

Dear Friends and Family,

We've finished the first two Pastoral Epistles.

I pray that you have enjoyed studying through these important books along with me. As we turn our attention to the book of Titus, I want to depart from our normal pattern slightly. This week, as a way of introduction, we will look at just the first 3 verses of Titus, not for their content, but for the importance of remembering the overarching message of the Gospel.

Consider this scene in the book The Little Duke, by Charlotte Yonge. The young 8 year old prince, while sitting with his father, the Duke, exclaims, "I hate the English!" After some length of conversation about why he hates them coupled with his 8-year-old ideal of vengeance for wrongs committed, his father explains to him the concept of forgiveness.

"They had not been taught the truth, but to us it has been said, 'Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.' Listen to me, my son, Christian as is this nation of ours, this duty of forgiveness is too often neglected, but let it not be so with you. Bear in mind, whenever you see the Cross marked on our banner, or carved in stone on the Churches, that it speaks of forgiveness to us; but of that pardon we shall never taste if we forgive not our enemies. Do you mark me, boy?"

This foreshadowing of the impending death of the Duke himself and the all-too-soon reign of his son, will lead to how the Little Duke is able to forgive the one who kills his father.

Pastor's Point of View

The big question: **Is your understanding of forgiveness based on the Gospel?**

Day 1 - READ Titus 1:1-3

1. Paul's introduction to this letter is so fascinating. Putting the lense of forgiveness on these verses, what is Paul saying God did for us?
2. Faith. Knowledge. Godliness. Hope. Define these words. Describe how God's forgiveness brought them about in your life?
3. What does it mean for us that God cannot lie?
4. Thinking specifically of God's timing, knowing that Jesus would have to die to be the propitiation for our sins, what does it say about the measure of God's forgiveness that He sent Him?

Day 2 - READ Luke 23:34

1. John MacArthur wrote in commentary on this passage:

They do not know what they do. i.e. they were not aware of the full scope of their wickedness. They did not recognize Him as the true Messiah (Acts 13:27-28). They were blind to the light of divine truth, "For if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:8). Still, their ignorance certainly did not mean they deserved forgiveness; rather, their spiritual blindness itself was a manifestation of their guilt (John 3:19). But Christ's prayer while they were in the very act of mocking Him is an expression of the boundless compassion of divine grace.

2. The gospel is not about us deserving forgiveness. The gospel is about us receiving forgiveness even while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8).

Day 3 - READ Luke 8:10

1. Katie reads and edits everything I write, ever since college! It's one of my life's greatest benefits, a godly wife who happens to be an English teacher. Not only does she provide invaluable editing to my writing, she also provides much wisdom in content and clarification. What follows are her words.

The single greatest act of forgiveness could not be more clearly demonstrated than here. As Jesus struggles to breathe, hanging heavily on the cross, nails driven into his wrists and a crown of thorns on his head, he speaks. And does he issue a tongue lashing to the fools who placed him there? Does he criticize the Pharisees for their ignorance? Does he berate Peter for his denial? Does he scream at Judas for the betrayal? Does he ask God to remove him? Does he summon legions of angels? No. His request is so opposite of all typical reactions in our sinful humanity, that we must pause. Jesus takes this moment to use his words, his painful breaths, to make a request. He asks God to forgive.

The momentum leading to this proclamation includes mockery, torment, abuse, whip lashings and unbearable pain. Hoisted on a cross, burdened with public shame, embarrassment, and betrayal, Christ could have reacted so differently. Yet he doesn't. No. He asks God to forgive. Christ uses an interesting phrase.

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

Yet, I would argue, they knew EXACTLY what they were doing. They were killing an innocent man. They were removing a stumbling block to their pyramid of power. They were stopping a movement. They were finally avenging themselves. They were acting in their power, out of anger and revenge, seeking "justice" for the problems Christ caused by his presence. They *knew* what they were doing. They were killing.

