

Father, Forgive Them

Scripture Reading — Luke 23:32-34

“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

Luke 23:34 —

This is a stunning prayer. When people treat us unjustly, it's natural for us to want them punished rather than pardoned.

God could easily have rescued his Son. He whose care and concern reaches down to the smallest things like the flowers of the field and the hairs of our heads could certainly have stopped Jesus' enemies. God could have sent legions of angels to set him free (see Matthew 26:53). But he didn't. And Jesus did not ask.

Instead of calling for his enemies' judgment, Jesus asked his Father to forgive them. This is amazing grace. Grace is what Jesus is all about. Jesus wants his enemies forgiven; he wants them saved.

“When we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son” (Romans 5:10).

Jesus wants us to desire forgiveness for our enemies as well. But we will not desire that for others unless we ourselves have first been touched and changed by God's grace. Only the grace that took Jesus to the cross can change us so profoundly that we desire the forgiveness of our enemies.

This is what the Bible means by love. To love is to give and to forgive. It means laying down our lives, if need be, not just for our friends, but even for the salvation of our enemies.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, help us to grow in your amazing grace so that, like you, we also desire and seek the salvation of our enemies. In your name we pray, O Savior. Amen.

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