

Your Spirit-Filled Source of Fathomless Forgiveness

Walking on water?

Healing crowds of people?

Miraculously multiplying food to feed thousands?

Our Savior defied logic and did the unthinkable as He walked the earth, daily giving evidence of His clear divinity while enrobed in the fragility of humanity.

Maybe one of the clearest examples occurs at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry.

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

Raised high above the earth He spoke into existence, God hung on a cross, writhing in agony as metal worked against the flesh of calloused hands fastened against a wooden cross. Suspended between man and God, He battled in the waiting, shamed before religious and political leaders, His family, followers and friends. Blood poured down His shredded flesh, His body so beaten and torn it was unrecognizable to His own mother. In the midst of agony, Jesus used His sacred life-giving breath to intercede for is Jesus. This is love—consistent, committed, unrelenting love.

Now, most days it's not too hard to hold a grudge, especially when the person committing the wrong is a repeat offender. At that point, it's easy to justify why forgiveness is undeserved. Instead there's a cry for justice. A wrong must be made right. The greater the offense, the louder the cry for punishment.

But He has made forgiveness possible.

Even in the most hurtful and crushing of situations, we can follow our Savior. As we meet with Him, discussing what has happened, bringing our hurts before Him, we get to access His strength and power that stabilize fickle emotions and grant us new perspective and the ability to forgive.

“But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you” (Luke 6:27-28).

On a normal day, Jesus’ command seems challenging. But when a wrong stares us squarely in the face and pain seems to siphon the air from our lungs, opportunities for retaliation beckon us to join them in administering “justice.” In these moments, Jesus’ command seems like an impossibility. Actually blessing those who have hurt you seems so impossible, because it is. True forgiveness is not a work of human emotion; it is a work of God in man that wars against, and overcomes, our own emotions.

It’s through His power that we are able to display the fruit of the Spirit when the world, the flesh and the devil offer alternatives to meekness, humility and blessing others.

The Spirit of power He has given us allows us to access what’s in His heart for others, even when we’re in pain.

He demonstrated this first.

Our beloved Son of God, the One in whom the Father is well pleased, looked on those who had lied about Him, those who had tortured Him and those who had abandoned Him, and fully gave Himself to being their sacrificial Lamb. He willingly took on their sin so that they could be free from the crime they were committing and their bondage to all sin.

Although many would’ve understood if He had chosen anger, Jesus showed compassion on those accusing Him, beating Him and deriding Him, refusing to save Himself or put Himself above His creation. Instead He chose, once more, to serve all as the

receding tide of popularity swept away the fleeting facade of man's approval.

There had been a time when others had flocked to Him, seeking miracles, food, notoriety, entertainment. But amid two thieves, the Lamb slain before the foundations of this world kept His focus on His Father and the joy set before Him. With a heart free of malice, ill intent or musings of retaliation, Jesus showed us of a love that is patient, kind, keeps no record of wrongs and results in forgiveness—an open heart that continues to pour forth love when being wronged.

This is the love that's been placed in our hearts by His Spirit. It leads us to forgive when it's completely undeserved, unrequested and undesired. It allows us to walk as Jesus did toward those who lack compassion, remorse, or even a full understanding of the gravity of their wrong.

Through the power of God, we have access to what Jesus died to give us in these situations—true freedom.

“For freedom Christ freed us. Stand fast therefore and do not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Gal. 5:1).

Instead of being yoked to anger, hatred, malice, bitterness, heaviness or resentment, we are offered healing by the Spirit as we lay offenses at the cross, at the feet of the one who was grievously wronged and yet prevailed in His assignment and in His emotions. As fantastic as it seems, we have an open door to a life unencumbered, leaving us free to pick up Jesus' yoke, which is easy, and His burden, which is light. We have a Savior who understands how we hurt, a High Priest who knows how the pain sears our souls and leaves us wounded and aching. And when we recoil from the pain as our love wanes and find ourselves giving up the idea of even offering forgiveness, He whispers over us again, “I Am, and I can.”

“Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matt. 11:29).

In Him, we find our place of rest in which forgiveness is actually achievable. Through His power at work within us, we are able to stare at the offense, and the offender, without denying the pain or minimizing the wrong and relinquish our right for retaliation. As we shift our focus to our defender, Redeemer, restorer and judge, we allow for His good, pleasing and perfect will to work within as He shows us the price He paid for the wrongs done to us and cleanses our emotions. He walked this road before us, and He walks it again with us.

The one who authored our faith will also finish what He's doing in us and through us. No matter the size or scope of the offense or the degree of the pain, the restorer of all things looks to lead us in the path of forgiveness that allows for redemption and healing to take place.

He lifts our heads and urges us to keep our eyes on Him, the one who is able to carry the weight of our pain and properly administer justice for that pain in holiness. {eo}

Fia Curley serves on the NightWatch at IHOPKC, participating in prayer, worship and intercession from midnight to 6 a.m. She enjoys blending her passion for prayer, worship and journalism as she labors with the Lord to see His goodness revealed to families, government leaders and immigrants from non-Christian nations.

This article originally appeared at .