

Deep Forgiveness

“You can’t take it with you.” This well-known saying usually refers to physical things such as money or possessions. When you die and show up at Heaven’s front gate, you will have left all of your physical “stuff” behind on Earth.

What about your other stuff -- your memories, ideas, attitudes, whatever -- things you carry in your soul? Will you leave all of that behind?

I can’t give you a knowledgeable answer, of course, because I don’t know for sure, but I’ll tell you what I think. I believe that the good stuff -- the love you have given and received, the joyful memories, even the good feelings of having been a blessing to others -- those things will stay with you, but the bad stuff -- the anger, the resentment, the greed or envy you might have felt, and so on -- you might carry all of that with you as far as the gate, but if you won’t discard it, you won’t get in. There is no room in Heaven for any kind of sin -- and unforgiveness, which we find comfortable and very reasonable to hang onto, is a sin because it is selfish and a failure to love.

Jesus taught His disciples (and us) to pray: *“Give us today the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don’t let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.”*

Then He continued, *“If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.”* (Matt. 5:11-16 NLT)

Notice a very important fact here. What separates us from God is not His being unwilling to have us close to Him. His love for us is unconditional and never wavers. No, what keeps us away from Him is our refusal to let go of “stuff” that can’t be allowed into His presence.

Think of it this way. Suppose you have been wallowing in mud and garbage and all kinds of filthiness. You show up at the door of a lovely mansion that is all clean and bright and smells nice. The Master says you need a bath before coming in. Are you going to try to go in still hanging onto a handful of filthy stuff?

Do you understand what it actually means to forgive someone who has hurt you? Someone who insulted you, stole from you, abused you, neglected you, or did not love you enough? Maybe even someone who hurt you badly without meaning to hurt you at all?

What does it mean, this forgiveness that Jesus was talking about? I believe it means don’t let that injury—

that insult or abuse or neglect or whatever it was—don’t let it continue to affect the way you relate to that person. Consider that injury, whatever it was, no longer worth thinking about. If you do happen to think of it, be quick to dismiss that thought as foolishness, something either your own mind or Satan wanted to bother you with, but not something that matters. Because it does not matter any more. That’s what forgiveness is.

If what hurt you was trivial, it’s easy to dismiss it and move on. But if you were deeply hurt, or believe you were, it isn’t easy to forgive. You might say you have forgiven; you might even think you have; but if you still feel the hurt, and especially if you use that hurt as an excuse for not loving a person, then you have not forgiven. If you are still harboring some bitterness, some anger, some resentment deep down in your soul, then you are carrying around some “excess baggage.”

Why forgive? (1) Jesus said to forgive; in fact, if you won’t forgive, you prevent God from forgiving you. That should make you think. (2) Negative garbage like anger, bitterness, and worry, is poison for your soul. Your anger does nothing to hurt the person who hurt you. Dwelling on the memory of the injury just prolongs the pain. In other words, by not letting go of it, you are letting it hurt you again, on and on.

How do you forgive, when it’s hard? I heard a teaching once about Romans 12:1-2, that offering oneself as a living sacrifice is how we should worship God. The teacher said, “Picture an altar, and lay yourself upon it as a sacrifice. And if you find that you have slipped or fallen off the altar, climb back on it and lie down.”

Our lives -- including our emotions such as anger and bitterness -- need to be sacrificed on the altar of God’s unflinching love. Jesus took all of our sins with Him to the Cross. If we will let them go, He will finish that cleanup job.

Dig deep. Find the buried anger and let Jesus get rid of it for you. And the next time you see a shadow of it or hear an echo of its noise, just ignore it.

God bless you. Be free in Him!

Brother Roland

Special treat: three puzzles this month! ENJOY!

Send me your address changes and Bible questions.

**Brother Roland
PO Box 14
Fayetteville PA 17222**

Jesus, on Forgiveness

Jesus talked about, and practiced, forgiveness. From His parables to His final few breaths on the Cross -- "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing" -- forgiveness was a consistent theme of His. Here's a puzzle based on a few Bible passages.

