

It's A Choice

by Linville Dunaway, Corinth Christian Church

"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses," **Mark 11:25.**

The Lord talked much about offences and that forgiveness is necessary between the believers. He went so far as to say that if we didn't forgive each other, then God would not forgive us. That is a sobering thought, isn't it? To think that a person would be unforgiven by the Lord for not forgiving his brother. While it is easy to talk about forgiving one another, it is a different matter when someone has done us harm in some way. Sometimes forgiveness is easier to say than to do.

As long as it is some small thing that was done to us it may be rather easy to let it go and say, "I forgive you." What about when someone has done some harmful, or shameful, thing to us or to someone we love? Then it is another matter entirely and much harder to do. When we are hurting from the offence we don't feel like being nice to the person who has caused the situation. If we acted according to our feelings, we would probably do unto to them as they did to us. No, we would be as mean to them as they were to us, for that is human

nature.

However, we as Christians are not to live and do according to the fleshly nature as we did before we believed in Jesus. Our feelings are not to rule over us and cause us to behave in a sinful way. These things are not to be our guide and master, but Jesus is to lead us. Do you think that he felt like forgiving mankind when he was on the cross? He had been beaten, tortured, and mocked even as he hung on the cross, suffering one of the most painful deaths that a person could suffer. He didn't let the pain and the mockery of the people cause him to act contrary to the father's will, but as he suffered he said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

That wasn't him acting according to his feelings, for he had a human body and felt pain just as we do. This was Jesus making a choice to forgive and to complete the mission that the father had sent him here to do. I know that some might say that he could do this because he was the son of God, but what about Stephen who did the same when he was stoned to death? With his last breath he asked God to forgive them even as they stoned him. He made a choice that he was going to live and die by the word of God.

That is what life is about to a child of God who has been saved by trusting in Jesus. He makes a choice to love

and to forgive, not choosing his response according to his feelings, but by the will of God. When a spouse has hurt their mate by some deed, or hurtful words, they are sometimes forgiven by the injured one. This is a choice and is done according to the word of God and not according to feelings. The injured person is hurt and in a lot of emotional pain, if not in physical pain as well. They make a conscience decision to forgive even while they hurt. Then they let go of the pain and hurt and the healing process begins. When someone has truly forgiven they may remember the hurt, you know they do, but, they don't bring it up all the time.

I have known of situations where someone was offended by another person. At the time and in the hurt he or she, might say, "When they need me I'll not help them." At the time they mean it for they speak from pain and hurt to have been treated that way. Yet, when the offender came to a place where they needed help, the one that they had hurt helped them gladly. When they got over the hurt and shock, they made a decision that they knew was right. They forgave and helped the one in need without regard for what they had done in the past. It is up to us to do what we know the Lord wants us to do. It is our choice to make.

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This is a dramatized version of facts taken from the Book of I Samuel Intending to show some of the customs of these ancient and traditional times

SAMUEL AND SAUL
AS SAMUEL AWAITS A SIGN FROM THE LORD TO GUIDE HIM IN CHOOSING A KING FOR ISRAEL, KISH, THE FATHER OF SAUL, APPOINTS HIM TO A TASK ...

BEHOLD, MY SON, WE HAVE TROUBLE— AND YOU MUST HELP!

WHATEVER THOU SAY, THAT SHALL I DO, MY FATHER!

OUR BEASTS OF BURDEN ARE LOST AND WANDERED OFF! TAKE THOU A SERVANT WITH THEE AND GO FIND THEM!

AND SAUL WITH A SERVANT GOES IN SEARCH OF THE LOST ANIMALS!

THEY SEARCH THE LAND THROUGH MT. EPHRAIM, AND THROUGH THE LAND OF SHALISHA, AND THE LAND OF SHALIM— NO WHERE CAN THEY FIND THE LOST ANIMALS, FINALLY...

WE HAD BETTER CEASE LOOKING AND RETURN HOME OR MY FATHER WILL FEAR THAT WE TOO ARE LOST!

BEHOLD, THERE IS IN THAT CITY A PROPHET OF GOD— SURELY HE CAN TELL US WHERE THE ANIMALS ARE!

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