

Forgiveness Friday #6

15 October 2021



Just when I thought I was getting the hang of this forgiveness thing, God upped the stakes.

I've never felt so sorry for Jesus' disciples as during this last week. Just when the boys were getting used to the idea of Jesus being the Messiah, He tells them he's going to be killed. While they're still reeling from that piece of news, He tells them they'll be eating his body and drinking his blood. I can't claim anything to match the impact of those momentous and disorienting disclosures – which still have the power to disturb nearly 2,000 years later – but the week has certainly been confronting and very, very uncomfortable.

In my [last email](#) I mentioned that several people from past work situations had popped into my mind. It was clear I'd been given the prod by God to embark on the next stage of my forgiveness journey, but just what it was I had to forgive needed thought.

After a couple of days, the general discomfort I felt at remembering these people crystallised and then shattered as I relived some minor and quite major experiences of workplace bullying. I went from surprise that people would bother to behave that way to wondering what I'd done to cause the behaviour. In some cases, I wasn't the only target. It was little comfort to remember my fellow victims were among the kindest people I've known, because I also saw that we had been bullied because we could be bullied. It wasn't a matter of what we'd done; it was a case of who we were.

I've taken a long look at the repercussions of these bullying incidents on my life – lack of confidence in the quality of my work, and uncertainty as to whether I am likeable let alone lovable being among them. If only at that time I could have seen the opportunity to forgive! But instead, I let the barbs sink deeper. And because I clung to the hurt, I continued to give those bullies what amounted to a temptation to demean themselves. The more I withdrew and stayed silent, the more I encouraged the bullying.

Here's the lesson for me. Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'. I finally get that forgiveness is not just a matter of overcoming our own hurt, it's about the willingness to shift perspective from self to other.

I prayed. In my mind I said sorry for anything I may have done that caused hurt to those people who had behaved so badly, and I asked forgiveness for not looking beyond my own hurt, for not seeing that they needed saving from the temptation to be mean. I said I was deeply sorry for not reaching out a hand in a way that might have changed the lives of all of us. All those wasted decades. How very sad.

At that point, the blessings began to flow. I blessed the bullies, I blessed my fellow victims, I blessed myself and I fervently thanked God for all He is teaching me. It's all in my little blessing book.

Love, Lyndal

PS My friend Bev in New Zealand recommended this [*Songs of Praise* program](#), which aired last month. It's called 'The journey to forgiveness'. Enjoy!