

March 27, 2015

During a recent prayer meeting a comment was made affirming someone for whom we were praying with the phrase, "There are very few people I can trust and you are one of them." It was meant as a special relationship word of encouragement but it exposed a fundamental issue of human behaviour, that of trust.

Why do we need to "trust," and why is that trust is so often betrayed? For society to function with some degree of success requires each of us do what we say we will do and be what we should be for others. I have to trust that others on the road will obey the rules of the road, that they will stop at red lights and only go on green ones. When the sign states "walk," I trust that those in cars will obey the signs.

Having spent some time in China and other parts of Asia I've discovered that these rules do not fully apply. A "red" light often means, only if you have to stop. "Green" means go if you can, and "walk" means taking your life into your own hands!

All business life functions on degrees of trust, and all social, recreational and family life is the same. The "Christianised" parts of the world exercise higher levels of trust and success as societies because the belief and value system of the Judeo Christian ethic influences behaviour.

Trust betrayed cuts deeply into our personal lives and we can easily develop a "fortress" mentality against everything and anyone. We can be imprisoned by the betrayal of big business, governments, churches, clergy, family and even those as close as brothers, sisters and parents. The deepest hurts, wounds and damage often come from our own flesh and blood. Those closest to us are the means of both our security and our destruction.

Despite all of these disappointments we have a deep need to trust. As human beings we are not self sufficient. We are created gregarious, which means we need and want others. Likewise we were made to know and trust God, but many feel they cannot trust Him either. Some life experience fills them with disappointment and God gets the blame; "Why did my son have to die so young?" "Why did God allow the Holocaust?"

We are both the victims and the cause of betrayal of trust. None of us are innocent and the reason lies in the original failure to trust exercised by our first parents. Adam and Eve failed to trust what God had said about eating from the tree of "The knowledge of good and evil." They crossed traffic on a "red" light. We have all since reproduced the same traffic violation. We are guilty of disobedience and "T boning" each other at the intersections of life.

God has revealed a solution to our dilemma. Despite the fact that we often do not trust Him, He has taken the initiative to demonstrate His love. He became the victim for all situations of betrayal of trust. The writer of Hebrews states; "He was tempted in all points just as we are;" He was betrayed and abandoned by his disciples and even as He was being murdered unjustly He cried in apparent despair at God's abandonment; " My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" He has walked where we walk and He knows the anguish better than us all.

So what, we may say? This proves that even Jesus suffered the same as we do. The beauty of Jesus is that in the betrayal and abandonment He shows us the way out. He gives us the keys to set us free so that life's experiences do not become chains that bind us. One of the last recorded words from the cross was, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." Jesus spoke these words in reference to those who had unjustly murdered Him. We are both those who are murdered and also the murderers and the key out of the prison for murderers is to forgive those who murder us.

This may be the greatest challenge of our lives because the pain, the hurt is so deep and we want justice too!

Jesus taught us a very simple but incredibly profound prayer which contains these words; "Father forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." The only part of the Lord's Prayer He chose to explain was; "For if you forgive men their sin against you, then your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Failure to forgive locks us in a prison of our own unforgiveness forever and ever and ever...

Still troubled by the need for justice? God, as a God of incredible mercy and forgiveness states, "It is mine to avenge, I will repay." He will balance the books. Leave justice in the hands of God who sees and knows the hearts of both the victim and the victimiser.

Shalom.

*Ron Harris*

