

A sunset over the ocean with a golden sky and darkening sea. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright glow that fades into a darker blue and purple sky. The water is dark with some white foam from waves breaking in the distance. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness

– TFCHA JUNE 2022

“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone.” Colossians 3:13

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” Ephesians 4:32



Think about things that you are doing at the moment that require forgiveness. Think about:

- People who have been unkind to you
- When you have been unkind to others!
- At home during lockdown it is easy to say/do things that may require forgiveness

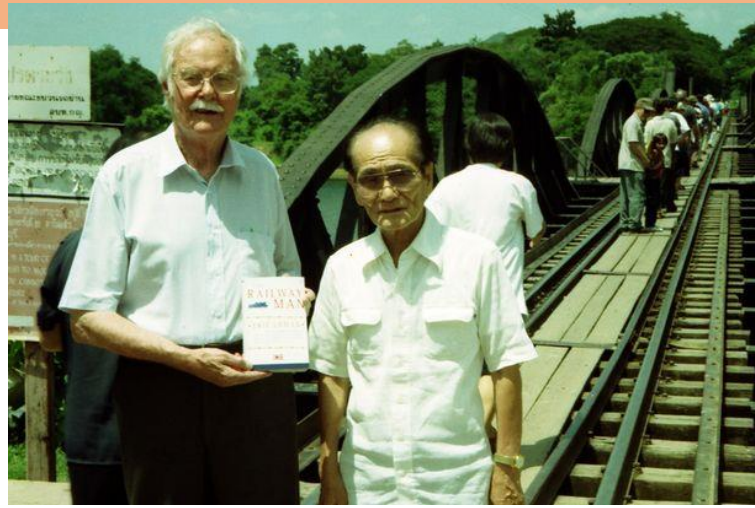
Why should we forgive?

Forgiveness does not mean that we are saying that what someone did is ok – if it was not – you do not have condone wrongdoing. But forgiveness is good because:

- 1. Forgiveness helps us to be happy** - when we hold on to hurt, pain, resentment, and anger it harms us far more than it harms the offender.
- 2. You can move on with your life** - forgiveness allows us to move on without anger or contempt or seeking revenge.
- 3. You hold on to power** – our anger, regret, hatred, or resentment towards someone means that we are giving up our power to that person. Forgiving them means you win back power.
- 4. Removes negative emotions** – forgiveness brings you back to good physical and mental health. The systems of the body respond to negative emotions, affecting the immune system in a negative way.

DOES THIS HELP US TO SEE THE BENEFITS OF FORGIVENESS??

Forgiveness – in extreme conditions – THE RAILWAYMAN



During the Second World War, Eric Lomax was a British officer who was captured by the Japanese and sent to Japanese Prisoner of War camp, where he was forced to work on the Thai-Burma Railway. During his time in the camp as one of the Far East prisoners of war, Lomax was tortured by a Japanese secret police officer Takashi Nagase. The torture included beatings, food deprivation and waterboarding.

Some 30 years later, (in the 1970s) Lomax was still suffering the psychological trauma of his wartime experiences. Eric Lomax found out that Takashi Nagase, was working as a tourist guide in the very camp where he and his men once tortured British POWs. Lomax traveled alone to Thailand and returned to the scene of his torture to confront Nagase 'in an attempt to let go of a lifetime of bitterness and hate'. When he finally confronted his former captor, Lomax questioned him in the same way Nagase and his men had interrogated him years before.

After an indefinite period of time, Lomax meets up with Takashi Nagase again, and in an emotional scene, after exchanging and accepting each other's apologies, the two make peace. Nagase and Eric remained friends until their deaths in 2011 and 2012, respectively.

A Woman Washes Jesus' Feet – Luke 7:36-50

³⁶ One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, so Jesus went into the Pharisee's house and sat at the table. ³⁷ A sinful woman in the town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house. So she brought an alabaster jar of perfume ³⁸ and stood behind Jesus at his feet, crying. She began to wash his feet with her tears, and she dried them with her hair, kissing them many times and rubbing them with the perfume. ³⁹ When the Pharisee who asked Jesus to come to his house saw this, he thought to himself, "If Jesus were a prophet, he would know that the woman touching him is a sinner!"

⁴⁰ Jesus said to the Pharisee, "Simon, I have something to say to you." Simon said, "Teacher, tell me."

⁴¹ Jesus said, "Two people owed money to the same banker. One owed five hundred coins and the other owed fifty. ⁴² They had no money to pay what they owed, but the banker told both of them they did not have to pay him. Which person will love the banker more?"

⁴³ Simon, the Pharisee, answered, "I think it would be the one who owed him the most money." Jesus said to Simon, "You are right." ⁴⁴ Then Jesus turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? When I came into your house, you gave me no water for my feet, but she washed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss of greeting, but she has been kissing my feet since I came in. ⁴⁶ You did not put oil on my head, but she poured perfume on my feet. ⁴⁷ I tell you that her many sins are forgiven, so she showed great love. But the person who is forgiven only a little will love only a little."

⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

⁴⁹ The people sitting at the table began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

⁵⁰ Jesus said to the woman, "Because you believed, you are saved from your sins. Go in peace."

IN THIS STORY IT IS MARY
MAGDALENE WHO WASHES
JESUS' FEET WITH HER TEARS

IT IS THOUGHT THAT MARY
MADALENE WAS A
PROSTITUTE AND MANY
PEOPLE FELT THAT JESUS
SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWING
HER TO HAVE ANYTHING TO
DO WITH HIM!!

