

St. Luke's Lutheran Church

Chuluota Edition

January 2011

Forgiving and Being Forgiven

by Frank Kraus

When reading one of Martin Luther's devotionals concerning "Forgive and you will be forgiven", I realized that being forgiven by my wife Nancy or me forgiving had never crossed my mind. Like in Matt 6:14-15 (ESV), "For if you forgive others their trespasses your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others, their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." This verse has been an obstruction for me for several years; we never said that we forgave each other for things that were said in disagreements. I know God has forgiven me.

From Martin Luther's readings. "Some people wonder why Christ would attach such a condition to this part of the Lord's Prayer: "If you forgive the failures of others, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." He didn't attach similar conditions to other parts of the prayer. He could have said. "Give us our daily bread today, as we give it to our children." Or, "Don't allow us

to be tempted, and we won't tempt anyone else either." Or, "Rescue us from evil, just as we try to help others."

No other parts of this prayer have a condition tacked on to them -- except this one. Some people are left with the impression that we earn forgiveness for our sins by forgiving others. What does this mean for the doctrine that forgiveness of sins comes only through Christ and is received through faith?

Jesus phrases this prayer so that God's forgiveness is linked to our own willingness to forgive others in order to make mutual love a Christian duty. We should always forgive others. After faith in Christ, loving and forgiving others should be a primary concern. We shouldn't cause others pain. Instead, we should remember to forgive others, even when they have caused suffering in our lives. If we are unwilling to forgive, we can be certain that we won't be forgiven

ourselves. If we are full of resentment and hostility, that prayer will be spoiled and all of the requests in that prayer will be rejected. We must establish a strong and durable bond of love with other Christians that will keep us united. When we come before God in prayer, we shouldn't be divided into splinter groups. Instead, we should be guided by love, tolerate differences of opinion and preserve unity.

Martin Luther was correct about my failure to ask Nancy for the forgiveness or me forgiving her before her death. I always seemed to be on the defensive when it came to Nancy and her feelings. Her desire was to help others when asked for her advice. Let's say, it made me feel inadequate to know that she was more acceptable than I was with other people's concerns. Christ's love has given me a feeling of reconciliation with my past. I praise the Lord for that feeling of being forgiven.

Chuluota Leadership Team Highlights meets on the 4th Monday

From December:

- The Christmas food basket and "Angel Gift" programs for needy families of Joan Walker Elementary School received tremendous response.
- CLT is working with Chris Wethman to develop a Ministry Action Plan to be presented after the first of the year. Feedback from congregational meetings is being reviewed.
- It was suggested that an "Event Organization Notebook" be established for committees to reference for outreach events (Oktoberfest, Trunk or Treat, etc.)
- Bob Scott will be presenting a short survey for assessment in planning "Adult" and "Home" Bible studies.

Christmas Donations

by: Tom Hultgreen



Your Christmas donations were absolutely phenomenal. I was completely blown away by the generous response of the Chuluota congregation. We filled four bags of food for each family and the children received most everything that they wished for

this Christmas. This, a Christmas that could have been remembered as a sad time, was transformed by you as one they will recall with joy for a very long time. I am encouraged that this group of Christian believers was able to show the true meaning of Christmas by giving generously to those in need. This act of compassion is one of the best ways to show the love of Jesus to the community, reinforcing that God is love.

Your Leadership team

The leadership team is reviewing your input from the December meetings. It will be used to draft a Ministry Action Plan that will help our congregation implement plans in a more intentional and timely manner. There will be one more congregational meeting (Date TBD) to discuss the findings. Thank you for your time and input into our planning process. With your help, we continue to do the Lord's work here in Chuluota.

Leadership Team Members:

Dave Nichols Trustees and Chairman
 Bob Scott Elders
 Laura Howe Christian Education
 Jon Pospisil Outreach and Evangelism
 Sheryl Hickey Human Care
 Marty Christiansen Stewardship
 Linda Nichols Worship
 Rick Watkins At Large, worship alternate
 Mike Thompson At Large, Ushers
 Tom Hultgreen At Large, Communications

January

We will start a new year looking forward with anticipation into what we wish to accomplish over the coming months. Some will make resolutions to start this or stop that, to lose weight (that one I've made every year for a while now) or to get healthy. To read the Bible more or to attend that study that Bob Scott teaches. My hope is that through continued efforts we will grow this church and continue to be a witness to our community. Happy New Year to you all and may God bless you.

Tom Hultgreen

January 2011

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Sunday Worship: 9 am Bible Study: 10:30 am
Worshiping at: Joan Walker School (3101 Snow Hill Road, Chuluota, FL 32766)

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stlukes-oviedo.org

Submit articles for publication to Tom Hultgreen at roguetrooper@bellsouth.net. Deadline is the 20th of the month.