

Devotion for June 13, 2018

It's upsetting when we are the victim of a sin. It doesn't feel good to be lied to, gossiped about, cheated, stolen from, or to have our trust in a person or relationship broken. When someone sins against us, often the last thing we feel like doing is forgiving them.

There are all sorts of excuses and reasons not to forgive, aren't there? For example, "They don't deserve to be forgiven after what they did to me," or, "They have to say sorry first." A subtle way to withhold forgiveness is to say, "I forgive you," but then to keep reminding that person of what they did to you, over and over again, in effect saying, "You still owe me." That's forgiving but not forgetting.

How are you able to forgive another person? Sometimes we look for motivation in the wrong place. Do we find our motivation to forgive in a promise that they will never do it again? But what happens when they do sin again? Could we find motivation in being the better person, willing to forgive a situation out of our own goodness? That sounds like a recipe for pride, not forgiveness.

When we need motivation and power, we find the answer in Christ. Remember what happens when the situation is reversed. When we sin, how does God judge a Christian? God knows about the sin. Sin deserves hell. Sin is a debt of guilt we can't afford to repay to God. But God's judgment is this, "Christ died for the sins of the world."

Our enormous debt of guilt is gone. It was nailed to the cross with Christ. Each and every single sin, of the millions of sins a lifetime contains—they're all gone and they're all paid for.

Since God freely and graciously forgive us for a lifetime of sins, we have a real and inexhaustible motivation to be able to forgive the comparably few sins people commit against us.

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32)