

Forgiving (with 2 songs from "*I BELIEVE*")

"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

(Luke 23:34)

As I worked through forgiveness of my father for molesting me, I wrote the book, "Bentley & the Boy with the Bear." It was the most difficult writing I have ever undertaken.

I stopped and started it. As the man/boy dealt with his father, (whom he murdered) in prison - so I dealt with my own father, in my own prison.

The father I loved so much; the father I thought loved me more than any of my 4 parents (birth and adoptive).

This writing was NOT an easy process. The story took twists and turns I could not imagine when I began. For approximately 2 years, I dealt with this story. The little boy become man; a man with an agonized little boy living inside. A life dictated by deep childhood wounding. A life finally experiencing freedom - on death row.

When I feel any residual anger towards my father now that the shock of these memories has become a part of my life since 2009, I can now say what Jesus said:

"Father, forgive him, he knows not what he did." And still that is a challenge to say.

It was not easy to get to this place. For several years I thought that forgiveness was simply letting him off the hook.

Then I thought about Jesus. God as man is butchered on a cross. Sinless, He was crucified for our sins. He was murdered for us. Dying, He bought our salvation with His own blood. While being the blood sacrifice for our sins, He dies with words of forgiveness. Forgiveness!

"For God so loved the world, that He sent His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

As the remission of sin demanded a blood sacrifice, Jesus became the once and forever "Lamb" of God to die for all sin. The blood of the lamb on the doors at Passover, became the Blood of the Lamb of God on the doors of our hearts - for once and for all - Forever.

I often cry when I see depictions of Jesus, nails in His hands and feet, butchered on a cross in my place, for my sins. Totally blameless. Innocent. Would I willingly climb onto a cross, allow nails to hold my hands and feet - while I paid the penalty for someone else's crime???? I know the answer to that.

He died for me. For you. For my father . . . and He died for . . .

In August of 2014, I sat down and began to read aloud, "Bentley & the Square Round House;" the story I wrote of young Nina, a little girl raped by her revered minister father. As I read of him hitting her, I suddenly felt (and saw) a man's hand squeeze my neck, choking me!! I couldn't read any more! In my mind's eye I saw myself at age 3, or 3 1/2. I only saw his adult hand. I did not see his face. I did not know who he was. He suddenly removed his hand and I had a violent sore throat for a moment. My body remembered. A fragment. That's how these 'dissociative' memories are. Fragments with no narrative. The man-sized hand around my little neck identified him as an adult.

I sat on my couch, stunned. Immediately I realized that this is what caused my lifetime of dizziness. An MRI confirmed that I had a 'break' in my neck. For over 50 years I had been told that my chronic dizziness was caused by my inner ear. But this was not true. Some man tried to choke me; some man tried to silence me; was he trying to murder me? And I was only 3 years old.

Ironically, I was so happy the memory emerged from the sacred vault of my primitive brain; the PTSD receptacle. I'm also extremely grateful NOT to know who tried to harm/kill me. My father? An uncle? It's enough for me to know the root of this lifetime disability. And now, this also must be forgiven. As I forgive this man, I put him and his actions, in the hands of Almighty God. I place his sin on Jesus . . . on the cross.

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I am recording "Bentley & the Boy with the Bear." I have been gifted with the talent of mimicry. I can 'mimic' all the characters' voices. It's so natural for me.

"Bentley & the Square Round House" and "Bentley & the Boy with the Bear" are the books I wrote dealing with childhood abuse. Sexual and physical abuse. They have helped me work through so much of what is still 'unremembered/unknown' to me. Even this past Christmas Day, a vague and uncomfortable memory came up . . .

I trust God that what I need to remember will surface; what is too much for me, will remain hidden. What's most significant, is that I work now to forgive. Not to excuse. Forgiveness frees me; it puts my father (and others) in the hands of Almighty God! They are not off the hook --- but they are off of MY hook . . .

If the truth be told, and yes, I will tell it . . . I am so pained by my father's actions, because I loved him so much, and still want to love him! I remember good things that he did. It is, unfortunately, not black and white; not 'cut and dried.' This is where the pain lies. I want to love my adoptive father . . .

As I want to love my birth father. The father who refused to give me his name because he did not want to embarrass his 'real' children, his legitimate children, by exposing the 3 illegitimate ones - me, Richard and Sharon. We were expendable, they were not.

What pain. What hurt. And what a revelation to me, the day I realized my hurt stemmed from not being able to love my real father . . . how vulnerable I felt, wanting to love the man who gave me away before I was even born. I should not want to love him!!!! Yet, I do.

" . . . Father, forgive him, he knew not what he did . . . "

He is long dead (as is my birth brother). When I learned of him in 2009, I went to Mountain Grove Cemetery and found his grave. There he was, buried next to his first wife. That did it. I spit on his grave. It was all he deserved . . .

I returned two more times and made peace with him. The man 30 years older than my birth mother. What a jaded situation.

I look forward now. On April 25th, 2015, as I awoke the words,
JESUS CHRIST IS COMING SOON
appeared before me. Unmistakable. I don't receive a whole lot of prophetic words. Yet, Almighty God has shown me this.

God promises to forgive us as we forgive those who have hurt us.

It is hard to forgive. Yet, it is transforming.
I lost much of my life due to my parents - all 4 of them. I lost a significant singing career . . .and more. "The sins of the father" etc., were visited upon me in ways that trashed my hopes and dreams . . . so much got stolen from me. And yet . . .

I choose to go forward, forgiving. I choose to cancel the debts. That's a whole lot to carry around, and I am intent upon going forward; to sift

my life ashes and find the Beauty that is there. The paradox of God . . .
lose yet gain . . . give yet get . . . choose to say: "I forgive you."

How vulnerable you leave yourself. I am hardly a sainted person
forgiving these people. And yet . . .

How FREE I become. Another paradox. It's risky saying,
"I've cancelled your debt. You owe nothing." Very risky. And yet . . .

Jesus gave/forgave/lowered Himself. And yet . . .

He was resurrected above all of earth and eternity!

He lost everything He had, only to gain More.

*Father, forgive them. Forgive them as I forgive them;
They knew NOT what they did.*

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*It is Finished; Fulfilled. I've laid this huge burden down.
I am now ready to take a new step in my life.*

Isaiah 43: 19 & 1 . . .

*"See I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the desert
and streams in the wasteland . . . "
. . . "Fear not, I am with you!
I have called you by name, Carol,
You are Mine.*

(1988/2015)

Gratefully learning to forgive, I move forward.

- Carol

*P.S. Last night I dreamed of an evergreen tree growing
in my childhood bedroom. I saw it needed more branches,
and I said, "I'll prune it so more branches grow." As I
touched a large branch, it came off effortlessly in my hand.
In it's place, a small, yet beautiful, green flower was already
growing! I was completely - and happily - surprised.
"See, I am doing a new thing, Carol, do you not perceive it?"
1/12/2016*