

My Prayer Journal

Use this weekly prayer to help you begin your time with God each day.

Prayer of Confession:

Thank You, God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that You have had mercy on us and have forgiven us through Your Son. Make us more like Him, so that we too forgive one another from the heart. And when we fail, forgive us for our limited grace and give to us the greater grace You shared in Jesus Christ.

My Prayers this Week:

Family Activity:

Have you ever heard your parents argue, fight, or yell? It feels crummy and can be a little scary. But your parents are just people, and people don't always get along. And arguing and fighting and yelling don't mean your parents don't love each other. And it especially doesn't mean they don't love you. Usually parents figure out a way to forgive each other. Kids don't always see the part where parents work through their anger, but usually they do that. And then they forgive each other and keep working really hard to keep your family together. It's ok to tell your parents you don't like it when they fight...it's always ok to talk about how you feel. That can help your parents and you forgive each other. 'Cause sometimes maybe you yell, too. God's got your back. God forgives, you forgive, your parents forgive.

MONDAY 2.10.20

Genesis 33:1-11

Today's story draws on deep currents of history and emotion. Jacob tricked Esau out of his birthright and his father's blessing, then fled his father's home to escape Esau's wrath. Jacob's descendants, the Israelites, often warred with Esau's offspring, the nation of Edom. Yet they preserved this story, in which Esau forgives his kid brother. Jacob felt a lot of fear as he approached the country where Esau lived (Genesis 32:7), and with good reason. Yet with many precautions, he moved forward, humbly seeking a renewal of the family ties. But Jacob also showed humility and repentance as he came to the brother he had wronged. Unlike Jacob, people sometimes see themselves as entitled to forgiveness "just because I'm family."

- When has your own fear, or someone else's fear of you, been a barrier to healing? Are there any fears you need to start dealing with today?
- What do you believe—does anyone have a right to demand forgiveness? What does it take to bring healing where there has been hurt?

TUESDAY 2.11.20

Genesis 45:1-15

Joseph was his Dad's favorite. In his coat of many colors, he often acted superior to his brothers. Sibling rivalry ran amok, and they sold him to slavers going to Egypt. There, in time, he became second in command to the Pharaoh. During a famine, the brothers who sold him came to buy food. They didn't recognize Joseph. He was gracious to them.

- In Genesis 42-44, Joseph gave his siblings some stern tests. In Joseph's place (betrayed and with the power to grant them life or death), what would it take for you to forgive them? What inner struggles do you think Joseph had before he could forgive?
- The brothers were terrified at first. This powerful Egyptian official was the brother they had literally sold out! But at the end, "his brothers talked with him." What role does open, honest communication play in moving past fear to forgiveness and reconciliation? Is there someone you need to talk with?

WEDNESDAY 2.12.20

Genesis 50:12-21

When their father Jacob died, Joseph's brothers were afraid. Joseph took time to work through his feelings before he forgave his brothers. In the brothers, we see that it can take time to receive and trust forgiveness for deep hurts, too. Their frightened, transparent effort to put words in their dead father's mouth moved Joseph to tears.

- Imagine yourself in the brothers' shoes. The brash kid you sold to slave traders is now the second most powerful man in the foreign land where you live. Rulers there hold absolute power. Your brother said he forgave you, but the family patriarch, the one person whose moral authority might have held Joseph back, just died. Would you be at all afraid of what might happen? Why or why not?
- As in yesterday's reading from Genesis 45, we read that Joseph wept. What role does expressing sorrow play in the process of forgiving, or receiving forgiveness from a person you've hurt? How can repressing sorrow or regret block reconciliation?

THURSDAY 2.13.20

Luke 2:41-52

The gospels only tell us this one story from the 30 years between Jesus' birth and the start of His public ministry. Interestingly, it's a story that shows Jesus' parents as worried and upset with Him. The word "forgiveness" is not in the story, but it seems plain that Jesus' parents had to work through the worry and pain Jesus caused them at that time.

- Jesus seemed surprised when His mother said they'd searched anxiously for Him. Did you ever do anything that scared or upset your parents, but seemed logical and safe to you? Can you better appreciate some of your parents' fears now? What helps or hinders you in trying to forgive reactions that still feel excessive to you?
- "Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover." That took effort and sacrifice. These good people were raising their son "right." Might Mary, like many parents, have hoped that parenting "right" would avoid any strains with her son? If you have children, are there things you need to forgive them for?

FRIDAY 2.14.20 John 7:1-5; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

“Even [Jesus’] own brothers did not believe in Him.” That must have caused Jesus pain. One of Jesus’ brothers was James (Matthew 13:55). Paul wrote, “Then He appeared to James.” Imagine the risen Lord seeking out His dubious brother: “James, it is Jesus, your brother. I died, but I’m alive again. Now do you believe?” And James did.

- Was there ever a time when you did not believe? If so, what steps led you from that point to where you are today? If you’ve always believed in Jesus, how have you applied that faith in day-to-day life? In either case, how do you keep growing in Jesus, letting His love and grace more and more shape your way of life?
- Paul wrote Corinth roughly 20 years after Jesus’ resurrection. Many eyewitnesses were still alive when he wrote. How does it shape your life and faith that Jesus’ death and resurrection are facts of history, not just “church talk”?

SATURDAY 2.15.20 Mark 3:21-35; John 19:15-27

Mark wrote that Jesus’ mother and brothers said at one point, “He is out of His mind.” They went to take charge of Him, but Jesus rebuffed them. Yet on the cross, He cared enough to think of His mother’s needs. He showed His total love and care for her.

- What kinds of pain do you carry from your parents? From siblings? From your children? How have you caused pain to others in your family? What steps can you take to begin (or advance) the process of forgiveness and reconciliation? How can you grow spiritually and emotionally so that you can live beyond pain even if other family members are not yet able to seek healing?



Daily Study Guide

February 9-15, 2020

Sermon Series: Forgive/Forgiven

Week Two: “Forgiving Family” - Rev. J. David Israel

Scripture for Sunday, February 9: Genesis 50:15-21

“When Joseph’s brothers realized that their father was now dead, they said, ‘What if Joseph bears a grudge against us, and wants to pay us back seriously for all of the terrible things we did to him?’ So they approached Joseph and said, ‘Your father gave orders before he died, telling us, “This is what you should say to Joseph. ‘Please forgive your brothers’ sins and misdeeds, for they did terrible things to you. Now, please forgive the sins of the servants of your father’s God.’”’ Joseph wept when they spoke to him. His brothers wept too, fell down in front of him and said, ‘We’re here as your slaves.’ But Joseph said to them, ‘Don’t be afraid. Am I God? You planned something bad for me, but God produced something good from it, in order to save the lives of many people, just as He’s doing today. Now, don’t be afraid. I will take care of you and your children.’ So he put them at ease and spoke reassuringly to them.” (CEB)

Things that really impacted me from today’s sermon:

Prayer Requests

- Robin Norton
- Kathy Westholt
- Vicki Robinson
- Duke Goodwin
- John Wilson
- Bob Savage
- Al Sappington
- Mary Hediger
- Delaney Digman
- Bill Reichter
- Jan Reichter
- Bob Vincent
- Bill Cruse
- Jim Stephens
- Sophia Miller
- Judy Hoffman
- Nini Schneider

Family and friends on the loss of Dale Allen

Family and friends on the loss of Nancy Westholt

Mary & Scott Gibson on the loss of Scott’s father

Share prayer requests online at livingwordumc.org