

Is Forgiveness In You?

It was a beautiful sign. It was about four feet wide and stood five feet tall. It was white with black lettering and it read, "Robert's Farm Bed and Breakfast, entertainment, gifts lodging." That sign meant a lot to my wife. She had given up her job for that sign.

At the time, she was working for Westwood Floral just up the street from where we lived. She had wanted to open her own shop for some time and now that we owned Robert's Farm and had a regular following coming to our home on Thursday nights in the summer for our free concerts, we felt we were ready to open the shop. It was going to be a gift shop with crafts, and dried and silk flower arrangements.

My job was to order a sign for the front yard. So, I went to a local sign company and placed an order for this sign. About a week later, the owner of the sign company stopped in at Westwood Floral and began to tell the owner of the flower shop about a new competitor that was opening just down the street. She of course wanted to know who this was and the sign company owner said Roslyn McFarland. My wife was right there working on an arrangement when this happened. You can imagine the embarrassment mixed with surprise and anger, my wife had to quit her job before she had planned to; the sign company owner was ashamed of her unethical behavior and offered to give us the sign for free which we accepted.

So, this wonderful free sign that had cost my wife her job was delivered and set up at our house. The day it was put up was the day I had planned to mow the front yard. I used a large ford tractor with a brush hog attachment to do the job.

My wife said to be careful and stay away from the new sign. You can imagine what happened next. I hit the sign with the mower knocked a large piece out of it. I wanted to hide. I wanted to die. I wanted to go back in time and make the sign whole again. I wanted to do anything to avoid having to face the wrath of my wife and having to ask for forgiveness.

It is so hard to admit it when you have done something wrong. When you must go to the person you have wronged and ask for forgiveness. You give up all control of the situation and must rely on the kindness of someone else. What if they don't forgive you? What if the thing you have done to them is for them unforgivable? Then what can you do?

The disciple Peter must have felt this way after the rooster crowed the night that Jesus was captured and put on trial. Jesus had told him that he would deny him three times before the rooster crowed and Peter said he would die for Jesus before he would deny him. But now the rooster had crowed and everything was just as Jesus said. How could he face Jesus now? What could he say to him to make up for the wrong he had done? And what if Jesus would not forgive him?

If Peter had been logical about it, he might have reasoned that if Jesus was right about predicting Peter's denial, then Jesus was probably right about his own death and resurrection... but a desperate mind is not a logical mind and so Peter went into hiding.

Wouldn't we all rather hide than take responsibility for our actions? The worst part to me is the waiting for forgiveness. I just want to get it over with. Come on you know you're going to forgive me, just do it already and let's move on. But on the other hand, having that power to forgive is not something we want to give up too quickly. We want to

make sure the person asking for the absolution is genuinely sorry. We want them to earn that forgiveness just a little bit, don't we? Are you really sorry? How can I be sure you have learned your lesson? Do you realize how much you hurt me? These all seem like fair questions. The disciple Peter wondered about forgiveness and asked Jesus about it. How many times must I forgive someone? Peter asked Jesus. seven times? (Matt. 18: 21) Jesus said seventy – seven times. That's a lot to keep track of Lord. Do you suppose Peter remembered that after Jesus was resurrected? Do we remember it when we are asked to forgive someone like a spouse who keeps making mistake after mistake after mistake? Forgiveness is a Godly quality. Forgiveness has healing power. Forgiveness restores brokenness. Forgiveness is better to give than to receive. Is forgiveness in you? If you are a Christian who wants to be like Jesus, then it must be. Remember what Jesus said from the cross? Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing (Luke 23: 34) ...If Jesus can forgive his own murderers while they are in the process of killing him, what is there that we cannot forgive? Remember how good it feels to be forgiven? Don't you want to give that feeling to someone you love? Jesus wants to forgive us. All we must do is ask. Jesus forgave Peter. My wife forgave me. As we forgive others, God forgives us.