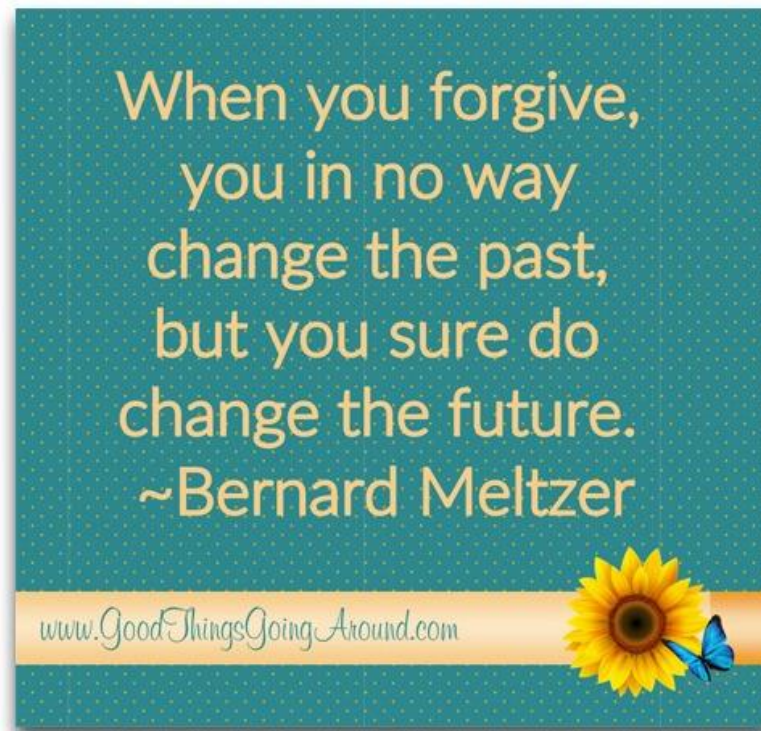
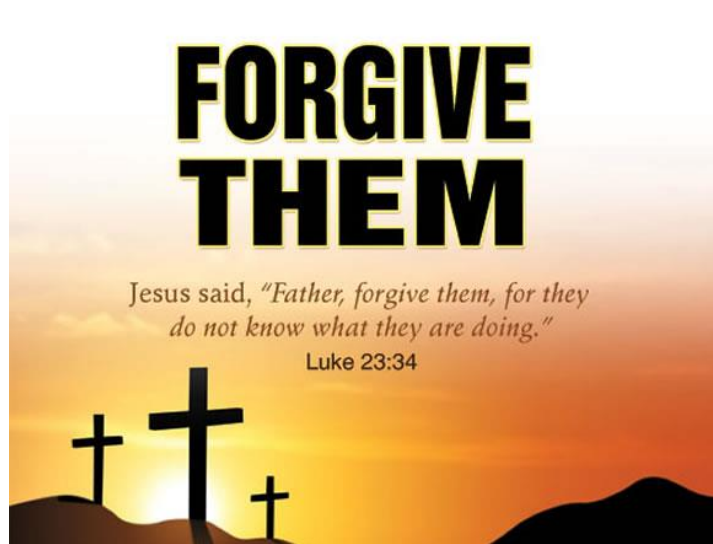
BUT – HE SHOWED
COMPLETE FORGIVENESS
TOWARDS HER.

CAN FORGIVE PEOPLE WHO
HAVE MADE BAD DECISIONS
IN THEIR LIVES?

Forgiveness during lockdown!! Good news stories!

- **The unbelievable friend** - During a night swim with girlfriends, bride-to-be Rachelle Friedman was horsing around and got jokingly pushed into the shallow end of the pool, where her head hit the bottom. She cracked her neck and has not been able to feel anything below it since. Despite the life-changing injury, Friedman went on with her marriage and has said she never harbored resentment toward her friend about the freak accident. "There is no use in being down in the dumps and depressed. It's not going to get you anywhere," she said.
- **The sympathetic victim** - Mary Hedges was at a mall with her son when two boys pushed a cart over a railing onto her, causing severe brain injury as well as blindness in one eye, and the amputation of her right foot. Even though she suffered a coma and spent weeks fighting for her life, Hedges was forgiving. "I wish them well, I do," she said. "I feel very sorry for them. My son is 13 also, and he is a very good boy."
- **The compassionate officer** - According to an excerpt of the book *Why Forgive?* Steven McDonald was a young police officer in 1986 when he was shot by a teenager in New York's Central Park, an incident that left him paralyzed. "I forgave [the shooter] because I believe the only thing worse than receiving a bullet in my spine would have been to nurture revenge in my heart," McDonald wrote. While the younger man was serving his prison sentence, McDonald corresponded with him, hoping that one day the two could work together to demonstrate forgiveness and nonviolence.

Think about it: how can I use forgiveness in my life?



“When you hold resentment toward another, you are bound to that person or condition by an emotional link that is stronger than steel. Forgiveness is the only way to dissolve that link and get free.”

A prayer for reflection

The Power of Forgiveness

Bless me with the wonderful power of forgiveness,
Give me the grace to unconditionally forgive those who
have done me wrong.

Give me strength to let go of all ill-will, the strength to
forgive myself of my own failings and past mistakes.

Free me of all anger, bitterness and hate

Amen