golgotha, the "place of the skull." We are invited to eat its fruit, forgiveness. ✠

This is hard. It is perhaps not so hard to forgive a single great injury. But to forgive the incessant provocations of daily life—to keep on forgiving the bossy mother-in-law, the bullying husband, the nagging wife, the selfish daughter, the deceitful son—how can we do it? Only, I think, by remembering where we stand, by meaning our words when we say in our prayers each night, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us." We are offered forgiveness on no other terms. To refuse it is to refuse God's mercy for ourselves. There is no hint of exceptions and God means what he says. ✠

The True Greatness of Jackie Robinson

By Eric Metaxas



Eric Metaxas tells the story of how Jackie Robinson (1919–1972) became the first African American to play Major League Baseball in 1947. While Robinson’s athletic abilities are well known, few know the story of how his faith in Jesus Christ was perhaps the most critical element in this amazing story. As Metaxas tells it, the pivotal moment came in a conversation between Branch Rickey (the

legendary general manager for the Brooklyn Dodgers and himself a strong Christian) and Jackie Robinson as they agreed together to take what was to become one of the most impactful steps in the history of sports. This article (slightly edited) is taken from Metaxas’ book *Seven Men and the Secret of Their Greatness* (Thomas Nelson, 2013: 125–28).

The air in the room when Rickey and Robinson met was electric. At first Rickey and Jackie just stared at each other. Rickey stared because he knew what was at stake and why the moment was potentially historic. The young man before him

“If you can make it, yes. Later on—also if you can make it—you’ll have a chance with the Brooklyn Dodgers.”

What Rickey was saying seemed impossible. Jackie was speechless. Rickey continued to spin out his long-held fantasy. “I want to win the pennant and we need ball players!” he roared, pounding his desk. “Do you think you can do it?”

There was a long pause while Jackie thought it over. Finally he answered: “Yes.”

When Rickey asked Jackie if he was up to the job, he wasn’t talking only about playing great baseball. He knew Jackie could do that. What he meant, he explained, was that if Jackie were to become Major League Baseball’s first black player, he would be in for a tremendous amount of abuse, both verbal and physical.

Jackie said he was sure he could face up to whatever came his way. He wasn’t afraid of anyone and had been in any number of fist fights over the years when anyone had challenged him.

But Rickey had something else in mind. “I know you’re a good ball player,” Rickey said. “What I don’t know is whether you have the guts.” Rickey knew he meant something dramatically different from what Robinson was thinking, so he continued. “I’m looking,” Rickey said, “for a ball player with guts enough *not to fight back*.” This was an unexpected wrinkle, to put it mildly.

Rickey then spun out a number of scenarios to convey what he meant, in the form of a dramatic pop quiz. Biographer Arnold Rampersad writes:

Rickey stripped off his coat and enacted out a variety of parts that portrayed examples of an offended Jim Crow. Now he was a white hotel clerk rudely refusing Jack accommodations; now a supercilious white waiter in a restaurant; now a brutish railroad conductor. He became a foul-mouthed opponent, Jack recalled, talking about “my race, my parents, in language that was almost unendurable.” Now he was a vengeful base runner, vindictive spikes flashing in the sun, sliding into Jack’s black flesh—“How do you like that, nigger-boy?”

According to Rickey, not only would Robinson have to tolerate such abuse, but he would need to be almost superhuman and to commit himself to never, ever hit back. This was at the heart of the whole enterprise. If Jackie could promise that, then he and Rickey could make it work. They could open the doors for other black players and change the game forever.

Jackie knew that resisting the urge to fight back really would require a superhuman effort, but he was deeply moved by Rickey’s vision. He thought of his mother. He thought of all the black people who deserved someone to break this ground for them, even if it was difficult. He believed God had chosen him

“I’m looking for a ball player with guts enough *not to fight back*.”



Photo Credit: ASSOCIATED PRESS / JH

might well become a historic figure, and this scene might well be written about in future books. For his part, Jackie had no idea what was happening or why Rickey was staring at him. And as Jackie wasn’t about to be stared at without staring back, he stared back. What he saw was a pudgy, bespectacled man with bushy eyebrows, a bow tie, and a cigar. The staring continued.

