



The Christian life is a journey.

TrailNotes speaks to forward movement, paying attention to the “landscape” we are passing through in this trail-laced wooded hillside and valley, not to mention the world beyond. **TrailNotes** is an unfolding, ongoing journal of the people who share the trail with us and the things we’re learning and doing.

ElderTalk: **“It is His glory to overlook an offense”** JADAÉ FOX

It happens to most of us. Someone steps on your foot or you get hit with something flying through the air. After an initial reaction of surprise and pain, you realize that it was an accident. Most of us are quick to forgive and forget.

However, what if I hold onto the offense instead of overlooking it? What if my friend who hurt me, does not even realize that I am still upset, so much so that the annoyance or anger changes the way I think about him? It would change the way I interacted with him. Of course, it would be a shame to damage or lose a relationship with someone over something so small. The fact is that feelings of prolonged unforgiveness sabotage relationships between family and friends all the time.

Even as I am writing this article, I find myself needing to ask my children’s forgiveness. I was cooking dinner—baked spaghetti. I thought I could add a little flavor, but I accidentally added too much chipotle peppers. Even with sour cream, it proved too much for them. “I’m sorry, guys, I said, “for ruining dinner. Please forgive me.”

Then came the quick reply. “It’s OK, Dad. We forgive you.”

The greatest example of the loss of a relationship is the relationships between God and man because of sin. The good news is that while we were still sinners, Jesus died for us. (Romans 5:8) Easter (Resurrection Sunday) is all about the Father’s love and forgiveness for a lost world. Anyone who asks for forgiveness and trusts in the death and resurrection of Jesus can have a right relationship with God restored.

To be clear, God does not keep this need for forgiveness a secret. He sent prophet after prophet to tell us about it. It has been recorded in His Word. Now God has commissioned all who have received this forgiveness to be messengers to those in our lives. God’s people are to show others (in love) both their need of God’s forgiveness and the fact that He freely offers it.

Proverbs 19:11 says, “...it is His glory to overlook an offense.” If someone hurts or offends you and you

can forgive and overlook it, that is great! But what if you cannot? If the offense keeps coming back to mind, if it affects your ability to think well of him, or you find yourself sharing with others about the offense but not with the one who hurt you, then here are a few things you do.

You can go to him. If you are unable to overlook the offense, then go to him in love and gentleness (Ephesians 4:1-3) and share your offense with him. As much as it is possible, be at peace with all people.





You can get help. Sometimes it helps to talk to a third party to get a fresh perspective. Please keep in mind that our motivation to share your offense with another needs to be the desire to restore a right relationship.

If you are not careful in whom you confide, it will turn into gossip and damage even more relationships. “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses...”(see Matthew 18:18; 25-20)

You can pray for him. There was a time in my past that a Christian brother really hurt me. I said, many times, that I forgave him. I prayed that God would change my heart toward him. I tried talking with him. But in this case, the feelings of animosity and unforgiveness did not go away until the Lord

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APRIL 2021

- 1 Women of Grace Study, "The Struggle Is Real" led by Laura Byrom, Upper Room at 6:30 pm.
- 4 **Resurrection Sunday!** Service at 10. No Circle Church or Sunday School. Pastor Eric Byrom will be bringing the Easter message.
- 8 Tabletop Game Club training 6-8 pm at church.
- 11 Pastor Eric Byrom preaching on Mark 5:25-6:6.  Circle Church Leaders Zoom meeting at 2 pm.
- 15 Women of Grace Study continued at 6:30-8 pm in the Upper Room. Laura Byrom leading.
- 17 Men's Monthly Prayer Breakfast at 9 am. Meet at the Rutherford house on the hill. Jake and friends will provide the meal. There will be an opportunity to give a donation to offset the cost of the meal.
- 18 Elder Jon Vega preaching on Mark 6:7-29.
- 22 Last Tabletop Game Club training. 6-8 pm.
- 25 Elder Jadaé Fox preaching on Mark 6:30-56. 



Sinful woman washes Jesus' feet - artist & date unknown

Dates coming up:

- May 3-8 Spring Work Week.
- July 25-31 Discipleship Training School for ages 13-19. To sign up, go to church website.
- August 6-8 GFC Family Camping Weekend.
- August 28 Annual GFC Community Celebration on Saturday evening. Always a special occasion!

