



Week 7

A village chief in Kenya stood in the ELI training hall which was filled with illegal brewers who had brought devastation to his village for years. **He rubbed his eyes in disbelief as he heard woman after woman ask for his forgiveness.** Each one shared that they had received new life in Christ and wanted to make things right with others.

On a table in front of the chief was a simple brown cake that the women had learned how to bake the day before. **With a trembling hand, a former brewer cut a small piece of the cake and, using a fork, brought it close to the chief.** The room went silent. The chief paused for a moment, looked at the dozens of women staring at him with hopeful eyes, and then in all sincerity said, **"I forgive you."** He then opened his mouth and received the cake, which is a powerful sign of forgiveness and reconciliation in Kenyan culture.

The room full of forgiven hearts burst into cheers, which crescendoed into praise, dancing, and tears of joy. A new chapter started for everyone, and **humbled hearts were set free.**



As we approach Easter, whether we are quarantined with someone we have been hurt by, irritated by someone through the media, or prompted by God to reach out to someone by phone or email, **the death and resurrection of Christ reminds us how important it is to forgive others as He has forgiven us.** [Countless scriptures declare it](#), and Jesus always lived it out: even when He was dying on the cross, He shouted, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

*“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other,
just as in Christ God forgave you.”*

Ephesians 4:32

Louis Smedes once said, **“To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.”** I recently saw the story of a father and mother who forgave the man who killed their daughter. The father, Andy Grosmaire, said with gut-wrenching honesty that his difficult choice to finally forgive “kept me from being locked in the cell of my own hatred, anger, and bitterness.”

Neither Andy nor the Chief were forced to forgive . . . and neither are we. It is a choice we can each make this Holy Week—a choice which represents the very nature of God and the reason Jesus went to the cross. He paid the ultimate price for your freedom. **Take a moment and reflect on your life and relationships. Forgiving others is not easy, but God will guide your hand and heart as you turn the key and open the door to a place where the love of God takes the cake.**

Because He lives and forgives,

Don

Don Rogers
ELI Founder/CVO

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