



2. The Hurdle Called 'Behold'

When Forgiveness Knocked

Behold! See! Lo! If you hear and open, I will come... Revelation 3:20

[for-give (fər-gĭv', fôr-)]

1. To excuse for a fault or an offense; pardon.
2. To renounce anger or resentment against.
3. To absolve from payment of (a debt, for example).

The definitions above are not complete on their own. Each one completes the other.

Forgiveness is both internal & external. We must face the debt incurred within us, just as much as we must face the offender. But forgiveness is more than facing, it is a releasing of these realities into the hands of God to both heal and avenge; all for the purpose of restoration of relationship.

BEHOLD I stand at the door and knock...

In order to forgive, we need to know if there is someone that needs our forgiveness. To receive forgiveness, we need to know if we need it... So, the first step we must take in forgiveness is "in the beholding"...

They say that ignorance is bliss, but I would argue that even though it may be for a season, it is actually quite dangerous; a state that could lull us into sleep or at best, keep us in the land of the familiar – never changing, never learning, never growing. Ignorance is defined as 'the lack of knowledge' or simply put: *not knowing*. It may imply aimlessness, apathy, or a lack of wisdom. It may also imply denial or fear.

The word 'behold' is actually used several times in the New Testament meaning: Behold! See! Lo! In the

Strong's we read: ...*giving a peculiar vivacity to the style by bidding the reader or hearer to attend to what is said.*

What a picture this paints for us! Jesus is standing at our door, with a peculiar vivacity, pleading with us to listen.

Look up the following verses.

What do they say to us with regards to ignorance?

Leviticus 5:15; Numbers 15:28

Romans 1:20

Romans 10:3

Ignorance is not an excuse...

So, we see that unintentional sin is atoneable through repentance, but ignorance is not an excuse. Ignorance stops us from submitting to God & His righteousness and knowing His fullness in our lives.

Look up the following verses and write out what God does not want us to be ignorant of:

Jeremiah 24:7

Ephesians 6:17

Ephesians 6:10-12

2 Corinthians 2:10-12

(answer key: Him, His Word, the devil's schemes, the power of forgiveness)

So, ignorance can be a major hurdle to forgiveness. What might be the cause of ignorance?

► Denial

- Denial is different than ignorance. The problem with denial is that it is a choice that someone has made to not 'behold' – to not listen or look. There are different reasons for this.
- Denial may stem from places inside of us that have been so deeply wounded that we have built walls of protection around them. We may unconsciously have chosen to block these deep wounds off so that we don't have to visit the pain of them again.
- Wilful denial is also a form of rebellion. Now, I know that is a strong word, but think about this for a moment. When we choose to not see the truth, to not trust in God's ability to work on our behalf and heal, to not let Him in to every place of our lives, we are taking things into our own hands; becoming our own master. We cannot serve two masters. (Matthew 6:24, Luke 16:13)

► Pain

- We must see pain for what it is. It is the sign of wounding. It is actually a gift from God to give us a 'heads-up' to a need, but if it is not cared for properly it may fester and grow into much larger issues; namely resentment, anger, fear, etc.
- The nature of pain is that it draws attention and can distract us from a broader picture. In extreme cases, pain can become part of someone's identity. They may never want to let it go. We can learn to thrive off of the attention and pity it gets for us.
- It can paralyze us with fear because something in us understands that to face the truth would simply be more than we could bear. This is where we really need to rely on God's word and presence to encourage us to visit these hard memories again, but this time with Him leading us (and a good friend by our side!).

NOTE: This can be one of the hardest places we ever find ourselves emotionally. Please don't go through this alone! Find someone that is a proven friend over time to take this journey with you.

"Pain can be a decoy."

► Pride

- Have you ever heard yourself say: "But I shouldn't feel this way?" We could call this denial, but in actual fact it is really pride. Well, pride tends to mask the truth and really causes a lot of denial anyway, doesn't it?
- We may be embarrassed to actually admit to a particular circumstance in our life thinking things like; "What would others think?"

► The battle of our flesh and spirit

- Read Romans 7:21-25. Note, that we all face this same dilemma.
- We seem to have this innate desire for retaliation. We seem to want that 'pound of flesh' ... the 'just desserts'. (Did you know that the root word for dessert is deserve?) We want people to get what they deserve. I am reminded of a line from 'Fiddler on the Roof' with Tavia saying something like: "Yeah, an eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth. That way we will all be blind and toothless".

► Unbelief

- We may not believe that God will avenge us in the right way. Will He show mercy? It becomes a trust issue ([Romans 12:19](#)).
- We may not believe His Word ([Hebrews 11:6](#))

► Fear

- Fear of confrontation can make us slink back from really being honest. Although we need wisdom in what we should say or not say, silence is not always healthy. It eliminates the opportunity for misunderstandings to be solved, and for us to build each other up in love... teaching each other in love. ([Matthew 18:15-17](#); [Psalm 32:3](#))

"Each handicap is like a hurdle in a steeplechase, and when you ride up to it, if you throw your heart over, the horse will go along, too."
~Lawrence Bixby

What does this mean for me?

As we go through this process of forgiveness (and I do mean process), we will find that one of the greatest hurdles any one of us will face is this first one that I have affectionately named 'BEHOLD'. Unless we are willing to really behold, to give attention to what is right in front of us or what is still lingering from our past, we will not be able to complete the race. We will not even try to jump this first hurdle (by the way, there is no other way around it). We might just sit down and have a Gatorade instead, along with a side-dish of pity.

Paul said that we need to 'press on, forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what is ahead'. ([Philippians 3:12-14](#)) The goal being the prize we have in Christ.

The only way I've found to forget, is through faith and forgiveness.

- I must know Him myself and believe that forgiveness is for me.
- I must know my need and believe I can release it to God and He will take care of it.
- I must know my position and release those who have offended me to the rightful judge ... the higher court.

The Challenge:

- Make a conscious commitment to not stay in the land of the familiar.
- Tell yourself, that with God's help, you will face whatever hurdle is in front of you and deal with it as He leads you ... one hurdle at a time. ([Exodus 23:30](#); [Deuteronomy 7:22](#))

The Choice:

- Choose to behold and not to be ignorant
- Choose to know God & His Word
- Choose to believe
- Choose to trust

Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. (Psalm 34:8)
*Then I, God, step in and say, 'I'm **on your side**, taking up your cause. I'm your Avenger.(Jeremiah 51:34)*