Puzzle:

P O U R E D O U T F O R M A N Y N O R E F M O R B D O B F T D
A P L C K Z R W W V K J H B P F W A A Z N D E O L D G A O E L
R E F U S E D T O F O R G I V E E M A M E T U O R I K H R H B
K J G X Q D G C Q U H F W H N A G B O H E R S A E P I U N R M
M I H D E W O E V A L S S G N I K A S P E M E I W Y N N O R P
I K W H I C D T K B S U R W Q V Y I D H I H O N S S G D T E C
S E V E N T Y T I M E S S E V E N L T H G D F D N N F R F H R
T W Z Q S J G A S W T R W Z Q U O O R N T F T Y A X O E O E T
N T R A E H R U O Y M O R F P T R E I M Y H H Y S M R D R N Y
M E G S D H J P K O X O C E S B D K R F W O E A I O G D G O L
E X K V S S G O J U D C V U R R E R V C O H C M H O A E I T I
D V S T N E L A T D N A S U O H T N E T Q E O E D A V N V S M
N E M F B D J X J X L E O G T A W V N C N A M K E X E A I D A
O H I N F P E D C S J Y N N C E C E I O Z I E X Y O T R N L F
C T B R K K Q W D W E I E V R U M C T L T R N Q A E H I G U S
T R H U A I K E O V K H S O C Y O S U R W O A N L V E I J O I
O T R R U B K L I E W F M H A X R Y O S H E N Z E I D Q J W H
N X H O O C R G F K V O R P F I Z F O O E V T G D G E Y T S L
D N L I I W R O K Z N A D I F L D V H T C R W X S R B C K E L
I C J W S O T I T N H E L N W E Z Z Z J O A S D U O T O F E A
D I Q U F I A H I H D C E S G S H Z O W U D K W S F Q Q J S D
S N I S F O S S E N E V I G R O F R O F L P L R E T U W A I N
U H A F V E D M A F I R E H D E Y L Z V D M Z L J N P Z L R A
S Q P W E N X M Y G I B O R A Q H T I C N N H L I O T E Q A E
E E X B A W E G R B E R T R W M G T I N O B S D H W M A Q H C
J E P O J D S O X V L J S B S U U O O Q T Y Y Q G U D I W P Z
I N G T E A F F A C U O I T G I L A D N P L R Z F O U O O A Y
M Y F H T E S L G I H A O V S C S H E W A S V E R Y A N G R Y
B Z Y W H Q S F Y A H C Y D A T X T T D Y Y C F R F U K O O F
N I S T U O H T I W M I H T E L O I E J I O F P Y I H B O S S
E V E R S R X V A S T Y Q M I X D N P R T Q Q E N U X U X D N
W O M A N C A U G H T I N A D U L T E R Y N F K U K F I U M F

Words:

* Matthew 18:21-35

JESUS TOLD PETER
FORGIVE YOUR BROTHER
SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN
A KING'S SLAVE OWED HIM
TEN THOUSAND TALENTS
HE COULD NOT PAY IT
KING ORDER HIM SOLD
AND ALL HIS FAMILY
SLAVE BEGGED FOR TIME
KING FORGAVE THE DEBT
ANOTHER SLAVE OWED

THE FORGIVEN FIRST ONE
A HUNDRED DENARII
HE DEMANDED PAYMENT
REFUSED TO FORGIVE
WHEN THE KING HEARD
HE WAS VERY ANGRY
WICKED SLAVE PUNISHED
FOR NOT FORGIVING
SO GOD WILL DO TO YOU
IF YOU WON'T FORGIVE
A BROTHER OR SISTER
FROM YOUR HEART

* John 8:1-11

WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY
PHARISEES WOULD STONE HER
JESUS DELAYED HIS ANSWER
LET HIM WITHOUT SIN
THROW THE FIRST STONE
ACCUSERS WENT AWAY
JESUS DID NOT CONDEMN
GO AND SIN NO MORE

* Matthew 26:28

THIS IS MY BLOOD
POURED OUT FOR MANY
FOR FORGIVENESS OF SINS

People Who Met Jesus

Some were His family or His friends; some were His enemies; some were people He healed. If you don't recognize some of the names, look them up in the Bible. The way Jesus dealt with people teaches us a lot about to love each other as He commanded.