“Do you know why you were brought here?” Rickey asked Robinson.

“Sure,” Robinson replied, “to play on the new Brooklyn Brown Dodgers team.”

“No,” Rickey said. “That isn’t it. You were brought here, Jackie, to play for the Brooklyn organization. Perhaps in Montreal to start with, and—”

“Me? Play for Montreal?” Jackie was stunned. The implications were impossible to take in so quickly.

Continued on page 12

the utter perdition and corruption of human nature when one sees his own specific sins. Self-examination on the basis of all Ten Commandments therefore will be the right preparation for confession. Blind Bartimaeus was asked by Jesus: “What do you want me to do for you?” (Mk 10:51). Before confession, we must have a clear answer to this question.

Does all this mean that confession to a brother is a divine law? No, confession is not a law, it is an offer of divine help for the sinner. It is possible that a person may by God’s grace break through to certainty, new life, the cross, and fellowship without benefit of confession to a brother. It is possible that a person may never know what it is to doubt his own forgiveness and despair of his own confession of sin, that he may be given everything in his own private confession to God. We have spoken here for those who cannot make this assertion. Those who, despite all their seeking and trying, cannot find the great joy of fellowship, the cross, the new life, and certainty should be shown the blessing that God offers us in mutual confession. ✠

The Problem of Forgiveness continued from page 3

All inadequate doctrines of the atonement are due to inadequate doctrines of God and humanity. When we have glimpsed the blinding glory of the holiness of God and have been so convicted of our sin by the Holy Spirit that we tremble before God and acknowledge what we are, namely, “hell-deserving sinners,” then and only then does the necessity of the cross appear so obvious that we are astonished we never saw it before. The essential background to the cross, therefore, is a balanced understanding of the gravity of sin and the majesty of God. If we diminish either, we thereby diminish the cross. ✠

What Forgiveness Is Not

From Christianity Today, January 10, 2000: 41.

Forgetting—deep hurts can rarely be wiped out of one’s awareness.

Reconciliation—reconciliation takes two people, but an injured party can forgive an offender without reconciliation.

Condoning—forgiveness does not necessarily excuse bad or hurtful behavior.

Dismissing—forgiveness involves taking the offense seriously, not passing it off as inconsequential or insignificant.

Pardoning—a pardon is a legal transaction that releases an offender from the consequences of an action, such as a penalty. Forgiveness is a personal transaction that releases the one offended from the offense.

Valjean was no thief, the bishop assured the gendarmes. “This silver was my gift to him.” When the gendarmes withdrew, the bishop gave the candlesticks to his guest, now speechless and trembling. “Do not forget, do not ever forget,” said the bishop, “that you have promised me to use the money to make yourself an honest man.”

The power of the bishop’s act, defying every human instinct for revenge, changed Jean Valjean forever. A naked encounter with forgiveness—especially since he had never repented—melted the granite defenses of his soul. He kept the candlesticks as a precious memento of grace and dedicated himself from then on to helping others in need.

Third, forgiveness is of fundamental importance because it accomplishes its redemptive work through a remarkable transaction: it puts the forgiver on the same side as the party who did the wrong. Through it we realize we are not as different from the wrongdoer as we would like to think.

In a small discussion group, I met a woman named Rebecca. One day she told us her story. She had married a pastor who had some renown as a retreat leader. It became apparent, however, that her husband had a dark side. He dabbled in pornography, and on his trips to other cities he solicited prostitutes. In time, he left her for another woman, Julianne.

Rebecca, of course, was devastated. Over time, however, she had the increasing sense that unless she forgave her former husband, a hard lump of revenge would be passed on to their children. For months she prayed. At first her prayers seemed as vengeful as some of the Psalms: she asked God to give her ex-husband “what he deserved.” Finally, she came to the place of letting God, not herself, determine “what he deserved.”

One night, Rebecca called her ex-husband and said, in a shaky, strained voice, “I want you to know that I forgive you for what you’ve done to me. And I forgive Julianne too.” He laughed off her apology, unwilling to admit he had done anything wrong. Despite his rebuff, that conversation helped Rebecca get past her bitter feelings.

