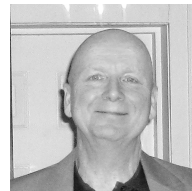


Lo The Ou Righteousness

Forgive Each Other

Elder Charles Moore



ourselves cannot do). Likewise, forgiving others does not require that we deny that an offense has

Paul tells us, **"Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."** (Ephesians 4:31-32) Did you catch that? The three essential ingredients in getting rid of bitterness, anger, slander and every form of malice are: be kind to one another; be compassionate towards one another and forgive each other. We looked at "Be kind to one another" in August and we looked at "Be compassionate" last month, so we will examine "Forgive each other" this month

I believe the reason Paul put "forgive each other" last is because I don't think we can really forgive somebody until we have learned to be kind and compassionate towards them. Let me remind you of Henry W. Longfellow words from last month's article, "If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we should find in each man's life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility." Put another way if we could just see what the other person has

been through and the pains and disappointments they have suffered, it would open the door of our heart to them so that we would be kind to them, compassionate towards them and even forgive them.

Forgiveness is not easy. C. S. Lewis said, "Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea until they have something to forgive." We all understand how true that is and that is why we are often tempted to be unforgiving. But unforgiveness is like drinking a deadly poison in hopes that it will kill your enemy.

Knowing forgiveness isn't easy, Paul gives us the added incentive **"...forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."** (Ephesians 4:32) When you remember the debts that you have been forgiven, it is easier to forgive others. In forgiving us, God did not turn a blind eye to our sin. He did not deny its existence. Rather, He dealt with our sin appropriately by forgiving us (after paying sin's debt, which we

taken place. God does not expect us to live in denial. Instead, we should admit our hurt and acknowledge our pain. When God saw the sinfulness of mankind in Noah's day, the Bible acknowledges His grief. **"The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain."** (Genesis 6:6) God gets emotional about our sin against Him. Yet, He forgives us. Likewise, in forgiving others, we are not asked to deny the reality of the offense or the depth of the hurt.

In forgiving us, God did not approve of our sin. God hates sin. But he loves us. Likewise, we are not expected to approve or excuse the other person's offense. But we are expected to forgive.

In forgiving us, God has given us a "clean slate." Now, a common saying is that we should "forgive and forget." Often this is based on the notion that this is what God has done when He forgave our sin through Christ. One place we get this idea is from Jeremiah, **"...for I will forgive their iniquity, and**

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SPEND
CHRISTMAS EVE
AT COLOR
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their sin I will remember no more."(Jeremiah 31:34) The idea though is not that God has amnesia regarding our sin, but instead it is that He will never bring them up again. He has determined that He will not allow our sin to ever again come between us. Likewise, when we truly forgive other people's offense, we choose to not let this offense remain a barrier in our relationship with the other person.

In forgiving us, God assumed the price for our sin. When we forgive others, we are saying, "I will trust God to work out justice in this matter and accept that for whatever purpose God has in mind, He has allowed me to experience this injustice." After years of betrayal, false accusations and imprisonment Joseph understood this perspective. "And Joseph said to them, Fear not; for am I in the place of God? As for you, you thought evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring about that many people should be kept alive, as they are this day." (Genesis 50:19-20)

David Yarbrough tells this story, "the wife of a Zulu chief happened to attend a meeting of Christians and heard for the very first time in her life about Jesus. The message of a God who loves us and forgives our sins was something new and wonderful for her to consider. She had never heard of such a God before. And it wasn't long until she became a Christian, too.

When her husband learned of this he angrily forbade her, on pain of death, ever to attend a Christian meeting again. However, eager to hear more about Jesus, she dared to go, and when her husband found out what she had done he met her on the trail and beat her so savagely that he left her for dead.

But it wasn't long until curiosity got the better of him and he went back to look for her. She was not on the trail where he had left her. But he did see broken twigs and other signs to indicate where she had crawled away. Following them he finally found her lying under a bush.

Cruelly, he asked, "And just what is your Jesus Christ doing for you now?" She opened her eyes, and looking at him, said gently, "He is helping me to forgive you!"

God calls us to forgive. The good news is that God helps us forgive, not just for the sake of those we forgive but for our own sake and for our own good. Forgiveness heals the hurts of the past. When we forgive, the wound heals and though there may be a scar, the pain is gone. God has given us the perfect example in that in Christ Jesus, God has forgiven us so much.

Cyberspace News



October 5, 6 and 7 started our month's activities with our annual fall retreat. We had a big weekend and are very grateful for the folks who traveled so many miles to be with us. Sonya Pease—New York, Kay and Jim Nevil—western Michigan, Laurie Eckles—Bloomfield Hills, Lynn and Rob Vaughn—Howell MI. Friday evening Tim Begeman had a Bible trivia game, but don't ask me who got the most right! Saturday the Church of God folks from Petersburg joined our ranks and Elder Moore spoke on our commitment of love to every person in the body of Christ. He had a commitment paper made up for us to sign so we will always remember the love we have promised to other members of the body of Christ.

In the afternoon Rob Vaughn took us on a picture tour of the Holy Land that he and Lynn had enjoyed in February of this year. It is wonderful to study about events in the Bible while actually being where they took place. Both Rob and Lynn loved that part of their tour.

We were especially glad to welcome Daran and Vicki Chapman to our time together.

We were really sorry that Jim and Deborah Stoner and Dorothy Layton had to forgo their trip to the Michigan retreat due to Jim being ill. He had a few days under the weather and has since had some heart tests, etc. Deborah reports that he is on the mend now though. Maybe we can welcome you here sometime this fall! This month in Maryland the Walter Layton's host a family reunion at their farm. Dorothy was happy to see everyone together. She always enjoys the young ones playing and having a good time together.

