



April  
2017

Forest Hills EFC Messenger  
5183 Pebble Creek Trail  
Loves Park, IL 61111

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If we have missed your birthday or someone else's, please contact the office to inform us.

- April 2 Reanee Rowell
- Berthema Thomasson
- April 7 Nena Robeniol
- April 18 Archie Reynolds
- April 24 Debi Beard
- April 26 Arleen Hood

## Weekly Schedule

### Sunday Morning

- 9 a.m. Sunday School
- 10 a.m. Fellowship Time
- 10:25 a.m. Worship Service

### Wednesdays

- 6:30 Adult Bible Study

### Contacting Pastor Mitch

- Call or Text
- (815) 391-3133
- Email: [mitch@mitchss.com](mailto:mitch@mitchss.com)
- Blog: IHGG.NET

## Forgive Him ... Forgive Him Not ...

by Betty Burnell

Imagine standing with your daisy and saying the familiar antidote ... "He Loves Me ... He Loves Me Not" Then change the verse to ... "Forgive Him ... Forgive Him Not". If you find yourself landed on the Forgive Him NOT pedal .... you need to continue reading. **It's literally a matter of life and death for you.**

As I carry on conversations with people in life ... a lot of times it's apparent that this is exactly where we've landed ... on the "FORGIVE HIM NOT" pedal. I'll give a few examples.

One individual was so distraught with some folk in life they were literally ready to ka pow them. Ready ... take aim ... and Ka pow ka pow ka pow ... Now this person wasn't really planning to do this ... it was just how they felt at the time. Another individual was focused on the absence of an official request for forgiveness from the party who they felt wronged them. Another was determined that they needed to march in and announce to all involved the glaring sin that choked relationships. In other words, spill the beans whether helpful or not. Unfortunately, human nature clutches us and more times than not wants us to hang onto lots of ugly stuff that's not good for us.

So I'm thinking ... forgiveness needs to be addressed ....

Of course, the PEFFECT example of forgiveness was and is always Jesus. Please notice **WHEN** Jesus died for you and me. **While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** (Rom. 5:8) ... There is no way that Jesus would have died for someone He didn't forgive ... He even pleads with the Father for us "Forgive them for they know not what they've done. (Luke 23:34) So Jesus is actively forgiving us while we are still spitting on Him and yelling Crucify Him! and before we ever showed any signs of change.

And since we are to imitate Jesus ... our response to people who wrong us, should be to forgive promptly and thoroughly and if necessary even while the wrong is still going on.

While plucking your pedals, if you've landed on "Forgive Him **NOT**" and are holding that pedal til your dying breath please note that you will have an eternal consequence of magnitude size attached to that choice. (Matt 6:15) "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." We are literally playing with eternal damnation if we choose to hold onto unforgiveness pedals towards those who have wronged or hurt us.

I'm pleading with you ... DROP the (forgive him NOT) pedal before it's too late! Un-forgiveness breeds bitterness and anger which you cannot afford to carry. Scripture advises ... "Don't let bitterness take root in you because it will defile many ...." (Heb. 12:15) Instead of holding on stubbornly to that pedal that will only damage yourself and others ... drop it and exchange it for the healing pedal of "Forgive HIM" and we could even add ... for they don't know what they are doing ... cuz most of the time people really are unaware of the hurt they cause others. So let's forgive ...love ... forgive ...love and forgive again!

## The Truth Will Set You Free

Have you unwittingly angered someone in a seemingly polite conversation and been totally confused about what offense you have committed? Have you grown weary of figuring out what is really happening when listening to news reports?

I have in mind several instances: The white woman who “identifies” as black and was rejected by the NAACP. Numerous cases of transgenderism of various kinds. The growing outrage among homosexuals towards heterosexuals for a multitude of offenses. The move of public universities to allow individuals to select “their pronoun” which notably backfired at the University of Michigan when a young man selected “His Majesty”. I also have in mind the “Alt-facts” ground swell most notable in the disparity between the President’s spokespeople and the Media’s version of the facts.

I would like to suggest an exercise in reasoning through some principles in the hopes of learning to see through the fog of confusion growing in our culture. Let us start with the definitions of Facts and Truth from Webster’s 1828 Dictionary:

**FACT**, noun [Latin factum, from facio, to make or do.] 1. Any thing done, or that comes to pass; an act; a deed; an effect produced or achieved; an event. Witnesses are introduced into court to prove a fact.

**TRUTH**, noun 1. Conformity to fact or reality; exact accordance with that which is, or has been, or shall be. The truth of history constitutes its whole value. We rely on the truth of the scriptural prophecies.

If you are like me, you probably use these two words interchangeably. I would like to suggest we start to use these words with a little more precision.

