



Nuggets 6: Forgiven? - Living with Our Past

Before you go to sleep, what memories cross your mind? As the Apostle Paul lay on his pillow, did he sometimes remember his old life? Did he see the faces of those who denied Christ to escape his terror? Or other faces he sent to prison or death? How does one live with sins of the past?

Some of us would give almost anything if we could go back and relive parts of our lives. It is easier for God to forgive us than for us to forgive ourselves. Paul called himself the "worst of sinners." Yet Christ chose Paul to preach good news so that Paul could be a picture of how much Christ forgives. If Paul was to serve God and others today, he must let Christ take care of yesterday. He must come to the place where he could say, "I can't undo the hurts I caused. But I can give the rest of my life to redeeming instead of destroying." Because Paul laid his past at the cross, God used Paul to change the world more than anyone else except Christ himself. "He who is forgiven much loves much."

God made us so he would have someone to love. When we fall, God's joy is not in condemning us but in getting us back. He leaves 99 to look for one stray. The father of the prodigal sits on the porch every day watching the road for his lost son. Bible word pictures show how completely God forgives: "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow..." "You have put all my sins behind your back." "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." "You will...hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea." "I will remember their sins no more." "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." "Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him." "I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist...I have redeemed you."

Acts 8:1-3; 9:1,2; 26:10,11; 1 Timothy 1:12-16; Philippians 3:7-14; Luke 7:36-50; 2 Peter 3:9b; John 3:16; Luke 15:1-24; Isaiah 1:18; 38:17; Psalm 103:12; Micah 7:19; Hebrews 8:12; Romans 8:1; 4:7,8; Isaiah 44:22 (all NIV)

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