**FORGIVE AND FORGET**

Let’s read some versus to relate to the thought of forgiving and forgetting [**Isaiah 1:18, 43:25, 44:22, Acts 3:19-20, Hebrews 8:12, 10:17** (from Jeremiah 31:34)].

When God forgives sins they are forgotten as if they never occurred. Knowing that our sins are not only forgiven but also will never be held against us once forgiven, we can have the assurance of appearing pure and white to God on the day of judgment. Buy when man forgives;

memories tend to linger.

**What keeps us from forgiving and forgetting like God?**

* **Hurt feelings**
* **Unfair treatment by self or others**
* **Sins against us or those who are dear to us**
* **Something terrible has been done to us or to our loved ones that we are not willing to forget and sometimes not willing to forgive**

We need to realize God has these same feelings toward us when we disobey Him! He is hurt by our sins, He feels we are not treating Him fairly, and sometimes we do terrible things that make a mockery of Him. He knows how it feels to be offended. He is the Creator of us all and when anyone of us of disobeys Him, it hurts Him and the cause of Christ. Yet when we repent and ask forgiveness, He forgives His children and forgets their forgiven sins!

We need to try to be more like God in forgiving friends, family, parents, brethren, employers, neighbors, spouses, etc. If we can truly forgive it will make it much easier to forget the hurt and pain. Then we will be living like Jesus.

I have been reading a book of J. W. McGarvey’s sermons from 1893. It has encouraged me to go deeper in my studies. I would like to a closer now look at the example of Joseph. Gordo spoke of Joseph last week. Much scripture is dedicated to this great patriarch!

**JOSEPH**

Ten of Joseph’s brothers wanted to kill him. Rather than kill him they ended up taking his coat of many colors, putting him in a pit, selling him for 20 pieces of silver into slavery, and then dipping the coat in goat’s blood. They took the coat back to his father Jacob. He surmised that Joseph was killed by a wild animal. As a result of this Joseph went into slavery, then prison, and then was elevated to Governor in Egypt (**Genesis 37:20-36**).

Joseph spent a total of 22 years from when he was 17 years old until he was 39 before he would see his brothers again. During this time he may have thought, “Why hasn’t my father come and looked for me?” Knowing what his brothers did to him and that his father did not seem to care, he dealt with very painful memories for 22 long years. So deep was he hurt that he named his son Manasseh which means “forgetfulness” when He finally got past these memories (**Genesis 41:51-52**). Even a grown man with a family can feel a lot of pain from bad memories, but God can help to sooth the pain.

After 22 years, Joseph once again sees his ten brothers when they come to Egypt to buy food because of the severe worldwide famine (**Genesis 41:56-42:8**). During this interaction with his brothers, Joseph learns that his brother Reuben had stuck up for him (**Genesis 42:21-24**).

Joseph then requires the brothers to leave one in Egypt (Simeon) and to bring back their youngest brother Benjamin to him. He sees that his brothers have changed drastically for the good (e.g., they are now willing to sacrifice themselves for the good of their father and little brother Benjamin), and these ten brothers prove themselves to be honest and trustworthy (**Genesis 43:8-9, 19-23**).

If God judged us on what we were at one time, we would have no hope. ***Thank God our chances are based on what we hope to be for Him!*** The same is true for these ten brothers.

Later in chapter 43, Joseph sees Benjamin and weeps. In chapter 44, he then tries to make it look like Benjamin stole his silver cup in order to keep Benjamin with him. At this point Judah tells Joseph of his father’s grief (**Genesis 44:18-34**). Good children know when their parents are suffering and try to relieve that suffering in any way they can. Judah offers to stay as a slave in place of Benjamin (quite a change). Joseph also finds out why his father had not come to look for him because Jacob thought he was dead.

Joseph can now look back and see God’s plan for him! Joseph is now willing to forgive and forget all the hurt and pain from how he was treated 22 years before (**Genesis 45:1-15**).

Forgiving and forgetting can be very hard. Sometimes there is deep pain that needs to be overcome. Joseph shows us an example of one who overcame his hurt.

Jesus knows when we have sin against Him and feels the pain for each and every sin we commit. And He still died so He could forgive us more completely than Joseph forgave his brothers. Notice what Jesus said while hanging on the cross (**Luke 23:33-34**)! God and Jesus not only forgive our sins but also forget (“remember no more”). What amazing love they have for us!

Let us work to forgive and forget more like God! Maybe there is someone in your life that you need to forgive and try to forget the hurt that they have caused you. Let us follow the example of Joseph and Jesus.

If you have not become a Christian, you need the forgiveness of Jesus right now! Just like God had a grand plan for Joseph, He has a plan for you! Please repent of your sins and be baptized so your sins can be forgiven and forgotten by God! And then you can come up from the waters of baptism, determined to follow the plan God has for you!

Let us know how we can help you while we stand and sing!