

Playing in the mud!

Kids love to play in the mud. There is something about getting all messy that they love. As we get older, we are less inclined to wallow but will feel dirty with a lot less mud on us. I remember having my children come to the back door while playing outside and being covered with mud. They had found some wet dirt and were having a fun time. I reluctantly took them in the house and put them in the tub and cleaned them up. I took their pictures before and after which they found funny. I remember as a child wading in the water that had accumulated in a hole that was being dug for a basement. It was muddy and messy, and we loved it. Someone built a raft, and we would play on the raft and sometimes end up in the muddy water but mostly we just waded in it and ended up soaking wet. I think back on that and wonder that no one drowned or contracted a serious disease. It is fun as a child to get muddy and dirty. As adults we think less of the fun and more of the results. Sometimes it is like our sins. We feel them on us, they weigh us down, they make us feel different. God cleanses us of our sins. On the walk to Emmaus, I was able to lay all those sins and heartbreaks of a lifetime at the cross. All the times I felt dirtied by my own sins, my reactions to other sins against me, my unwillingness to let go and my unwillingness to forgive. I have discovered that laying them down is the first step the second step is harder and that is not picking them up again. But we have the good news! Christ died for our sins. We are a forgiven people. We just must remember to not beat ourselves up for what we have done or to not forgive others for what they did. Their shortcomings and sins are their own and they can be forgiven by God just as we can but that is their burden not ours, but we can pray they find their way.

When I think of forgiveness I think of Peter. Jesus told Peter that he would deny him three times and Peter did not believe it. Then the unthinkable happened and three times Peter denied even knowing Jesus. Peter might have thought he would live with his guilt forever, but Jesus rose and then wonder of wonders Peter was forgiven and sent out to do the work Christ had begun. A story of sin, repentance and forgiveness and a life lived for Christ.

John 21:15-19 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Again, Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep," The third time that he said to him, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked for the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep, I tell you the truth when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted, but when you are old you will stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go," Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

Lord, we thank you for the gift of today. Be with those who are suffering from war, from hunger, from homelessness, from disease. Comfort those who are grieving. May we be the hands and feet of Christ in this world. Be with our church may we reach out to fill the needs of those around us and those around the world. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry and be with him in all he does. Be with our staff and leaders, bless their work and guide them. Be with our Bishop and our District Superintendent as they do the work of the church, bless, and guide them in their endeavors. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

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