



Wednesday Prayer

15th Sunday after Pentecost – Forgive 77 times?

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.” Matthew 18:21-22

Seventy-seven times? How could I forgive the man who sexually assaulted me at gunpoint and nearly left me for dead even *once*, let alone seventy-seven times? Even though I believed God rescued me that day when I called His name out loud and that man fled as if his hair was on fire? I could *not* forgive him, *ever!* Even when I first accepted Christ as my personal savior about three years after the assault. What about the seventy-seven-plus times I had been terrified to go out alone at night? I cried myself to sleep, living alone, afraid he would find me again. I had nightmares. I jumped out of my skin if I heard a suspicious noise. Pounding in my chest, emotional numbness—all symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. They never found him or held him accountable in any way, but I was convicted and sentenced to a lifetime of fear and sadness because of *his* actions. And I’m supposed to forgive *him*?

After years of counseling and keeping secrets, I wrote a memoir that changed my life. I began speaking out about what happened to me. I thought I had forgiven the man by then. After all, I was a Christian and it was what I was supposed to do. But the rage and yes, hatred for him still simmered below the surface. Then I was asked to speak to two hundred and fifty convicted sex offenders in a men’s treatment program at a Minnesota correctional institution. Friends were praying for me and I could literally feel the Holy Spirit bouncing off the walls as I stood before row after row of rapists who had admitted wrong and sought understanding of the harm they had done. If those men were brave enough to face their demons and seek to do good, I had to lay down the gauntlet. As I told my story, I found myself not only feeling compassion and forgiveness for those men, but I let go of my unforgiveness for the man who assaulted me.

Lord, thank You for showing me not one, not seventy-seven, but two hundred and fifty reasons to forgive. Amen.

Please note: This is Meg’s personal story of forgiveness. This is not an assertion that survivors should be ready to forgive, or that forgiveness means that there are not consequences for the person who committed the abuse or assault. For more information, read [“When the Abuser Is Among Us: One Church’s Response to a Perpetrator.”](#)

Written by Meg Corrigan. Meg’s compelling memoir, *Then I Am Strong: Moving From My Mother’s Daughter to God’s Child*, tells of her miracle of survival following a sexual assault at gunpoint. God’s timely intervention in Meg’s life is her motivation to help other survivors. Reach out to her at MegCorrigan@comcast.net or 651-295-7099 or through her website, www.MegCorrigan.com.