

# ***REFLECTIONS***

May 22, 2005

**And when you stand praying, if you hold  
anything against anyone, forgive him,**

*Mark 11:25*

## **A Lonely Cry for Forgiveness**

The story about a broken parent child relationship was not a new one to me. I have known of it for many years and I have seen the dreadful impact of it. Only the bitterness and hurt from the estrangement of them have been known, not the cause. But the cause became less the issue than the deep, enduring hurt and resentment between them. I saw the pain from the perspective of the parent. How bitter; how abandoned; how angry; how alone. My sympathies rested with the parent for that is where I heard the story.

The separation had lasted many years longer than their good times together. Then one day the child extended a hand in hopes of reconciliation. "Please forgive the youthful mistake I made," the cry might have been. The child had been alone too. The child had suffered pain too. The child was asking for the parent's love again. It was a lonely cry for forgiveness only to find rejection of the outreached hand.

When I heard this new piece of the story, I found myself forgiving the child even though I had not been wronged; and I found myself praying for a restored relationship between them. With the parent's rejection of the child's outreached hand, my sympathies for the parent shifted to sorrow. It grieved me to see someone choose the sting of bitterness over the warmth of forgiveness, to choose bondage over freedom.

The story is about bondage. We find ourselves in bondage when we are attached to a source so tightly that we react with the source's every movement. Bitterness toward another person is such a source. Liberty comes when we can detach ourselves from the source of our bondage so that we are no longer responsive to its movement. Forgiveness will do that.

The tragedy in the story does not make me feel good. As I reflect on it, the story could just as easily have been a love story. A forgiving parent would find us writing a happy ending. Forgiveness would not change whatever happened, but forgiveness would reshape what happened next, for whatever happened next could have been bondage free.

Jesus came and we are forgiven. Freedom comes when we are *forgiving*.

*You are the light of the world,*

*Richard* +