

**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. This is a monthly publication of Grace Fellowship Church, Mansfield, Ohio.

**ElderTalk: Forgiveness is a big deal to God**

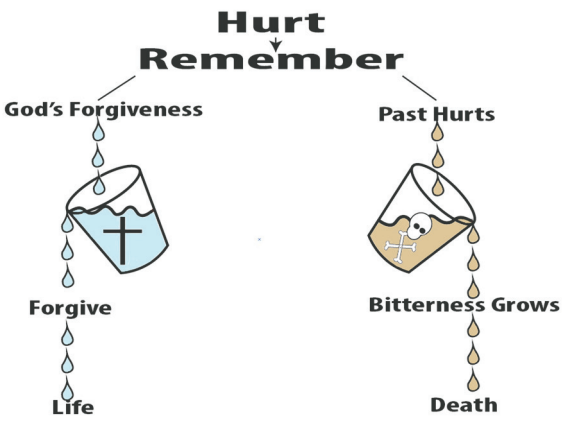
ERIC BYROM

The other day I heard a podcast that talked about the board game “Mouse trap.” If you grew up anytime after 1963, this was often a staple in many homes. It was first published by Ideal and had players working cooperatively to construct an elaborate mousetrap to catch a mouse. It popularizes the Rube Goldberg machine, which according to Wikipedia, is “a type of contraption that performs a simple task through a convoluted series of actions.” These types of Rube Goldberg machines are seen in many areas of popular culture, such as movies, music videos and cartoons. One mechanism often used in these machines is a glass filling up with water and tipping to knock some other aspect of the machine into action.

you can see that it resembles a Rube Goldberg Machine in that the one cup is filled and then overflows to cause something else to happen.

Ephesians 4:32 is a great example of this illustration. Paul writes, “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” We see that when we are hurt, we remember something. We can either remember all that we have been forgiven, which will fill our cup up with grace and mercy towards others because we have received grace and mercy, or we can remember the hurt done to us. Remembering the hurt done to us will fill us with anger, bitterness and vengeance, which will overflow into unforgiveness in our hearts towards the offender.

This year at Grace Fellowship we have been talking about discipleship, and the simple definition of discipleship according to Matthew 28 is to “Study, imitate and share Jesus.” There are some tools in this process that can be very helpful. One tool we have developed from Scripture is the “Forgiveness Tool.” If you look at the illustration,



So why is forgiveness such an important aspect of discipleship? Well, we see over and over in Scripture that if we do not forgive, it affects us receiving forgiveness. It is essential to a healthy disciple to be a forgiving disciple. When we will not forgive, it shows that we either haven’t received forgiveness ourselves or have forgotten the great forgiveness we have received from Christ.

Matthew 18:21-35 is a powerful illustration of this in parable form from Jesus. In this parable of the unmerciful servant, a servant who owes an unrepayable amount is forgiven by his master when he begs for mercy. Strangely, he then goes out and demands another servant repay a small debt owed to him. When the other servant begs him for mercy, rather than showing that servant the mercy he had just received, he instead has

*(Continued on page 2)*

# Forgiveness is a big deal to God *(Continued from page 1)*



*The Parable of Forgiveness by James Eckford Lauder (1811-1869) - Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, England*

that servant thrown into prison until he can repay the small debt. When word gets back to the master of how this servant is treating others, the master reinstates the massive debt and throws that servant in prison until it is repaid.

Jesus ended the parable with a warning, “So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.” Forgiveness is a big deal to God! As disciples seeking to study, imitate and share Jesus, we see that forgiveness is core to the gospel and to the walk of discipleship.

If we refer back to the forgiveness tool again, we see that if we do not forgive, bitterness and death flows out of us. If we do forgive, life flows out of us. What flows out of us is what is being fed into us. What is fed into us is what we choose to remember. We can remember the hurt done to us or remember the grace shown to us.

Take a moment to look at your own life. What is flowing out of you? Are you a gracious and

forgiving person, or do you hold onto offenses and not forgive others? Remember the great grace that was shown to you by Jesus, and let go of the hurt and offense that others have done to you. Let life rather than death flow into your heart!

