

Hope Trending

[4] The Sunflower—No More Fear of Unforgiven

- Luke 23:33-34—Christ’s prayer on the cross: “Father, forgive them—they don’t know what they’re doing.”
- Timothy Keller: “To refrain from lashing out at someone when you want to do so with all your being is agony. It is a form of suffering. You not only suffer the original loss of happiness, reputation, and opportunity, but now you forgo the consolation of inflicting the same on them. You are absorbing the debt, taking the cost of it completely on yourself instead of taking it out on the other person. It hurts terribly. Many people would say it feels like a kind of death.” (*The Reason for God* 188-189)
- Harold Kushner: “She is a single mother, divorced, working to support herself and three young children. She says to me, ‘Since my husband walked out on us, every month is a struggle to pay our bills. I have to tell my kids we have no money to go to the movies, while he’s living it up with his new wife in another state. How can you tell me to forgive him?’ I answer her, ‘I’m not asking you to forgive him because what he did was acceptable. It wasn’t; it was mean and selfish. I’m asking you to forgive because he doesn’t deserve the power to live in your head and turn you into a bitter, angry woman. I’d like to see him out of your life emotionally as completely as he is out of it physically, but you keep holding on to him. You’re not hurting him by holding on to that resentment, but you’re hurting yourself’” (*The Sunflower* 185,186).
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer: “My brother’s burden which I must bear is not only his outward lot, his natural characteristics and gifts, but quite literally his sin. And the only way to bear that sin is by forgiving it in the power of the cross of Christ in which I now share. . . . Forgiveness is the Christlike suffering which it is the Christian’s duty to bear.” (*Cost of Discipleship* 100)
- *Desire of Ages*: “That prayer of Christ for His enemies embraced the world. It took in every sinner that had lived or should live, from the beginning of the world to the end of time. Upon all rests the guilt of crucifying the Son of God. To all, forgiveness is freely offered. ‘Whosoever will’ may have peace with God, and inherit eternal life.” (745)

HOPE

- How to say Yes to that prayer:
 - Romans 5:8
 - 1 Timothy 1:15
 - John 6:37
 - Matthew 11:28
 - Revelation 3:20

- It is the language of friendship—this language of God.

Questions:

___What is there about forgiveness that is so costly to the one who forgives?

___Explain: Forgiveness means bearing the cost for someone else's misdeed.

___How can we accept the forgiveness that Jesus offered at the cross?

___How does Revelation 3:20 answer that question?