

Holy Week Devotions-Tuesday: Bitterness to Forgiveness



“See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.” Hebrews 12:15 (NIV)

“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” Colossians 1:13-14 (NIV)

Today is the second day of our **Holy Week series**, and the stanza of the poem that is our focus is the following:

Fast from bitterness; feast on forgiveness.

(Click [here](#) for the complete poem. Here is the first day of the series on Judging.)

Imagine sitting down on a hot summer day to a bowl full of frosty, juicy, crisp grapes that burst in your mouth with... bitterness. Can you imagine how awful that would taste? **Bitterness** leaves a bad taste in everyone's mouth. According to Hebrews 12:15, we are to guard against bitterness because one bitter heart can defile and trouble many people. Bitterness is a sign of unforgiveness. In the original Greek, bitterness means “extreme wickedness, hatred, virulence and harshness.” And as the Bible verse suggests, if left untended, bitterness will root and grow and produce a harvest of destruction. It's true in our lives that a bitter root yields a bitter fruit.

The word **bitter** when traced back to its origin means “to fasten, to fasten something together, to construct something

by fastening it together.” So if we are bitter against a person in a literal sense by withholding forgiveness, we are fastening that person to us and dragging them with us wherever we may go! Do you see now one of the reasons why bitterness is so destructive? We are forever tying ourselves to that very thing we are bitter about, which is preventing us from healing. As Joyce Meyer says, “You may have a reason to be bitter, but by the word of God, you do not have a right.”

What is the antidote then for bitterness? **Forgiveness**. Forgiveness means to release someone from prison or from **bondage**. Forgiving someone does not mean that what they did to us is okay; it means we are **releasing them from our own vengeance and giving them over to God**. Sometimes the one we may be bitter against and need to release from bondage is **ourselves**. This **Easter** let us pray and ask God to help make us willing to lay aside our bitterness and trade it in for forgiveness. Let's set a few captives free. That's what Easter is all about, isn't it?



Application: So during this **Holy Week**, what is it that you need to leave at the feet of the cross? Who or what are you bitter against that you need to let go, that you need to forgive? Let the first captive that's set free be you.

Prayer: Dear Lord, it can be difficult releasing bitterness. That heavy thing we're dragging around feels normal after a while. Help us to let go, release, and forgive so that we can experience the joy and lightness of living in forgiveness and freedom. Amen.

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