

How do you handle it when someone has done something wrong?

As preached by Jesus so often, there has to be forgiveness. As we know, however, forgiveness is not easy.

Forgiveness is often not the ready human reaction. More often we want revenge, to get even with the person who has offended. But then, imitating Jesus, living in his way, is not easy. Choosing to forgive is a Jesus characteristic: forgiveness is a central message of Jesus to his followers. The challenge to forgive is one that Jesus repeatedly proclaimed directly and through parables.

Those who accept this Jesus invitation to forgive will find that this choice often runs counter to a strong societal value. "People of peace must not think about recriminations and retribution. Courageous people do not fear forgiving" (*Nelson Mandela*).

Forgiveness is not the action of the weak but rather the virtue of the brave. The process of forgiveness takes time and patience and is never an easy journey. The fact that forgiveness is not easy demands that adequate time be given to work through the attending issues. Forgiveness can be a slow process. If one rushes the process and tries to oversimplify it, the result can be half-hearted.

Thankfully God forgives us ... and again ... and again!