

WOCI INTERNATIONAL PREPARING THE REMNANT

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PREPARING THE REMNANT

BY DEBORAH MAYFIELD

While the COVID pandemic has forced many people to start thinking about the End Times (2 Thess 1:11), we at WOCI already know Yeshua has chosen us to prepare a remnant for such a time. John 15:16 reminds us of our Great Commission (make disciples as we go) and our need to make spiritual and natural preparations for the End Times.

Yeshua stressed the importance of this in Mark 13, in His spiritual instruction regarding the End Times and Yahweh's judgment on sin, when He said 1. Stay Alert! 2. Don't be deceived. 3. Watch 4. Pray. But Yeshua gave them instructions regarding natural preparation as well, when He said in Mark 13:14 "Now when you see the abomination that causes devastation [a] standing where it ought not to be" (let the reader understand the allusion), "that will be the time for those in Y'udah to escape to the hills." Why go to the hills? Preparations had been made to accommodate their impending escape.

NOW is the time to adhere to Yeshua's End Times instructions. "Prepare yourself, get ready, you and all your crowd gathered around you; and take charge of them." Ezek 38:7 Let us take charge and fulfill our callings by preparing the remnant! – "It's the same way in the present age: there is a remnant, chosen by grace" Romans 11:5 CJB.

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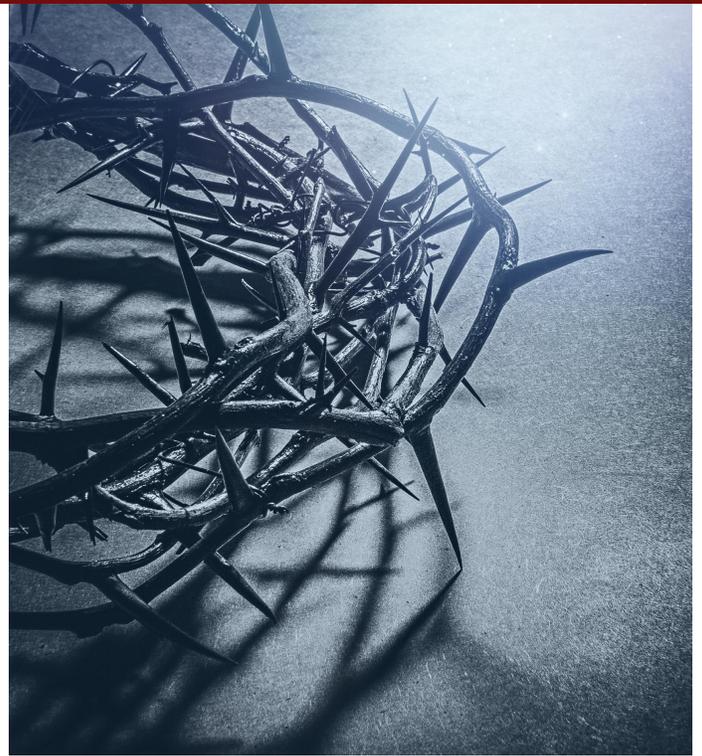
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FORGIVENESS 101

BY JEFFREY MAYFIELD

Today we will discuss some basic scriptural truths concerning forgiveness, which tend to get overlooked in the typical conversation about forgiveness. Truths that will enable a guilt ridden believer to free himself permanently from the shame and embarrassment he carries around because of his bondage to sinful prior acts.

While there are many answers to the question, "Why do believers still feel guilty about behavior they asked God to forgive," I will focus on one in particular. The one that opines believers feel this way because they have not forgiven themselves. The problem with this false belief (besides the fact it is untrue), it directly contradicts fundamental biblical principles regarding forgiveness and ensures those believing this will continue to feel guilty about prior bad acts in the future.



