Coronavirus Social Distancing Daily Devotion #16

Forgive Them

**Luke 23:34 (NASB)** *34  But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."*

Continuing in the Passion week according to the Gospels, it is Friday and numerous individuals and situations are brought to light. Earlier Jesus told Peter that before the rooster would crow, he would deny Jesus three times. (Luke 22:61) The time had come for Peter to do just that. Just as morning dawned, Peter was accused by three different people that He knew the Christ and was a part of His group, and just as Jesus said, Peter denied His Lord in each occurrence.

The Jewish leaders longed for power and control over the people, but they were hindered by the Roman occupation. When Jesus began His ministry, they quickly became jealous and wanted Him dead. The time had come for them to make their move, so through Judas Iscariot, the day before, and his desire for wealth and lack of belief that Jesus was indeed the Christ the Savior of Israel, he turned Jesus over to the authorities as a traitor.

Pilot, prefect over Jerusalem, was the one whom the Jews needed permission from to rid themselves of Jesus. It was on this night; Jesus was paraded before him only to be quickly taken to Herod, who was visiting the area. Pilot learned that Jesus was a Galilean and because he was too afraid of the Jews to make a decision that would be in favor of Jesus, even though he believed Jesus to be innocent, he turned Jesus over to Herod.

Herod was ruler over Galilee and was delighted to have Jesus in his presence because he had heard about Him and the many miracles that Jesus did. This was Herod’s opportunity to see a miracle done by Jesus. For Herod, Jesus was nothing more than a circus attraction, entertainment to be enjoyed, not the Son of God.

Pilot did what he could to persuade the Jews from killing Jesus, but they wouldn’t have it. So, to keep the peace, he released a criminal, a rebel against Rome named Barabbas, and gives Jesus into the hands of the Hebrews to be crucified.

Beloved, that brief account is what Luke tells us happened on Friday. As we look at the various people, we see first, someone who denied Jesus even though he was a close ally and friend. Have you ever been betrayed or hurt by someone whom you believed to be your close friend? How did you handle that situation? How are you dealing with that situation?

And what about the people in your life who reject you or rejected you at some point? Even those people who you work for or have some leadership over you? Or what about those people or that person who was supposed to support and take care of you, the one you believed to have the power and ability to justify you and remove those from you who wanted to harm you?

Or what about the people that are your family or blood relatives whom you grew up with and now will have nothing to do with you or maybe ridicule you because you follow Christ? How are you dealing with them?

The words that Luke recorded for us from the mouth of our Lord are penetrating. Jesus, the Creator of all things, was despised and rejected, forsaken and given a criminal’s death sentence, asked His Father to forgive them all. Amazing isn’t it?

The greatest model of love there has ever been was in the presence of all those people. And even though they rejected Him, He forgave them. Now, He looks to us to offer forgiveness to all who have wronged us in some way. No matter who they are or what they have done.

Of all the weeks of the year, could there be a better time than now to forgive those who have wronged you?

**Ephesians 4:32 (NASB)** *32  Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you*.