Please continue to remember Norma and Rip Ripley in your prayers as their needs have not vanished. We love you very much, Rip and Norma. Ellen Momberger also needs our prayers. The older I get the more I realize how important we are to each other.

We were happy to receive by snail mail a brief summary of Casey Johnson's (New Jersey) travels to India on a mission trip the last part of July. What a thrilling experience he had, and he will never forget the needs there. It always makes one appreciate our own country when you view the poverty in other places in the world. The New Jersey area was hard hit by our recent storm, and we were thankful to hear that the whole Kerry Johnson family was fine physically even though LeeAnn Huang, husband Jon and baby Max were without power until recently. Those eastern states really need supplies and our prayer.

Dale and I have enjoyed the fall foliage this year without traveling afar. We took an afternoon jaunt to an apple orchard and took pictures all the way. We hope that each of you look around and find things in God's creation to celebrate. This is the month of thanksgiving so do not wait until "the" day to thank God for our blessings.



Michigan Report

Tim Begeman

As is our custom we started out October with our business meeting retreat weekend. We had visitors from far and wide show up to share the weekend with us. I started out on Friday with a convivial question and answer segment entitled "Knowledge Excursion" where I tested the cognitive acuity and astuteness of the attendees. I tested their knowledge on topics such as movie fonts, population ratios, town names, Bible trivia and famous acronyms. The weekend continued the with a poignant and persuasive sermon entitled "The New Commandment" from Elder Moore about how all people will know we are followers of Christ by how we love one another in thought, work and deed. He also handed out a commitment letter that we were to sign showing our diligence and commitment to do so. In the afternoon we invited Rob Vaughn to give us an interesting and detailed slide show highlighting his and Lynn's trip to the holy land. The lesson that came across is we may not know the exact spot where the New Testament stories happened but we can know for sure that it happened. Later that evening Terrie and Dave hosted a get together at the Fedor headquarters. We all had an enjoyable time sampling the palatable refreshments and getting caught up on the latest news among the party goers.

We started our weekly Bible studies the week after our business retreat weekend. This time we are lightly skimming the book of Genesis in 10 one hour sessions using the Book by Book series by Paul Blackham and Richard Bewes. The first book of the Bible came from over 1500 years before the birth of Jesus, yet we discover his birth, life, death and resurrection prophesied there. Jesus himself said that the whole Bible was about him (John 5:39). Every week we have refreshments, reading and reflection.

Terrie and Dave Fedor made a trip to the land of cactus, warmth and dust storms of Arizona this month to visit Terrie's brother Jon and his wife Berty and to congratulate their nephew Scott on his recent high school graduation. It also served as a reunion of sorts with all of the Lane siblings traveling and meeting at the aforementioned Scott's congratulatory celebration.

Also traveling this month was my brother Jeff Begeman. He had to jet to Germany for work. Apparently, he was required to go in person and share some of the vast acquired knowledge stored in the crevasses of his planet sized intellect.

My Mom, Geneva suddenly and without warning, became under the weather this month. She suffered with skull splitting pain which she came to find out was a severe sinus infection. Her eyes became swollen and she said it was painful for her to stare at the light her cell phone was giving off. The pain did not circumvent her phone usage however. It is much more important to stay abreast of news and keeping in touch with her many fans and admirers than to be detoured with some all-consuming excessive pain. A doctor visit with Jim and Tisha as her chauffeurs and a few antibiotic adjustments later the pain soon subsided. Now she is on the road to recovery and regaining strength.

This month our local board went shopping for a new location for our upcoming winter retreat. The place that we have been renting for the last 20 or so years made policy changes that made it rather costly and unpalatable for us to use. When I use the word unpalatable I meant that literally, because they were trying to force us to eat their cooking rather than letting us cook for ourselves. Our group has some that have very particular and or peculiar dietary stipulations and requirements. In other words we have some that are whining, wimpy, little complaining picky eaters. We went to a few venues and kicked some tires and finally landed at renting a couple of lodges at the Howell Conference & Nature Center. Please, if you were thinking about joining us on the 8th, 9th and 10th of February you will not be disappointed with the accommodations not to mention the food that will be prepared with the utmost care and consideration for those with discerning tastes.

If you only do what you know you can do—you never do much.

**CHURCH OF THE
LORD OUR
RIGHTEOUSNESS**

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Turkey Riddles

What did the mother turkey say to her disobedient children?
If your father could see you now, he'd turn over in his gravy!

Why do Pilgrims have trouble keeping their pants up?
'Cause they wear their belts on their hats!

What is the difference between a chicken and a turkey?
Chickens celebrate Thanksgiving!

What is the turkey's favorite black-tie celebration?
The Butter Ball.

What kind of music did Pilgrims listen to?
Plymouth Rock.

Why do turkeys eat so little?
Because they are always stuffed.

What sound does a space turkey make?
Hubble, hubble, hubble.

How do you keep a turkey in suspense?
I'll tell you at Christmas.



Who are these people?



Jon Lane, Terrie Fedor, Kathy Gearhart, Kevin Lane



Scott and Shealyn Lane



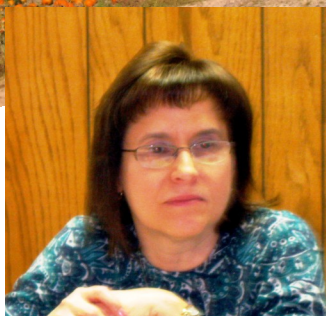
Erin Barbone, Casey, Kerry and Kathleen Johnson



Nate Valentine and David Charles



Sonya Pease



FALL IN MICHIGAN!