Puzzle:

N S E M Y H Z Q C I X W P O N T I U S P I L A T E O G F T Z T H N D J A
 X I F K X H W A F A D E K F P O A Q D Z O M F M K E I F X S C O Y Q R Z
 A X C Y D A L C T R Z M A A J R B D Q F R Q D H G P Q S I S E U Y A F P
 C R O O V N M W I M R O G Z W K B C F W V F N Z D W E T U M E M M N P G
 T W M U D B B A C S G L S T O I R A C S I S A D U J P R I G R U S A I Y
 A C C J E E E N N S P O R H Y O T Z B H L B B C T A A S R N X U R M C N
 E C E O E G M H I B N H B T O N S D M Y L V S J B Z T B J G R B R D F C
 W N E K L C U U P C O T G O S I B H V O S R U E A F O E Q I X E U A C Z
 V T E N A M O W S U O R E T L U D A N A E G H L Q E L I A Z S P X M P G
 P F K L T S B D N R V A N G T Q E F W P N T S N I I A J E S B R G E U M
 I A J O A U D E X M A B Q B A I P H E M N D Y G H Q E Z E P K D R N O B
 R V L A M D R H X W F R Z Z L R V L C H D W R T K H Z L G H Y E Y E G G
 Z Q U A M V G I M F V O E G Q I N X O C U G A E H B E I O Q T F S S R X
 V S C N Y E K A O U M L S B W E N J E E A F M F W H H F R E G P I A O M
 S G V N B Z S F M N C E N X T D E D H Q V Z H U T W T F P V C B Q R A Q
 Y O Q A R H X R C Y Q A I D N X I W G A O X P S X L N N P D A O O E D F
 H Y Q T D H T W N F R N A M O W N A I C I N E O H P O R Y S E H T G R S
 E O Y H J E F H X D P A Y O K S Y N W O N M S L U M M H U A H H R E O P
 R Z E E P N A X L D G H M Q Y G L M W L A Q O W I S I R M L T E O H F Q
 O Q I P M L S U S R A T F O L U A S G J Y S J S E F S I G Z A I O T Y G
 D E A R G Y I E P B P A X G B R R L F Y U U J A O H O W C L M Y C C M K
 A H N O Q Z M A I H C N A Q Y D P N Z A B Q L H Y H T J Y B I D J E M Y
 N N S P Q K O U F B I T T H A D D E U S O R J U D E L T C I R D D O F S
 T W S H D R N A E C Y L I Q K P I B D R Q X P H G I N V A Z A A H V H T
 I K I E L B O T A Q Z S I F F P K I S V Z K S W Z I B P I M F X Z M V N
 P C I T A A F F C U M A P P B D B T P N J Y W A N G L Y K J O E W N U I
 A J S Q H R C L M O T H E S A M A R I T A N W O M A N A T T H E W E L L
 S H R T W K Y A T G A F X A G T Y U R Z L S X W F O M O Z W P C H U X U
 X D R W Z P R H R H K Y J M T U R G J Y Y K C U V B H S X Y E E W S U T
 T A R T K E E C A I A P H A S T H E P R I E S T L F R T Y E S G X G Y E
 M U X U C R N V U F V U K R J K Q S K E S B R A A H W H S H O N Y Z Z V
 H K Q L O S E E Q M E H H R A X O L P C X I V V I B W I U V J Y Q J D F

Words:

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| A CENTURION | JOSEPH, MARY'S HUSBAND | SAUL OF TARSUS |
| A MAN BORN BLIND | JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA | SIMEON |
| AN ADULTEROUS WOMAN | JUDAS ISCARIOT | SIMON OF CYRENE |
| ANDREW | LAZARUS | SIMON PETER |
| ANNA THE PROPHET | MARTHA | SIMON THE ZEALOT |
| CAIAPHAS THE PRIEST | MARY, HIS MOTHER | TEN LEPERS |
| HEROD ANTIPAS | MARY MAGDALENE | THADDEUS OR JUDE |
| JAIRUS | MATTHEW | THE GERASENE MADMAN |
| JAMES | NATHANAEL OR BARTHOLOMEW | THE SAMARITAN WOMAN AT THE WELL |
| JAMES THE LESSER | NICODEMUS | THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN |
| JOHN | PHILIP | THOMAS |
| JOHN THE BAPTIST | PONTIUS PILATE | ZACCHEUS |

Books of the Bible

The Bible books are presented here in the order in which they occur in a standard Bible. As you find each name in the puzzle, note where it is in the list. It's useful to know the order of the books when you need to look up a passage. Enjoy the puzzle.

