



SPRING-TIME DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS

Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

April 20, 2023



Photo: Our Daily Bread

RECONCILING RELATIONSHIPS

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

Ephesians 4:32

READ Ephesians 4:22–32

My sister and I clashed frequently when we were younger, but one time especially stands out in my memory. After a bout of yelling back and forth where we'd both said hurtful things, she said something that in the moment seemed unforgivable. Witnessing the animosity growing between us, my grandmother reminded us of our responsibility to love each other: "God gave you one sister in life. You've got to show each other a little grace," she said. When we asked God to fill us with love and understanding, He helped us acknowledge how we'd hurt each other and to forgive one another.

It can be so easy to hold on to bitterness and anger, but God desires for us to experience the peace that can only come when we ask Him to help us release feelings of resentment (Ephesians 4:31). Instead of harboring these feelings, we can look to Christ's example of forgiveness that comes from a place of love and grace, striving to be "kind and compassionate" and to "[forgive] each other, just as in Christ God forgave [us]" (v. 32). When we find it challenging to forgive, may we consider the grace that He extends to us each day. No matter how many times we fall short, His compassion never fails (Lamentations 3:22). God can help us remove bitterness from our hearts, so we're free to remain hopeful and receptive to His love.

By Kimya Loder

PRAY & REFLECT

Heavenly Father, thank You for the people You've placed in my life. Help me to have a loving and forgiving spirit. Amen.

When has someone hurt you? What did you learn from that moment?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

There's some debate among scholars as to the actual destination of the letter of Ephesians. In Ephesians 1:1, the words "in Ephesus" are absent in several ancient manuscripts "causing some to view this as an "encyclical letter" - a letter that was to be circulated among the various church gatherings in Asia Minor. Adding to this theory is that Paul addresses no individuals, which seems unusual, especially compared to Romans 16, where he mentions no less than twenty-six people by name while also referring to many others in that congregation. Many scholars, however, hold to the church at Ephesus as being the proper first destination, with the letter to be circulated to other churches from there. The circular nature of the letter perhaps explains its lack of personal address. – By **Bill Crowder**

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