

LSE for 10/18/2020

We often mention the idea of forgiveness in the context of communion. We're commemorating the sacrifice that made forgiveness available to us. Sometimes we also note that we cut ourselves off from forgiveness if we refuse to forgive others, a point Jesus made in Matthew 18:34-35.

This morning I want to share a thought regarding forgiving others when it is hard. There are situations where we have real and legitimate grievances against someone. We can rehearse all the reasons they don't deserve our forgiveness. Maybe you struggle with that sort of situation.

Let's build a picture in our minds. Imagine yourself taking out a piece of paper and writing down all the reasons you have to feel hurt by and angry with that person. Make the case like you are explaining it to someone else. Write out how justified you are in hanging onto your anger and hurt. Feel the emotions stirring fresh inside you as you write out all your reasons for not forgiving. Now picture, as your anger is finishing its expression and the page is nearly full, a single red drop falling and splattering on the page. Don't look up yet to see where it is coming from. Just look at that red splatter on your page, covering some of those words you had just written. While you're watching this, another drop - a bigger one lands on the page. It covers and hides more of your words.

Now you can look up. You see Jesus, with eyes full of sadness holding His bleeding hand over your paper. He looks at the paper, then back at our face and says, "Tell Me when it is enough" as another drop of His blood lands on your paper. Let that picture burn into your mind. He's waiting, and still bleeding. When will you tell Him that it is enough? Will you wait for the whole paper to be covered in His blood?

Jesus died for all the sins of the whole world. His sacrifice *is* enough. We don't help anyone by holding onto hurt, frustration or anger - especially not ourselves. Jesus has forgiven us for so much. The gratitude we feel for the way He has forgiven us can and should release us from holding onto our anger and hurt toward others. We may not be able to forget, but we can choose not to bring the offenses up ever again. We can choose not to dwell on it. Just before Jesus died, He said, "It is finished." He paid the price. It is enough.

Prayer:

Precious Father, thank you for the sacrifice that Jesus made to enable all of our sins to be forgiven. Lord, help us trust You enough to let go of our pain and anger. Help us to focus instead on all the reasons we have to be grateful for your mercy toward us. Thank you for not continually reminding us of our faults and sins. Help us to do the same for those around us. Please bless the bread and juice that we take now to remind us of the real body and blood that Jesus sacrificed to satisfy Your justice. Thank you for forgiving us, even though we are so unworthy on our own. Enable us to partake of this memorial in a worthy manner. In Jesus name we pray, amen.