



Waldo Avenue
Restoration Branch

March, 2026 Vol 10 #03

Cultivating a Forgiving Heart

I read the testimony of a woman I would like to share:

In kindergarten, a classmate stole her favorite toy which she kept in her pocket for comfort, a small cat figurine. She never forgot that incident nor the girl who stole her toy. Many years later while attending her twentieth high school reunion she found herself in the buffet line beside this same person. The woman said to her *"I remember you, I almost didn't come tonight, I hated school but I'm glad I came."* A feeling came over the offended woman and she instantly forgave the woman. When she did all the resentment and anger she had harbored all those years disappeared.

Forgiveness occurs in many different ways and at many different times but in all situations it takes effort. Here are some ways of cultivating a forgiving heart.

- **Decide to forgive.** Forgiveness is a choice and it helps heal you.
- **Be patient with yourself.** Sometimes a hurt you thought was healed reemerges. If that happens, look at the situation from your current perspective and recognize you have grown and will continue to grow.
- **Surrender the idea that you are**

right. Instead of rehashing an offense, try to be kind, compassionate and understanding.

- **Breathe out past hurts.** When you feel stuck in anger, take a deep breath and let yourself relax. As you exhale, say to yourself: *I am ready to move forward, I forgive.*
- **Write your own apology.** If the person who hurt you is no longer in your life or unable to apologize, you can still have closure by writing down the words you have longed to hear. Consider them a gift to help you forgive.
- **Walk away the hurt.** Go outside with the intention of working through whatever is weighing on your heart. Sometimes physically moving forward can help you move on emotionally too.
- **Forgive yourself.** Dwelling on something you wish you hadn't said or done affects only you. Give yourself a hug and say: *"I'm ready to let go of this guilt and begin anew."*

*Continued on page -2- **Forgiving Heart***

Today my life is happier than it's ever been. I've remarried and have two more children. My prayer for them is ... I want them to be generous, welcoming and trusting. To take joy in the moment and listen to their inner voices. To understand that it's not what happens to you in life that makes the difference, but it's how you respond to the challenges that inevitably come along, and that there is a strength greater than our own in times of need. Jane Seymour, Actor.

Transforming Change

I recently read the testimony of a Mother of an 18 year old son who had been in an accident which left her son a total cripple, mentally deficient and unable to care for himself. She quit her job to care for him while her husband, a pastor, worked for their support. Insurance was running out because of his age which meant home-health care, nurses and aides who came regularly after the accident, had notified her they could no longer help her.

She grew up in an alcoholic family situation and eventually had no one to depend upon but herself: *"I basically raised myself"*. Now who would she depend upon? God? So far in her life she had basically said: *Dear God, from now on you'll be taking your orders from me.*

It sounded ridiculous but true. What she really dreaded was God taking control of her. It was one thing to believe in God but another thing to surrender to Him, to give up everything - her will, even her own son - to His total care. What would God do? He might tell her to stop staring at medical forms because her son's healing had gone as far as it ever would. He might remind her that she had prayed - actually already surrendered him in the hospital bedside when she had begged God to spare her son's life, no matter what.

Just maybe God would show her reserves of strength and courage she had never known she had. As she pondered she felt inside a release, change, like the end of a struggle and the beginning of acceptance. A picture came to mind of someone drowning, thrashing so hard that the life-

guard could not get a hold to pull them from the water. She stopped thrashing. She said that the most transforming change in her of all was surrender.#

Forgiving Heart

- **Look to animals for inspiration.** Ever notice how animals, though hurt by humans, open their hearts again and again to love?
- **Turn to Scripture for healing.** If you keep a mental list of who harmed you and how, replace it with a list of Scripture verses about forgiveness, such as 1 Cor. 13:4-5 which says *"Love is patient and kind...and it keeps no record of wrongs."*
- **Don't sweat the small stuff.** Did someone cut you off in traffic? Make sarcastic comments on social media? Let it go. Pray for that person.
- **Envision a bright future.** Focus on feeling better by releasing the pain or guilt of wrongdoings. Every moment is a new opportunity to cultivate a more forgiving heart.#

When forgiveness is heard, a heart is softened, and such a softening makes for a softening in other's hearts.

February's Women's Meeting Minutes

The women met at Sharon Bauman's home on Feb. 14th. Devotion was from Grace for Purpose on U-Tube followed by prayer requests and discussion on the Samaritan Woman from Twelve Extraordinary Women. Next women's meeting will be during the branch retreat, March 14th including discussion on chapter 9 covering Mary and Martha.#

Tamela's Testimony

The following is a continuation from January and February's newsletter, a talk my friend Tamela gave at a women's conference.

I clearly heard Father's voice that day say - *Go do something bigger than yourselves.* I just pondered that...

A few days later our pastor told me about a position for a mission in Haiti. When I told Steve about this, his response was - *I'm not called to be a missionary and have no desire to go to a third world country. Besides, it won't solve our financial needs* (we were going on eight months without Steve's income and couldn't keep our heads above water).