FACTS are a version of the truth based on the perceptions of those who are witnessing or analyzing a particular event. Human perspective, ability, preconceptions, and emotions have a limiting effect on FACTS. This is why in a court trial it is preferable to have many witnesses share the FACTS of what they saw and heard. Unfortunately, we have also learned here in Illinois how FACTS in a court case can lead to wrongful convictions and criminals being set free. The bigger problem we are experiencing today is events are more and more being tried in the Court of Public Opinion and the Court of Social Media. I ask, how many times has a particular video or post or testimony been seen in a totally different light once all the FACTS were known? This distortion is the unfortunate reality of the human condition. Each of us thinks we know what “really happened” when we have only seen or heard a limited set of FACTS. This shows the ultimate wisdom in our justice system that people in a criminal trial must be found guilty “beyond a reasonable doubt.” The compilation of the FACTS must provide

a convincing and coherent demonstration of guilt. But why do we not use that same standard in the Court of Public Opinion? This is the shortcoming of FACTS.

The TRUTH on the other hand is harder to find but more substantial. TRUTH has to do with what really exists or really happened apart from the fallible perceptions of human beings. I believe most would agree, we examine the FACTS with the goal of arriving at the TRUTH. This is why Jesus said: “You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free (John 8:32)”. When the TRUTH is known and acknowledged, then freedom comes to those who bend to the TRUTH without trying to manipulate or bend it to their will. While FACTS are based on perception, TRUTH is reality and must be unchanging.

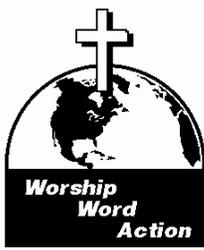
In our culture, we have confused the FACTS and the TRUTH. I heard someone the other day say “that is not my truth.” I was saddened because I realized they meant “I do not want that to be true, so I refuse to accept it.” Their feelings did not and do not change the TRUTH, but they certainly distort the FACTS. A harsh but refreshing example of this comes from the jail. I had the privilege of taking a tour of the county courthouse and jail with our Mock Trial students. The head jailer was asked about how they deal with the issue of transgender inmates. His response was refreshingly simply for a terribly complex issue in our culture, “If you have male sex parts (he used the anatomically correct word) then you are treated as a male.” I asked about those who are transitioning their gender. He held firm to that simple criteria that is based on the TRUTH of anatomy and not the changing FACTS of emotions and identifications. I think this shows not only an adherence to the TRUTH but an incredible wisdom for our times.

This kind of TRUTH brings real freedom when it breaks down all our FACTS, excuses, rationalizations and justifications. A person may say the FACTS are I am not that bad a person, but the TRUTH says, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).” A person may say the FACTS are God could never love a person like me, but the TRUTH says, “God demonstrates His love towards us that while we were still sinners Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).” A person may say the FACTS are my anatomy does not fit how I feel about my gender or sexuality or identity, but the TRUTH says of God, “You formed my inward parts, You wove me in my mother’s womb (Psalm 139:13).”

The FACTS may change based on who perceives them, but the TRUTH is unchanging reality. This is why it is the TRUTH that will set us free, if we yield to it rather than trying to manipulate the FACTS.

In His Grip & Grace  
Pastor Mitch

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						<b>1</b> 8:00 am Men Pray
<b>2</b> Lord's Supper 8:30 am Nomination Committee 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Fellowship 10:25 am Worship	<b>3</b> Pastor's Day Off 9:30 am Ladies Bible Study 7:00 pm CE MTG	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 6:30 pm Bible Study	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 8:00 am Men Pray
<b>9</b> 8:30 am Nomination Committee 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Fellowship 10:25 am Worship	<b>10</b> Pastor's Day Off 9:30 am Ladies Bible Study	<b>11</b> 12:00 pm Diaconate Mtg 12:00 pm Missions Mtg	<b>12</b> 6:30 pm Bible Study	<b>13</b> Maundy Thursday 11:30 am Elders MTG 7:00 pm Maundy Thursday Service	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 8:00 am Men Pray
<b>16</b> Annual Reports Due Resurrection Sunday 8:30 am Nomination Committee 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Fellowship 10:25 am Worship	<b>17</b> Pastor's Day Off 9:30 am Ladies Bible Study	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 6:30 pm Bible Study	<b>20</b> 7:00 pm Council MTG	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> 8:00 am Men Pray
<b>23</b> Timber-lee Missions Moment 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Fellowship 10:25 am Worship	<b>24</b> Pastor's Day Off 9:30 am Ladies Bible Study	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> 6:30 pm Bible Study	<b>27</b> 12:00 pm Goldenagers	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 8:00 am Men Pray
<b>30</b> 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Fellowship 10:25 am Worship 12:00 pm Get To Know You Potluck						



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