## **Grace Fellowship Church**

365 Straub Rd., East • Mansfield, OH 44903  
419-526-4699 • [gracefellowship01@gmail.com](mailto:gracefellowship01@gmail.com)



Eric Byrom	Presiding Elder/ Pastor
Jadaé Fox	Elder
Matt Godsil	Elder
Cameron Karger	Treasurer
Lori Judd	Missions
Andy Heininger	Worship
Judy Nichols	Prayer Chain
Kay Berry & Jadaé Fox	Office
Andy Anschutz	Sound/PowerPoint
John and Donna Kurtz	TrailNotes

# Update from Tamura City, Japan

田村市(日本)からの最新情報

Wednesday, Apr 1, 2026, at 9:53 AM

2026年4月1日(水) 午前9時53分

Hello Everyone,

こんにちは、みんな

Happy almost Easter! We are looking forward to celebrating Easter with the local church here this Sunday. Today, on April 1, the team enjoyed Passover. One of our teammates, who grew up celebrating Seder with her Jewish family, offered to host it for us this year (sorry, no picture). We used this time to learn, be in fellowship with one another, and pray for those who are blinded to the gospel. As we reflect on the death and resurrection of Christ, please pray specifically in these ways: Pray for the Japanese people to encounter the Messiah, for God to open their eyes to the gospel, and for opportunities this Easter to share Christ's love with those around us.

This past month the team finished up the school year and is in the last week of spring break. This is a time of transition for me as I will be moving from junior high school to elementary school. Many of the other teachers (Assistant Language Teachers) will be staying at the same school. Please continue to pray for current relationships and for new connections to be formed. Alongside this, as we wrap up our spring break, we begin orientation and welcome a new team member. Please pray that this is a good time for our team to reset and start the new school year refreshed.

Personally, this past month has involved several goodbyes as I bid farewell to my junior high students and co-workers. I also took a short trip to Tokyo with a friend, where we visited cafes, saw cherry blossoms, and attended a baseball game (pictured at right). It was a nice change of pace and a chance to experience more of Japan's culture.

I hope you all have a wonderful Easter!

Maria M. McCreadie

マリア・マククリーディー

.....  
Ed.'s note: As last month, the above was received right after we went to press, but the news and greetings are important to share.



Bible study and coffee in Tokyo  
東京での聖書勉強とコーヒー



Sakura (cherry blossoms) in Tokyo  
東京の桜



Major league baseball in Japan at the Tokyo Dome  
東京ドームでのメジャーリーグ・ベースボール

*Ed's note: Below are highlights from a lengthy presentation given in about 1986 by Gordon Walker. Although there are few of us at GFC who remember Gordon, he was a marvelous Bible teacher and dear friend, whose life and ministry touched thousands both during his years at Grace Haven Farm, together with our own Ray Nethery, and also in those years afterward when the Lord led him into ministry with the Antiochian Orthodox Church. It was during those years while becoming Orthodox that he gave this presentation and the spirit of its subject remained strong as ever with him. The Lord called Gordon home to Himself in July 2015.*

## EVANGELISM AND HOME MISSIONS: MENTALITY AND METHODOLOGY

GORDON T. WALKER



The issue is evangelization. First we must adopt the proper vision for evangelization. We must accept our Lord's command to proclaim the Gospel to "every creature," as He declared in Mark 16:14-18. We must accept the challenge of this command for our generation. No matter how overwhelming this vision might be, we must own it for ourselves! And within the command itself is the grace to fulfill it, for He has said, "Behold, I am with you always..."

Never pre-judge who may be interested. Faith and love on our part are essential to this mission. Believe that people can be changed. Believe that God can use you. The attitude of humility is essential. We must eagerly and sincerely seek to gain humility of heart, which is an essential to the mentality necessary for missions and evangelism. A personal commitment to Christ is, of course, essential. We must also develop a genuine expectation. We should expect God to do miracles in the lives of others as Jesus promised.

An adequate methodology is essential for both effective missions and evangelism. Sacrificial stewardship and our time are also needed together with an organized structure and program of evangelism where possible. It is important to know or learn the spiritual background of those we seek to evangelize or minister to in missions. We need to know who others are and where they live, etc. Small groups within or outside of the organized church can be an important element in accomplishing this. Attractively prepared and printed

# MAY 2026

					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

- 2 GFC workday, 9 AM-3 PM.  
Games Reach Game Night, 6:30-8:30 PM.
- 3 Elder Jadaé Fox preaching on Matthew 5:27-30.
- 6, 13 Connect Groups
- 7 **National Day of Prayer:**  
Parade from Penn Ave. to South Park at 6:00 PM.  
Community service at South Park from 7-8 PM.
- 10 **MOTHERS' DAY**  
Pastor Eric Byrom preaching on Matthew 5:31-32. 
- 17 Elder Matt Godsil preaching on Matthew 5:33-37.  
We honor our graduates during the morning worship.
- 17-20 Collection for GFC Rummage Sale.
- 20 End of the year Connect Group party.
- 21-23 GFC Rummage Sale.
- 24 Pastor Eric Byrom preaching on Matthew 5:17-20. 
- 26 Celebration worship.

material may also be an essential tool to missions and evangelism. Finally, powerful preaching, by those to whom God has given that gift, is needed. We must also never forget that it is God's kingdom that we are building, not our own.

May God enable us all to become better witnesses for Christ and His Church!