

Letting Go of Your Past Through the Unending Power of the Cross

Many years ago, I attended a Christian writers conference that was physically and intellectually demanding. I was looking forward to the conference's Palm Sunday worship service as a time of refreshment and preparation for Easter. I walked down the path toward the chapel, and I found a friend sitting near the front. As I sat down next to her, I sighed deeply. The service began with singing and instrumental music. A young woman sang "The Old Rugged Cross," and another woman accompanied her with sign language. As I listened to the song, I could see a dark wooden cross in my imagination. Jesus was on that cross. He asked me a question, not audibly, but inside my mind. He asked me why I continually brought my burdens to the cross and never left them there. I did not have an answer for Him.

I saw in my mind a large, flat wagon behind me as I stood at the foot of the cross. It was filled with the people who had sinned against me and the people against whom I had sinned. These were people I had chosen not to forgive. The people in the wagon were symbols of the pain and wounds of my past. The offenses against me had become burdens that were weighing me down. As long as I would not forgive, my past followed me everywhere I went in my mind and my heart.

I did not know why I would leave my unforgiveness and burdens at the foot of the cross and pick them up again. I realized the Lord wanted to free me from my unforgiveness and sins. I asked Him to help me.

He asked me to leave my burdens of unforgiveness and sins at the foot of the cross and move away from them. From my new

perspective of the cross in my imagination, I saw a deep narrow trench encircle the cross. God was marking the cross with His boundary. He put that boundary there so that I would not continue to pick up my burdens of unforgiveness and sin and drag them with me. I felt the Lord was saying to me that He wanted me to let go of the past so that I could live in the present and look forward to the future.

I was weary from the weight of my sins of unforgiveness, bitterness and resentment that were rooted in my past. My pain had served its purpose, because it had brought me to the cross to receive forgiveness, cleansing and healing.

Inside my imagination, I knelt outside the boundary at the cross and asked the Lord to forgive my sins and my unforgiveness toward all of the people He had brought to my mind. I released each one to His love and care and asked Him to bless them. I thanked Him for the boundary at the cross. By faith, I released my past to Him.

Daily I resist the urge to pick up any of my old burdens. I entrust my past with all of its pain to God. He is my burden bearer and my healer. Now I can joyfully live in the present and look forward to the future. {eoa}

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