ElderTalk *(Continued from p. 1)*

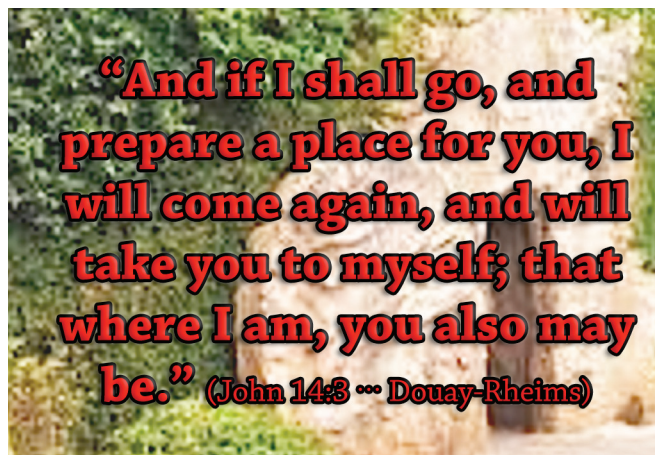
prompted me to pray for his blessing and that of his family. (Luke 6:27, Romans 9:26)

You can remember the cross. Remember the prostitute who came to Jesus and washed His feet with her tears? Jesus told us she loved much because she knew how much she had been forgiven. When we know how much we have been forgiven, it is easy to love God. (Luke 7:36-50) God, however, shows us that this same love is shown in how we forgive others. Remember the servant who refused to show mercy to his fellow servant? (Matther 18:21-35) Also, let's not forget that Jesus said that if we do not forgive others, neither will He forgive us! (Matther 6:15)

Paul said, *"If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all."* (Romans 12:18) You cannot force anyone to forgive you or accept your forgiveness. All you can do is forgive or ask for forgiveness as often, as quickly, and as freely as you can. Leave the rest for God to do.

Remember that asking for and giving forgiveness is all about restoring relationships. Here are a few tips:

1. When bringing an offense to someone, deal with the problem and do not attack the person.
2. Use "I" statements and let the person know how you feel. *"I felt angry when..."*
3. When asking for forgiveness, it is important to own your own mistakes by name. *"It was wrong of me to..."*
4. *"I am sorry"* communicates regret. However, *"asking for forgiveness"* gets to the heart of the offense and is a step towards restoring relationship.
5. Even when you forgive someone, you can still have hurts to work through. For more information on what God teaches about forgiveness, follow this link: <https://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-forgiveness.html>



Inevitability RICK JACOX

Editor's Note: Rick Jacox is a dear friend to many of us in GFC, a former elder here and a teacher at Ontario High School. In the military, he was a medical corpsman with lots of medical knowledge. He wrote this for those he works with, who wanted to know how he and Sue were doing with the news that his lung cancer had returned, now in both lungs. Stage IV. He graciously gave his permission for us to read this in TrailNotes.

The Present: I loved trauma and post-operative care much more than taking care of people with internal medical issues, especially chronic illnesses. The immediacy and urgency of the care, the almost instantaneous results of one's efforts (good or bad) was much more appealing to me than long-term care where there was little hope for recovery. I likened a terminal illness to being stuck on an elevator, a claustrophobic miasmic cloud of doom. Well, I am here now—and it is not as bad as I had thought.

I was present quite often when bad news regarding the inevitability of death was communicated to families and patients. I was amazed at times with how accepting many were, some achieving an almost peaceful resignation in the moment. I always imagined that I would fight the news, resist it with every ounce of energy, fueled by anger and frustration at things out of my control. But that is not how it has been.

When I was first diagnosed with cancer two years ago, I was struck initially at how hard it was for the ancillary workers in my pulmonary MD's office to interact with Sue and me. We had been getting multiple scans there yearly over the previous five years and thought we had a pretty good rapport with them. They, as well as Sue and I, were sur-

prised by the diagnosis; we thought after five years that we had had our last scan and would be released to normal life. I sensed that there was a feeling of failure on their part which Sue and I knew was not true. But I could identify with it, a sense that 'we let you down' somehow, an irrational shame, if you will. I told Sue during the time we were waiting in the examination room after a long wait in the waiting room, that something is different; there was a separation there I had never felt before.

The news this time, that the cancer had returned, was delivered in my oncologist's office, very expertly and with great care. Ironically, I have not experienced the claustrophobic dread I had anticipated. I think, if anything, there is a sense of liberation that is hard to describe. The normal things that inspire dread become very small in one's field of view and the important things, relationships, become a much grander vista, perhaps in the realization that I am a tourist now, not a citizen of this life. My visit is coming to an end—we hope in years rather than months. But there are no guarantees. There is mourning, to be sure, but more a sense of grateful awe at the life and gifts I have been given. The reality that, apart from a miracle, there is no cure, that I will die either of this lung cancer or *with* it, is a most interesting reality; I fight, to cooperate with treatment, though unpleasant, and try to live well for as long as I can. But, I recognize that while I want others to join Sue and me in praying for life, knowing that, without divine intervention, the day will come when I, and hopefully those who care for me, will be praying that I die well and gracefully. That day is not yet here, thankfully.

