

County-Wide Chaplaincy

Thanks you!

July 2024

What's Underneath?

We are currently in the process of refinishing our asphalt driveway. In the process we have been continually reminded that if we simply cover over the current issues, the “fix” may look better for a while, but it won't last. The issues that are underneath will continue to persist and probably even get worse. How true this is for our lives as well, and what a great reminder!

As we journey through this life, we all experience both joy and pain. Sometimes that pain is a result of the behavior of others, the injustice of this world, or the loss of someone or something that just doesn't seem fair. This life is full of pain and also full of opportunity to forgive. As Colossians 3:13 tells us, “Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” A grievance is a perceived wrong, something that causes resentment. We can all relate to this and we can all relate to the difficulty in forgiving sometimes. We can feel that if we hold on to that feeling of justifying our anger or resentment, it will somehow make the other person “pay” for the wrong they have done. However, it just doesn't work that way. In the same way that it matters what is under the final finish of my driveway, it matters what is underneath the face of my life. What is really in my heart? That is what matters the most, and the hardening and resentment only truly hurts me.

Just yesterday we went to visit a friend who was put on hospice care. His body is failing him and he is weak. He recounted to us that he has had things in his life that were not godly, and times that the enemy deceived him and he behaved in ways not honoring to the Lord. However.... that is not the end of his story. He has also accepted the Lord's healing forgiveness and he has forgiven himself, which is sometimes the hardest part for us. There is freedom in forgiveness, true freedom, and I felt I could see that freedom in his eyes. He is living in the assurance of that freedom. We were able to remind him of how the Lord has used him in our lives and encourage him in that way. His parting words to us were, “Pray that I can hang on until the rapture, so we can all go together!” That my friends is hope!

As we celebrate the 4th of July, we think of the cost of that freedom for our nation. Many have sacrificed their lives for that freedom and we are grateful and humbled at this fact. However, I am drawn to think of the freedom we have in Christ and the sacrifice He made for us to have that freedom. Our chaplains have many opportunities to share freedom with hurting people. Because of the experiences they have been through in their lives and the forgiveness they have both given and received, they are able to share with those who are devastated by their

circumstance. Our chaplains are able to share hope and encouragement and kindness and compassion. All of these are fruits of the Spirit and the result of accepting the freedom Christ gives. What an amazing opportunity! Please pray for them and for those they minister to.

In closing, we do want to shout out a thank you for the many who have sacrificed for our daily freedoms in this country! Our Independence is something to be celebrated!

Jan Richards

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