Puzzle:

P R O V E R B S P L M G T C A D F W U J L U V 2 N T I E E S
 E Z Y S V A Y Z Z U N U E S P H G G Y K O G T W R W A S N T
 K P H Z H F O K W K U B H A E D F Q V B M I I X I Y T A B L
 I N O I T A L E V E R U E A M G D C N Z M P H M H C I L N K
 W P V Z A S G Z S Y D N C I N A D J X O E M H T A N J Y D S
 Y M O N O R E T U E D J C W N G O U T R S C O A O L I X E S
 S U D Q S Z Z L U O O A L I T S L H J M E M H L B L A L P T
 E S 1 S A M U E L N H O E O T D Y E L J I X A A K A C C S I
 I D G S J C J E A E H L S Z X S E A V T Q S H V R I K I H T
 N S U N E V N H O J 1 G I C V O S S 1 I S N S T N I S K L I
 W Z N J I L F V D J J H A O V P F B N E T A R O K E A N U X
 D E Z A D K C J E O K 2 S A M U E L H O K I R J N D O H H K
 R P L B I H 1 I H Z Q Q T K V L X T L V I H C E A M R H A O
 H S S S A N S N N H E C E D J R 1 K 2 1 C T G U E E E W I K
 H V W I N U O U E O E K S Z K R A M C 1 I A A L S Z T R N C
 H M A E T A R L S Y R S I F S G B O O I X U I T Y Z E U A L
 A S L I R A I O A Z O H G E F T R W R P A H I F N H P A H X
 I V T P V B Q P M S 1 D C H L I G Q I C P S W B T E 2 V P G
 M M A T T H E W P A S P W 2 N P A N N T V O M S I V M Z E H
 E H S E O O P H L I N E E T D C L B T S I J E Q R L W A Z A
 R P R P J B U K H K L S H T F P A W H O S E A F H Z E Z L I
 E U T H Q A I E S O D I A T E X T N I S N A I S S O L O C M
 J C J E Q D H E H E A L H Q 2 R I B A D M N 2 A N T N N J E
 Q O P S K I M K U N X Q H P R L A N N O O K H 3 G R E E X H
 B H O I A A P A S G N O S F O G N O S B I C J O U G T E O E
 T A Q A J H V U O U F X D J G E S A Z N O O H T J G A F X N
 H I S N U M B E R S G I Y U X L R Z G P H A H T Z 2 X H L O
 R X Y S N B U Z I Z T N U N S D J S Z N Y V N G I P O W Q M

Bible Books

* Old Testament

GENESIS
 EXODUS
 LEVITICUS
 NUMBERS
 DEUTERONOMY
 JOSHUA
 JUDGES
 RUTH
 1 SAMUEL
 2 SAMUEL
 1 KINGS
 2 KINGS

1 CHRONICLES
 2 CHRONICLES
 EZRA
 NEHEMIAH
 ESTHER
 JOB
 PSALMS
 PROVERBS
 ECCLESIASTES
 SONG OF SONGS
 ISAIAH
 JEREMIAH
 LAMENTATIONS

EZEKIEL
 DANIEL
 HOSEA
 JOEL
 AMOS
 OBADIAH
 JONAH
 MICAH
 NAHUM
 HABAKKUK
 ZEPHANIAH
 HAGGAI
 ZECHARIAH
 MALACHI

* New Testament

MATTHEW
 MARK
 LUKE
 JOHN
 ACTS
 ROMANS
 1 CORINTHIANS
 2 CORINTHIANS
 GALATIANS
 EPHESIANS
 PHILIPPIANS
 COLOSSIANS
 1 THESSALONIANS

2 THESSALONIANS
 1 TIMOTHY
 2 TIMOTHY
 TITUS
 PHILEMON
 HEBREWS
 JAMES
 1 PETER
 2 PETER
 1 JOHN
 2 JOHN
 3 JOHN
 JUDE
 REVELATION