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Let us go to the house of the Lord JOHN KURTZ

On Palm Sunday, Donna and I were finally able to return to GFC, attending indoor worship for the first time, having received our vaccinations-plus-three-weeks. It was good to be "home" again! Not only was it Palm Sunday, and all that day represented, but it caused me to reflect on the significance of just "being there."

First, was the familiar verse, Ps. 122:1: "Let us go to the house of the Lord." I remembered that this came from one of David's Songs of Ascents. The Israelites literally had to walk *up* to the temple atop Mount Mariah, the high point of the city of Jerusalem.



Second, we know that we no longer are required to go "up" to a temple to worship and make sacrifices, thanks to the once-and-for-all-time sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross, as we are reminded in Hebrews 10:19-25.

Third, we are also told of our need to meet together in Ps. 133, Matthew 18: 20 and John 23-24.

As more of us are once again able to return safely to assembling together for corporate worship, let us be truly thankful for the opportunity and freedom we have to do so.

During this Easter season, let us also be reminded of the "free gift" price which has already been paid for this opportunity. I am reminded of the beautiful words from Zechariah, later set to music by G. F. Handel in *The Messiah*: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion," and those at the conclusion of Part II from Revelation, the beloved "Hallelujah Chorus."

We miss you, Jacob and Nathan!

JACOB COLE REID



Jacob Reid's parents were Marla and Duane Tanner. His grandmother was Dorothy Fuller. Jacob was 31 years old when he died on March 3, 2021. Also left to cherish his memory are his brother, Justin Reid, his step siblings Sarah, Ashley, Brandon, Angeleyea, Amber, Nathan, and his dogs, Dank and Ellie. Jacob was preceded in death by his father, Steve Reid, his younger brother Jared Reid, and his grandfathers Rollo Fuller and Richard Reid.

A Memorial Gathering was held the evening of March 21 at Grace Fellowship Church when friends and relatives shared memories of Jacob, mentioning his kindness and politeness.

The family requests memorial donations be given to Operation Christmas Child in the form of small toys and school supplies that will fit in shoeboxes which Dorothy Fuller will no doubt fill at Christmas.

Inevitability *(Continued from p. 3)*

I have seen the process of dying from lung cancer, both in my dad and in a number of patients. The living thought of death is one to which I am reconciled; the process is one to which I am not. My preference would be to go to sleep and wake up in heaven—without the agony of the dying process. A grace from God is that I am living in this moment well; the dread of the coming end does not permeate my current thinking to any great degree apart from a few minutes surrounding 2 am. I worked the night shift with so many dying people, I think my body has a type of circadian rhythm built into it. Sue usually wakes up in that window as well—we have some interesting conversations.

A new granddaughter, our first grandchild, Clover Helen Jacox, has brought indescribable joy!

DAVID NATHANIEL TUCKER



Nathan Tucker was born to David and Sara Tucker on June 25, 1977. In 1995 he graduated from Mansfield Senior High School, valedictorian of his class. He went to Wheaton College, graduating in 1998. He died on March 9, 2021 at the age of 43 and is survived by his mother, Sara, and five siblings: Beth Tucker, Lori Barker, Lisa Anton, Mark Tucker, and Susan Phaneuf, along with nieces and nephews.

Nathan's funeral was held at GFC on March 20, 2021 with his friend, Matt Roggio officiating. Sharing memories were friends Jesse Falls from Colorado, Dr. Michael Sethi from Chicago, Rebekah Stephaniuk, and Nathan's former Chicago roommate.

Nathan served as coordinator for the English teachers in Tamura, Japan and his memorial donations can be given to GFC for the Funehiki Evangelical Church where these teachers are located.

Grace Fellowship Church

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- Eric Byrom Presiding Elder/Pastor
- Jadaé Fox Elder
- Andy Heiningler Elder
- Jon Vega Elder
- Rick Widener Treasurer
- Kay Berry & Karen Gates Women
- Lori Barker Missions
- Andy Heiningler Worship
- Judy Nichols Prayer Chain
- Kay Berry & Jadaé Fox Office
- Kathy Barth, Manfred & Janet Adalem Communion
- Andy Anschutz Sound/Power Point
- John and Donna Kurtz TrailNotes