What does Scripture actually say about forgiving yourself (aka self-forgiveness)? Nothing. Rather, it tells us to consider our sin (Psalm 25:18), repent of our sin (Acts 17:30) and seek God's forgiveness for our sin (1 John 1:9). It informs us that we cannot forgive ourselves of sin as human beings, because whatever sin we commit is against our God: not ourselves (Psalm 51:4). It reminds us that we must forgive those that trespass against us. But we are only able to forgive because He has given us the power to do so when they break one of His laws in their mistreatment of us.

Since our sin is against an infinitely holy God (and Him alone), what other important reality accompanies this truth? He can choose whether He will forgive and it's not a sin if He elects not to forgive (Isaiah 22:14). Unlike with us, however, it is a sin to refuse to forgive others of their trespasses against us (Matt 6:14-15).

What do those believing they have the ability to forgive themselves fail to realize? First, no one is able to forgive himself of sin because no one can be a trespasser (one who commits the sin) and a remitter (one who forgives the sin). Second, "us needing to forgive ourselves" is part of a larger false narrative and dangerous pseudo reality that connects forgiveness to "feeling" forgiven (even though forgiveness has nothing to do with the presence or absence of emotions).

Why does our adversary take pleasure in us subjecting ourselves to this pseudo reality? He knows that we are forgiven when we acknowledge our sin, repent of our sin, and ask for forgiveness (acts of our will in our spirit; not acts of our emotions in our soul). He also knows if we try to forgive ourselves without trusting in the underlying truth that Yeshua has already paid for our sins when we trust in Him as Messiah and Adonai and request forgiveness (1 John 1:9); any forgiveness we think we have is illusionary at the least and temporal at best.

If it is that simple, why do we not "feel" forgiven at times? Sometimes, we don't "feel" forgiven because we still believe Satan's lie that we have not been forgiven. The truth is, regardless to how we feel and the number of times Satan brings it to our mind, once the Father forgives us, He remembers our sins no more (Jer 31:34). This does not mean He forgets our sin when He forgives us. It does mean He chooses not to bring it up to Himself or others and neither should we.

Sometimes we do not "feel" forgiven because we don't want forgiveness. We don't want to move beyond our past and we really don't want to forget our former sins. We like the vicarious thrill we get out of reliving past sins in our minds, even though it subjects us to a never-ending and destructive cycle of sin/guilt/sin/guilt. Lastly, we do not "feel" forgiven sometimes because we have a need to perform some type of penance to earn our forgiveness. And when we are denied the opportunity to perform what we perceive is an admirable service to legitimately receive this forgiveness, we wallow in our guilt and act as though we are not freed from it.

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What should we do when former sins come to mind? First, we should change the channel and dwell on His mercies. Second, recall specific passages in Scripture that confirm His faithfulness to forgive. Third, remind ourselves of what Yeshua did to forgive us of our sin. Fourth, rejoice in the praise worthy reality the Father does not hold forgiven sin against us (Ps 103:12). Fifth, fill our minds with thankful thoughts. Sixth, focus on things that are true and noble (Philippians 4:8) and accept the truth forgiveness renews us in Yeshua (2 Cor 5:17-21). Seventh, move forward in deliberate obedience trusting that His forgiveness merits this fresh start (Ps 103:2-3). Amen!



TILL WE HAVE FACES

BY DANIEL HARRELL
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I attended a church worship service with flesh-and-blood people on Sunday—in a parking lot, six feet apart, masks on. It wasn't the church I belong to but another that meets in our building. Like many, I'm [Zoomed out](#) as far as worship goes and find myself missing most not the sermons and music but the persons in person.

Adam Graber affirms the feeling and the reality when he writes, “In the transition to a [broadcast-only format](#), some churches may have lost sight of these other important priorities [pastoral conversations, one-to-one encounters, connections that can only happen in person]. The worship service has been [unbundled](#) from community and pastoral care. By going online, the church building no longer holds these three elements together.”