A few years later, Rebecca got a hysterical phone call from Julianne. She had been attending a ministerial conference with him in Minneapolis, and he had left the hotel room to go for a walk. A few hours passed, then Julianne heard from the police: her husband had been picked up for soliciting a prostitute. On the phone with Rebecca, Julianne was sobbing. “I never believed you,” she said. “And now this. I feel so ashamed, and hurt, and guilty. I have no one on earth who can understand. Then I remembered the night when you said you forgave us. I thought maybe you could understand what I’m going through. It’s a terrible thing to ask, I know, but could I come talk to you?”

Somehow Rebecca found the courage to invite Julianne over that same evening. They sat in her living room, cried together, shared stories of betrayal, and in the end prayed together. Julianne now points to that night as the time when she became a Christian. “For a long time, I had felt foolish about forgiving my husband,” Rebecca told us. “But that night I realized the fruit of forgiveness.”

Wrong does not disappear when I forgive, but it loses its grip on me and is taken over by God. He knows what to do. ✠

for this noble purpose. He believed he *had* to do it—for black kids, for his mother, for his wife, for himself.

Knowing that Jackie shared his Christian faith and wanting to reinforce the spiritual dimensions of what the two men were about to embark on, Rickey brought out a copy of a book titled *Life of Christ* by Giovanni Papini. He flipped to the passage in which Papini discusses the Sermon on the Mount and refers to it as “the most stupefying of (Jesus’) revolutionary teachings.” It certainly was revolutionary. In fact, it seemed impossible. In Matthew 5:38–41, Jesus said:

Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. (KJV)

Rickey was betting that Jackie Robinson knew what he himself knew: although this was indeed humanly impossible, with God’s help it was entirely possible. And Jackie did know it. As a Christian, he knew that if he committed himself to doing this thing—which both men felt was God’s will—God would give Jackie the strength to accomplish it.

So Jackie Roosevelt Robinson and Branch Rickey shook hands. And there, in that fourth-floor office in Brooklyn to which Jackie had ridden in a whites-only elevator, under a portrait of Abraham Lincoln, history was made. It was momentous day not only for baseball but for America. ✦

Though we cannot change the past, the gospel of Jesus Christ proclaims a proven method for dealing with it: forgiveness. Paul states the matter succinctly: “But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more” (Rom 5:20 NKJV). Though it may seem that these articles are about all the bad things that can happen in this world, don’t be fooled. They are really about grace! An old gospel song by Adger McDavid Page says it powerfully:

*Dark the stain that soiled man’s nature,
Long the distance that he fell.
Far removed from hope and heaven,
Into deep despair and hell.
But there was a fountain opened,
And the blood of God’s own Son,
Purifies the soul and reaches
Deeper than the stain has gone! ✦*

The High Calling—September–October 2019

The High Calling is a bimonthly publication of The Francis Asbury Society to serve as a link between FAS and its constituents, building loyalty and awareness so that the teaching and experience of Christian holiness may continue to be lived and proclaimed throughout the world.

The Francis Asbury Society

PO Box 7 | Wilmore, KY 40390 | 859-858-4222

FAS@francisasburysociety.com

www.francisasburysociety.com

Managing Editor: Stan Key

Editing/Design/Layout: Jennie Lovell

Contributors: Johann Cristoph Arnold, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Oswald Chambers, Stan Key, Peter Kreeft, C. S. Lewis, Eric Metaxas, Stephen Seamands, John R. W. Stott, Philip Yancey

Sign up to receive our companion e-newsletter, *Matters*, at www.francisasburysociety.com

- In This Issue**
- Forgiveness: Deeper than the Stain Has Gone (Key)
 - The Most Troubling Part of the Lord’s Prayer (Kreeft)
 - Forgiving Sin Does Not Mean Excusing Sin (Lewis)
 - The Problem of Forgiveness (Stott)
 - An Unnatural Act (Yancey)
 - Confess Your Sins to One Another (Bonhoeffer)
 - The Seven Steps of Forgiveness (Seamands)
 - The Cost of Forgiveness (Chambers)
 - How to Erase a Nightmare (Arnold)
 - The True Greatness of Jackie Robinson (Metaxas)

The Francis Asbury Society
PO Box 7
Wilmore, KY 40390



The High Calling

PRSRRT STD
AUTO
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SHOALS, IN
PERMIT NO 18