I still kept hearing God's voice saying - *Do something bigger than yourselves.* I picked up the phone that day and handed it to Steve. I said, *Babe call about this job...it's the only door God has left open...so he called the CEO of the mission and two weeks later I put Steve on a plane to go to Haiti!* This was a vision trip for Steve to meet the CEO of the mission and the Haitian staff. I didn't know what would come of that trip. I covered Steve in prayer daily because he was still struggling with depression, but I knew God's hand was in this and on Steve.

After Steve returned home, we started praying and seeking Godly council from our mentors. The idea of going to serve God in a 3rd world country at 50 years old was super scary. This was definitely something bigger than us. We said yes to the job and to God. We were so excited to go make God's name known among the

nations. We decided to call this part of our story our *Epic Faith Journey*. We called it Epic Faith because we took the job knowing that the mission was struggling financially and would not be able to pay us an income for over six months.

I know this does not sound logical or make any sense, especially because of the financial mess we were already in. Isaiah 58:11 says: *Where God leads, He Provides!* We were going to cling to that promise. Our new reality was in the hands of God our provider. He provided daily and gave us blessings that left us speechless. We were in awe of His provisions. He never failed us.

Steve's position with the mission required him to work with the staff in the states and with the Haitian staff. It also required us to go to Haiti every three or four months and be in the U.S. the rest of the time. Our first trip to Haiti was crazy...

We landed in Haiti on a day of civil unrest. There were riots in the streets, shootings, road blocks with men carrying machine guns, tires burning in the streets and buildings being destroyed. My first thought when we got there was - *I'm gonna die for Jesus while on my first day on the mission field.* Obviously we survived.

During this time, Steve was fighting like superman to get back to his normal self, but he kept struggling more each day. I finally convinced Steve to go to see our doctor. During the appointment I asked if we could get an MRI or CAT scan for Steve. I was concerned something was wrong. The Doctor didn't think it was necessary and thought Steve had possible PTSD from the trauma of the job loss and

suggested a counselor who does Cognitive Behavior Therapy. That is what we did.

We found a counselor and Steve agreed to go. At this point Steve's short term memory had declined significantly. He couldn't write or listen and with the panic attacks he couldn't drive. So I went with him to counseling to take notes for him, so he could listen and try to recall what he learned.

I needed the counseling sessions as much as Steve. I was learning how to give more grace to Steve and love him through this. I was learning to process the anger I had toward Steve by talking more to God. I would pray with Steve about things that scared him or bothered him. I would share verses or read scripture with him daily. I would turn encouraging praise and worship music on and sing to him.

Nothing was working. I kept fighting hard for him because I knew he'd do the same for me. There were still days I wanted to quit and leave and there were days I hated who Steve was becoming.

I begged God to bring him back to me and change our circumstances. Nothing changed. The counseling was good but Steve didn't make progress, he kept declining. His short term memory was gone. He couldn't solve simple tasks or problems. He wasn't thinking rationally. His conversations were only about his childhood. He stopped talking to me. This was the hardest for me because we talked about everything. We had no secrets to hide, we shared all of our strengths and weaknesses and downfalls to each other. He was always encouraging to me and we would laugh together for hours and now

there was nothing.

He was becoming more impulsive, aggressive and angry. He complained every day that his body hurt. He couldn't walk and talk at the same time. He was scared to be alone and panicked if I was gone. Terrified to ride in the car as he thought he would die. It was getting harder for him to do his job without my assistance, it wasn't getting done. The list goes on.

I took him back to the doctor again (asked for a CAT scan or MRI) but this time he wanted to test him for dementia and didn't think a CAT scan was necessary yet. Dementia test results all were negative. No answers again, and I was losing Steve faster each day. All those attractive traits I loved about Steve were slowly vanishing.

Steve started having hallucinations, hearing voices in the night, seeing people who weren't there and pacing the floor at night. Then he became suicidal. This broke my heart but scared me too. There were times he knew he wasn't in his right mind and would have fits of anger...he would run out of the house saying: *I just want to die. I can't think, I can't do this, I am gonna end it.*

I would follow him out of the house and grab his arms or face and hold him as tight as I could and say, *You are scaring me, snap out of it, I love you, I need you, I don't want to do life without you, your children need you, Fathers gonna get us through this.* I would just hold him until he calmed down. This worked almost every time. In those moments when I was holding him, God was holding us.

Another doctor visit ...I asked for a CT scan or MRI. He said lets try one more thing. Let's have him seen by a psychiatrist and try some medication. They wanted to admit him to a hospital to be evaluated but that terrified Steve and he didn't function on his own without me and begged me not to do it. They agreed to try meds first but that made everything worse. (I'll explain later why the meds didn't work and why God didn't give me peace about admitting him.)

Life at this point was more than I could handle. Continued next month.

