

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 11/27/2023

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

ONE AT ONE – *Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, November 28, you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, pray for peace in the Middle East. Pray for continuation of the cease fire between Israel and Hamas. Pray for the release of all hostages on both sides. Pray for justice and equity in the issues that exist between both sides. Ask GOD to bring resolution to the struggles that have plagued the people of this land for so very long.*

Over the course of my ministry, I have had many conversations with people who are struggling to forgive another or who have had their life dramatically changed by forgiveness from them or toward them. We often overlook the power of forgiveness and what it can mean for our daily living. Here are some things to keep in mind if you feel the need to be forgiven or have someone in your life that you need to forgive:

1. Choosing not to forgive another leaves us trapped in the past. Often our mind is drawn to thoughts of what that person has done to us, and sometimes that leads to thoughts of what we would like to do to that person. Forgiving someone we feel has wronged us releases us from these thoughts of revenge and frees us to move forward with our lives and relationships.
2. There is no such thing as “forgive and forget.” Even when we forgive someone, the memory of what happened will still be there and may remain with us for all our lives. Hurt changes relationships, but forgiveness is an important step to healing them, even if the relationship is never quite the same.
3. We can forgive even if the other person has not asked for it. Sometimes others don't realize they have hurt us, and therefore don't know to ask for our forgiveness. In other cases, it may be too hard to ask, or the other person simply isn't willing to ask. If we choose to wait until forgiveness is requested, we again may be trapped in our past. Instead, just forgive. (And damage may be done to the relationship if you decide to go and tell the other person that they need to ask for forgiveness!)
4. When you seek to be forgiven, don't just say, “I'm sorry.” Those words leave no real opportunity for forgiveness. Saying, “Please forgive me,” is an act of humility that puts you completely in the hands of the other. That person may choose not to forgive you. Nevertheless, think of the burden that would be lifted if those words of absolution were spoken: “I forgive you.”
5. Forgiving others and asking others for forgiveness can draw us closer to GOD. When we recognize how often GOD has forgiven us and the depth of that forgiveness it becomes easier to absolve someone else. And when we hear the words of forgiveness spoken by another, we also can hear GOD'S words of forgiveness in new and more meaningful way.
6. If there is something that you have done to another, but no longer are able to or simply can't ask for forgiveness, know that GOD has forgiven you. GOD'S forgiveness is not a replacement for what you need to do in a relationship with someone else. Nevertheless, be assured that there is nothing you can do that GOD won't forgive. That is the promise of the cross.

In CHRIST'S love,
Pastor Jeffrey