The need to be forgiven

Posted on Aug 08, Posted by Jacob Armstrong Category Religion

Ernest Hemingway wrote a story told about a young man in Spain who ran away from home. No one could really say why Paco ran away, or perhaps he didn't. Some said he was kicked out of his home by his father for something foolish that he said or did. Either way, Paco found himself far away from his small village wandering the streets of Madrid. Paco's memory of his mistakes and his guilt over what happened were leading him down a dangerous road.

It turns out that the last thing that Paco's father wanted was for his son to be far from home, which is why the father tried something desperate to get his son's attention. The father put out an advertisement in the local newspaper, El Liberal, which circulated throughout the entire city. The advertisement read,

"Paco, meet me at the Hotel Montana at noon on Tuesday. All is forgiven. Love, Papa."

When the father arrived at the Hotel Montana the next day at noon he was surprised to find eight-hundred young men named Paco waiting for their fathers.

The first time I heard that story I cried. Because of course I am a son who longs to be forgiven.

It is one of the great unspokens in our culture. We don't talk about it, but we need it. It affects our hearts in many ways, but we rarely acknowledge it. We need to be forgiven.

One of my friends told me recently of going to visit his mother in the hospital, she was sharing a room with a woman who was nearing death. He told me of how at night his mother's roommate would cry out. "Forgive me! Forgive me!" That bone-chilling request made in the sterile hospital room is not a rare request, but a common one. Often on the minds of those that are dying is regret for things done and some left undone. It's not evidence that they are despicable people but that they are human.

The definition of forgiven is "to grant pardon". What you once held against someone, you now release.

Jesus talked about the need to be forgiven and the great need that we have to forgive others of what they have done to us. When He taught His disciples how to pray he said that we must ask God to forgive us as we forgive others.

We all have the need to be forgiven and we all have the need to forgive.Forgiveness is available to you today through Jesus. Perhaps today you can ask God to forgive you and have that deep need of your heart met through his love and mercy. As you accept forgiveness you will also be able to extend it to those who have hurt you.

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