If I don't think there is a way, then I need to change the way I think. Kathleen Miller

Updates on:

- **Zion's Ridge** - Reunion May 31-June 6, 2026 theme's have been set and fliers will be coming out soon. Please support this wonderful reunion which is only 20 minutes away!
- **Unity Center** - Saturday, Feb. 28th a group of women seeking to give ministry to the Beloved met for fellowship and planning. There were approximately 30 in attendance at the first *Sisterhood Women's in the Fire* breakfast meeting, organized by Pam Boehler, Marsha Howell, and Caroline Graw. This introductory meeting enabled us to meet women of other Christian faiths who are interested in serving others - another positive step toward Zion's living.#

Good communication is not how much you talk, but how well you listen. Gabriel Gonzalez

Our Testimony

Jim and I were running a few errands on January 29th. We had our last errand, grocery shopping. After getting what we needed we were sitting in the truck and Jim turned the key, nothing. It wouldn't start, just cranked. He tried it 2 more times and then reached for his phone telling me to get in the glove-box and find the insurance phone number. I also had the card of a tow truck driver I had used a few years ago and that of our mechanic. We sat for at least 5 minutes. Just before calling his insurance road-side assistance to arrange a tow he reached for the key, I offered a silent prayer "*Lord will you start this truck?*" I wasn't as bold as I would like, but scripture says to ask, so I did. Jim turned the key and it started right up. We both began thanking and praising the Lord for His goodness. We drove straight home, parked it and called our mechanic to have the truck looked at as soon as we could.

The following Tuesday he took the truck in, they found nothing wrong. We've driven it since and it's always started. My thinking is there were three choices: **#1.** the adversary was attempting to discourage us with yet another challenge. **#2.** the Lord helped us home so if there was a problem we could have the car towed from home, maybe even fixing the problem! But, **#3** - is the one I cling to - we were there a good 5 minutes. God protected us by delaying us those 5 minutes. Perhaps from an accident or something. He does that because He knows everything from the beginning to the end. What a marvelous God! #



The Cry Heard Throughout Eternity

This week, I lingered in the final breath of Malachi's words and I felt the unbearable weight of what followed. When the prophet finished speaking, heaven did not answer. The echo of his voice faded...and then...nothing. Four hundred years of silence. No open vision. No burning word. No prophet rising with fire in his bones. No *"thus says the Lord"* breaking the darkness. Four hundred years of waiting. Of longing. Of groaning. Of hearts lifted toward heaven that seemed sealed shut. Generation after generation was born into the quiet. They lived. They died. And still - no voice.

Until one night...in a stable ...in the shadows of obscurity and insignificance...a sound was released. After four hundred years, heaven spoke again - not with thunder, not with fire, not from a mountain - but from the lungs of a newborn. A cry pierced the silence. A cry that split history in two. A cry that carried eternity within it.

In that moment, the King of Glory stepped down into the dust of His own creation. The Eternal wrapped Himself in skin. The Word became flesh - and cried.

The Son laid aside His throne and chose a manger, heaven's highest treasure placed in a feeding trough. He came low. He came meek. He came breakable. Wrapped in swaddling clothes, laid where animals ate, born beneath the looming shadow of a cross. A lamb born to be slain. The Hope of a hopeless world breathed His first breath in the dark. A weary world rejoiced as a young virgin labored and delivered its redemption. In the manger, the Great I AM made Himself vulnerable. Touchable. Killable. And with one holy cry, the silence was shattered. The separation was broken. The way was opened. Then, suddenly, heaven could not remain quiet.

The skies erupted with angelic voices declaring,

Glory to God in the highest Wonderful. Counselor. Mighty God. Everlasting Father. Prince of Peace.

With the cry of an infant, heaven invaded earth. Behold - our Redeemer. Behold - our King. Behold - the fulfillment of every promise. Behold - the sound that broke four hundred years of silence. Not the roar of an army. Not the shout of a king claiming His crown. But the fragile cry of God -with-us. He did not arrive with a sword in His hand, but with nails already written into His future. He did not enter wrapped in royalty, but in cloths that foretold a burial.

The silence was not just broken, it was answered. Every unanswered prayer. Every tear cried into the dark. Every generation that waited without seeing. Every promise that seemed delayed but not denied. All of it converged in the single cry.

That night, heaven did not just speak - heaven gave. God did not send another prophet. He did not send another sign. He sent Himself. And in that stable, eternity took its first shallow breath. Omnipotence learned weakness. Glory learned humility. Love made itself small. The cry that shattered the silence would one day be echoes again - not from a manger, but from a cross.

The first cry said, *He has come*. The final cry would say, *It is finished*. From swaddling clothes to grave clothes, from a feeding trough to a borrowed tomb, He came to be broken so we could be made whole. And even now, that sound still reverberates. It calls the weary. It awakens the forgotten. It reaches into the places where heaven has fell silent again. If God could speak through the cry of a baby, He can still break silence in our darkest night. So behold Him. Not distant. Not untouchable. Not unmoved. But Emanuel, God with us. (Jessica Jecker) #

The open heart doesn't say, "No, I can't do that." It remains open to challenges, open to change, open to guidance. You can let go of what is upsetting and hurtful and allow something beautiful to enter. If your heart is open it can never stay broken for long. Jane Seymour, Actor