Graber offers some thoughts on solutions in these pandemic days as we await a vaccine. The worship in the parking lot was makeshift to be sure, but that's part of what I've always appreciated about under-produced church. I like the humanness of live worship and preachers who stumble with their notes but love and are loved by their congregations, and the reality of gathering to hit a pause button each week and recalibrate our souls in line with the work of the Lord in this world.

Admittedly, the virus has made so much that was already bad worse. But it's also forced a prioritization of what matters most. Talking to another pastor friend this week, we counted a few viral blessings: the desire to get away from screens and out into the nature, the slowing down of many aspects of life (when there are fewer places to go you make the most of where you already are), the intensity of relationship that has emerged around those in your bubble, more time (and need) to pray.

As Graber concludes, “There are probably as many ideas for fostering community as there are communities. The point is that COVID-19 is an invitation for churches' creativity. As [a friend](#) of mine likes to remind me, “In the midst of devastation, there's an opportunity for innovation.” It's a timely word for the church in an unprecedented time.”

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UNDERSHEPHERD'S CORNER

BY JEFFREY MAYFIELD

As I meditated on what to write to conclude this first issue of our Members Newsletter, the Spirit reminded me of one I composed on Nov 15, 1982 called the Gospel Messenger. This newsletter was the main communication vehicle for the Gospel Messenger Ministry started in 1982 by my late wife, a few friends, a few family members and myself.

While I have occasionally read parts of this first Gospel Messenger newsletter at various points in the past, I don't recall reading it in its entirety again until Aug 11, 2020. When I read it, three things immediately caught my eye. First, I noticed there were several functions expressed in this first newsletter we did perform as a ministry. But there were several we intended to do that we didn't. Second, I noticed that those ministry functions that went unfulfilled had nothing to do with what Gospel Messenger was doing as a ministry at the time. But they did relate to what WOCI is doing as a church today. Third, I noticed the main verses in this newsletter written in 1982, were the same ones the Spirit gave me on Aug 11, 2020 to use in the 2020 New Moon 6 Service (before I had a chance to read the newsletter again)!

While I occasionally wondered why we never had the opportunity to fulfill certain ministry functions back then, I always assumed it was due to some unknown act(s) of disobedience. Besides, most of us were in our mid 20's when we started this ministry and it wasn't like anything we were doing was set in stone. What never occurred to me, however, was the Spirit having a different intent for some of those functions we thought we were supposed to do back then. Maybe our group was never intended to perform some of these tasks as we supposed. Maybe the Spirit was training me to serve in a way for a future that involved a different group that included me. Maybe the Spirit was teaching me to strive towards the mark despite my circumstances and that some of those unperformed-as-of-yet ministries back then, foreshadowed a future performance of these tasks by a church (albeit in a different way from what I previously thought).

What if the Spirit used Gospel Messenger Ministry as a launch point for an upcoming interim church (Way of the Cross) that would later birth and provide trained people for a final church (WOCI)? If so, my late wife and I had to bear heavy ministry burdens (along with their pain and consequences) as labor pains to birth this interim church. If so, Gospel Messenger and Way of the Cross had to involve those who would not consistently work together. If so, Deb and I and those that did cooperate, had to bear those burdens together to birth Teams happy to bear those burdens together.

What if the Spirit was trying to show me the need for advanced training? If so, my late wife and I had to seek advanced training, but never find it (the only training we received at any of the churches we attended was 3 superficial sessions). We had to learn everything on the fly via the school of hard knocks (even though it should've never been that way). We had to be the main ones making all of the ministry investments (time, respect, labor, talent and finances). We had to experience hard times under adverse circumstances, to prophesy future WOCI Teams that could survive the same.

It's time for WOCI to learn the rest of what was written on that first newsletter 37 years ago, as we go about our Father's business. Unlike the Gospel Messenger and Way of the Cross Church, WOCI has many who consistently work and bear ministry burdens. We have many that are trained, who make the same investments we do. We have many who work together as a family Team. Now it's time for this prophesied Team to fulfill its destiny! Onward march!