

How will forgiveness change me?

From: “*Show Me the Way*” – Henri J.M. Nouwen:

- This morning I am meditating on God’s eagerness to forgive me ... If I return to God with a repentant heart after I have sinned, God is always there to embrace me and let me start afresh.
- It is hard for me to forgive someone who has really offended me, especially when it happens more than once. I begin to doubt the sincerity of the one who asks forgiveness for a second, third or fourth time. But God does not keep count. God just waits for our return, without resentment or desire for revenge. God wants us home.
- Maybe the reason it seems hard for me to forgive others is that I do not fully believe that I am a forgiven person. If I could fully accept the truth that I am forgiven and do not have to live in guilt or shame, I would really be free. My freedom would allow me to forgive others seventy times seven times. By not forgiving, I chain myself to a desire to get even, thereby losing my freedom. A forgiven person forgives.

From: “*Days of Deepening Friendship*” - Vinita Hampton Wright:

- Without forgiveness, we will never be free. With it, we live in freedom and also free others to live well.
- Forgiveness is more like a door God has opened so that we can walk through and find the restoration we need. When we are able to change our ideas about forgiveness to such an extent that we see the open door and God’s great smile inviting us in, we will live in a new and freer way.

From: “*The God Who Won’t Let Go*” - Peter van Breemen SJ:

- Forgiveness is healthy food. If it isn’t on our menu over a span of time, the health of our spirit is impaired just as surely as our bodies become ill when lacking certain vitamins over a long period.
- Let God be God! God delights over us. God rejoices over us and shows it without inhibition.

A reading from the Gospel of Luke (Lk.7: 36-50):

One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment.

Now when the Pharisee...saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him". ...Jesus spoke up and said to him... "A certain creditor had two debtors, one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the greater debt". And Jesus said to him, "You have judged rightly".

Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one whom little is forgiven loves little". Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven ... Your faith has saved you; go in peace".

- **Imagine this scene as if it's happening in front of you ... Jesus saying: "*...her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love...*".
How do you experience God's forgiveness in your life?**
- **"*Your sins are forgiven ... go in peace*" – Jesus also says this to us, through the priest, in confession. As you are in silence, savour these words and sense God's peace in you.**
- **In this peaceful atmosphere, what do you want to say to God? ... And what does He want to say to you?**