However, Christ indicates that they actually did not *know* what they were doing. The original Greek word used is **εἰδó**. Translated to English, it means to *be aware, behold, consider, perceive*. They could not *perceive* what they were doing. They were truly not *aware* of who was on that cross. They could not *behold* the eternal implications of the cross. Their eyes were blind to what was being accomplished.

And He said, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is in parables, so that SEEING THEY MAY NOT SEE, AND HEARING THEY MAY NOT UNDERSTAND."

Luke 8:10

And how could they know? Consider that Jesus walked in close fellowship with his 12 for over three years, yet they still did not understand, as demonstrated by the disciples, James and John, in Mark 10.

James and John: *"Grant that one of us may sit at Your right hand and the other at Your left in Your glory."*

*"You do not **know** what you are asking," Jesus replied. "Can you drink the cup I will drink, or be baptized with the baptism I will undergo?"*

Oh how patient the love of Christ! For three years, he demonstrated his power, his miracles-raising the dead and calming the sea, yet the men he was with did not **know**. They did not **know** this fully God and fully human man. Even though they walked dusty Jerusalem roads together for over 1000 days. Even though they watched bread multiply to feed a hungry mass of over 5,000. Even though they slept where Jesus slept and witnessed works unknown to the earth before or after, they did not **know**. The same Greek word, **εἰδó**, is used in this passage in Mark that is used on the cross. James and John could not *perceive* what they were asking. They thought they knew. They didn't.

Have you ever thought you knew something in the moment, but you were completely unaware of what was actually going on? I see this play out with my children on a daily basis. Walking into the kitchen, I see my son taking all of the plates out of the cabinet. I *know* that he is about to make a mess. I get ready to fuss. But upon watching, he is trying to make the cabinet better. He is rearranging plates to fit in a more orderly fashion. He is not causing trouble, he is putting things in order. I almost react based on my *knowing*. What we think we *know* and what is actually occurring can often be completely different.

Day 4 - READ Hebrews 4:12

1. Think about the last time someone hurt you. How did you react? Was it full of lovingkindness or was it a lashing out of hurt? Was your response like that of Christ? Certainly Jesus was in the worst and most unimaginable pain, yet He reacted with forgiveness.
2. When you contemplate that you often do not have the whole story, how does taking your situation to scripture often help?
3. How can we do better? Knowing that we don't **know** puts us in a place of humility. God and God alone discerns the thoughts of man. Consider Hebrews 4:12.
4. What does it mean to seek understanding in love (Proverbs 25:21-22), rather than revenge in spite (1 Peter 3:8-18). Have you reacted in either or both ways? What has been the result?

5 Actions to Take:

People will upset, offend, frustrate, and humiliate us.

1. May we be like Christ on the cross. While enduring, he asked God for **their** forgiveness.
2. May we realize that the offense we **think** is directed toward us may be a symptom of a greater heart issue. May we forgive.
3. May we show grace to others, understanding that sometimes we think we **know**, yet we fail to perceive.
4. When we offend and hurt others, may we seek to ask for forgiveness. May we **know** and **perceive** our own role.
5. May God open our eyes, open our ears, and open our hearts to **be aware** of our actions and **know** the truth of Scripture.

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” - Philippians 4:4-7

May you know the grace and forgiveness of Christ,
Pastor Matt

To read an archive of past Pastor's Point of View devotionals please visit
<https://mplong.wordpress.com/pastors-point-of-view/>

The Pastor's Point of View© is a weekly, subscription based, email devotional. It is a unique creation and ministry of First Baptist Church of Havelock, written by Senior Pastor Dr. Matthew Long. Therefore, The Pastor's Point of View© is a copyright publication of First Baptist Church

of Havelock. You are free to copy, share, forward, and otherwise use this information as you see fit so long as credit is given to the author and ministry. You may unsubscribe to this devotional at any time by simply replying to the weekly email with the word 'STOP' in the body of the message. "May the LORD bless you and keep, may He make His face shine upon you." Numbers 6:24-25

Dr. Matthew Long

Senior Pastor

[FBC of Havelock](#)

*Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us **RUN** with endurance the race that is set before us -- Hebrews 12:1*