

To all those seeking a deeper relationship with God,

**SCRIPTURE:**

Psalm 32:3, 5 (NIV) – Larger reading: Psalm 32:1-11

*When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long... Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"-- and you forgave the guilt of my sin.*

**STORY:**

Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, was reminded one day of a vicious deed that someone had done to her years before. But she acted as if she had never even heard of the incident. "Don't you remember it?" her friend asked. "No," came Barton's reply, "I distinctly remember forgetting it."

**OBSERVATION:**

Let's be honest ... it is hard, extremely hard, painfully hard to forgive. Sometimes we just look at situations suffered by others and wonder, "How do they do that?" What is heard more often is, "I'll forgive, but I will never forget!" Ouch! Too often isn't that just like you and me?

Forgiveness is hard. And, as probably experienced by Clara Barton, very challenging ... especially with some of the things we have experience in this life. Yes, some things are easy to forgive, but there are other things that make us wonder if even God himself could forgive under the circumstances.

If it were easy it wouldn't be forgiveness. If it could roll off of us, "like water on a duck's back" then anyone could do it. It takes a truckload of grace and the strength of the Holy Spirit to forgive. That is what makes it so special when it is given. That is what makes it so dynamic when it is experienced.

And then to take the step even further ... to offer forgiveness even when it is not asked for. WOW! Now THAT IS GRACE!

**QUOTE:**

*"General Oglethorpe once said to John Wesley, "I never forgive and I never forget." To which Wesley replied, "Then, Sir, I hope you never sin."*

**PRAYER:**

Make it so in our life today. May we be instruments of grace under fire. May we be examples of forgiveness when it isn't asked for.

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim  
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***All Saints Sunday with Holy Communion is next Sunday.***

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