

FORGIVENESS FLOWS

Saturday, February 28

Reading: Ephesians 4:25 – 5:10

Ephesians 4:32 *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

The land of Israel has 3 main bodies of water – the Jordan River, the Sea of Galilee, and the Dead Sea. The Jordan begins in northern Israel, where the melting snow from the top of Mount Hermon provides its' headwaters. It then flows about 25 miles down to the Sea of Galilee, a body of water teeming with life. The Jordan then exits and flows some 130 miles south to empty in the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth. The Dead Sea is devoid of life other than algae, bacteria, and large amounts of salt. Why the difference between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, since they are both supplied by the same river? The Sea of Galilee has life because it passes on what it receives from the Jordan – it keeps the flow going. The Dead Sea has no outlet, so the waters stagnate and become unusable.

The same can be related to forgiveness. Forgiveness begins with God – He is the Source. His forgiveness flows to us and we in turn need to extend forgiveness to others (Colossians 3:12-14). But if we refuse to forgive, we will become like the Dead Sea – bitter and useless. Whether it is you who needs to forgive or you who needs to ask for forgiven, we must learn to keep God's forgiveness flowing. Below are some helpful steps for seeking forgiveness and granting forgiveness.

7 Steps for Seeking Forgiveness

1. Admit what you did was wrong or hurtful
2. Confess your sin and ask God to forgive you
3. Try to understand/empathize with the pain you have caused
4. Take responsibility for your actions and make restitution if necessary
5. Assure the other person/people you will not do it again
6. Apologize and ask for forgiveness
7. Forgive yourself

7 Steps for Granting Forgiveness

1. Surrender the conflict and pain to God
2. Acknowledge your pain and anger recognizing the disrespect you felt
3. Be specific about your future expectations and limits to yourself and the other person
4. Give up your right to "get even," but insist on being treated better in the future
5. Let go of blame, resentment, and negativity toward the other person/people
6. Communicate your act of forgiveness to the other person/people
7. Work toward reconciliation (when safe)

Is there someone you need to forgive? What steps do you need to take to keep God's love and forgiveness flowing in your life and the life of the other person?

Is there someone you have hurt or wronged from which you need to seek forgiveness? What steps do you need to take?

How can you make forgiveness a daily part of your prayer life?