

Day 11 - *January 23*

Janet Collins
Father Forgive them-
Key Verse: Luke 23:34

Luke 23:33-35 When they came to a place called **The Skull**, they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified— one on his right and one on his left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.” And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice. The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. “He saved others,” they said, “let him save himself if he is really God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.” (NLT)

Imagine being tortured for hours, physically, mentally, emotionally, and then being left to die a long slow painful death, all the while knowing you did nothing to deserve it. I think of times in my own life when people have done things, or said things that really hurt me, I walk around in an emotional mess for a while, shedding tears, feeling broken inside, I may even feel anger towards them and want to cut them out of my life or avoid them so they can’t hurt me again.

Yet we just read the prayer of Jesus, as he looks at the ones who are inflicting the worst pain imaginable on him, and he says, “Father forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.” Jesus did not just say “Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you.” (Luke 6:27-28) He lived it out, and he asks us to live the same way.

Forgiveness is a choice. It is not based on whether the person is aware of the hurt or pain they caused or not. It is not based on their sense of remorse. It is a choice we make to

release the hurt to God and let him deal with it. This is a lot easier to say than to do, but when we choose to forgive, we are following the example of Jesus.

Forgiveness is an act of obedience. We are told to love our enemies. We are also told in Colossians 3:13 “Make allowances for one another’s faults and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.” We cannot just say we are followers of Jesus we must live it out in how we treat others. This means even forgiving those who have hurt us, and those who don’t even realize how much they have hurt us.

The result of choosing to forgive, then living it out by being obedient, is freedom. By forgiving we choose to no longer live in the chains of unforgiveness and hurt but release it into God’s hands to deal with. He is the one who will bring us peace and will walk the journey with us, as well as the person who has caused the hurt. We must learn to trust him with all of it.

When I stop and reflect on my own life, I think of the times I have hurt others through my words or actions. I think of the way I have hurt God in how I have treated Him or those around me, yet He still forgives me. Forgiveness is the most amazing gift offered by Jesus to us. Having received that gift, and realizing what it cost Him, his very life, how can I not want to move past my hurt, my pain, to extend the same forgiveness to others that Jesus has extended to me.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

In what ways have you experienced the forgiveness of Jesus in your own life?

What hurts have you been hanging onto that you just need to give to Jesus right now.

In obedience, pray for those you need to forgive, and live in the freedom of letting go.

PRAYER:

Lord, I pray you would forgive _____ even though they have hurt me. I acknowledge that forgiveness is a gift from you. I have received that gift and in turn help me extend that gift to _____. Today I choose to live in obedience and freedom, "Father forgive them, they do not know what they have done." I release this/ them into your hands.