

Wednesday Devotion

January 18, 2023

Scripture: Matthew 6:14-16 (The Voice)

If you forgive people when they sin against you, then your Father will forgive you when you sin against Him and when you sin against your neighbor. But if you do not forgive your neighbors' sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. –

Quote:

"We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies." – Martin Luther King, Jr.

Reflection:

Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) was an ordinary man whose faith-led, justice-seeking focus made him extraordinary. He had a gift for communicating the brokenness and sinfulness in the world with such eloquence and honesty. Yet, thinking about the reality of his life makes his words about forgiveness take on a new level of meaning. He was a man who understood his very existence was considered by some as abhorrent to the point they wanted him dead. Due to his skin color, some saw him with hatred and as less than human. AND YET, because of his faith, he worked to forgive them, his enemies. Though these people wanted to keep him muzzled and under their control, he saw them as worthy of love and forgiveness in light of God's grace. Mind-boggling.

MLK's life and today's Matthew 6 scripture remind us of God's high calling toward forgiveness. Sunday, Pastor Curtis illuminated how life as a disciple of Jesus Christ means we are forgiven and forgiving people. It is always supposed to be both/and. Forgiveness is a way of life, a state of being faithful. In the Lord's Prayer, we ask for forgiveness as we are also giving forgiveness. MLK reminds us that none of us are all good or all bad. We all fall short of the glory of God, AND YET God still seeks us to love and forgive. MLK's words echo Curtis' emphasis that love and forgiveness are two sides to the same coin. Without God's forgiveness, we will never feel and embrace the fullness of God's love for us and how beautiful it is to share with others.

Questions:

- Each week in the Lord's Prayer we say this about forgiveness, "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." What does this look like in our daily lives?
- What do MLK's inspirational words about forgiving mean to you?

Songs:

- Traditional Song, Great is Thy Faithfulness by Maranatha!,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErwiBz1QA4o>
- Contemporary Song, Holy Water by We the Kingdom,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0xhhG1Hyos>

Prayer:

God, we are on our knees again. We need you. Release us from our unforgiveness and resentments holding us back from your complete forgiveness. Open our eyes and hearts to the places in our lives we judge, critique and even hate others. Feed us with your forgiveness and grace so we will live as forgiving, grace-filled people. We now praise you for the power of forgiveness to heal and restore brokenness in ourselves and this world. In the Holy Spirit's power, amen.