

A Plea to Save an Enemy

Dr. Stephen Olford (1918 – 2004) was a 20th century Christian leader whom Billy Graham called “the man who most influenced my ministry.” He was an author and a pioneer in Christian television programming, and his sermons were also broadcast around the world on radio.

In *The Grace of Giving*, Olford tells about Peter Miller, a Baptist pastor who lived during the American Revolution.

A citizen of Ephrata, Pennsylvania, Miller enjoyed the friendship of George Washington.

Michael Wittman also lived in Ephrata. He was an evil-minded man who did all he could to oppose and humiliate the pastor.

One day, Wittman was arrested for treason and sentenced to die. Pastor Miller traveled the 70 miles to Philadelphia on foot to plead for the life of the traitor.

“No, Peter,” Gen. Washington said. “I cannot grant you the life of your friend.”

“My friend!” exclaimed the old preacher. “He’s the bitterest enemy I have.”

“What?” said Washington. “You’ve walked 70 miles to save the life of an enemy? That puts the matter in a different light. I’ll grant your request for a pardon.” And he did.

Peter Miller took Michael Wittman back home to Ephrata – no longer an enemy but a friend.

Miller’s example of grace and forgiveness flowed from his knowledge of God’s sacrifice for the human race. Because God forgave Peter Miller and sacrificed His Son for him, Miller found the grace to sacrifice for his enemy.

Although most of us know God’s grace and love for us is great, sometimes we must be reminded that His love never fails – even when we do!

At the Pan American Games, a United States diver was asked how he coped with the stress of international diving competition. He replied that he climbed to the board, took a deep breath and thought, “Even if I blow it today, my God will still love me.” Then, he said, he would strive for excellence.

At the beginning of each day – like that diver – take a deep breath and say, “Even if I blow it today, my God will still love me.”

Then, assured of His grace and quickness to forgive, go into the day seeking a perfect score.”

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:23-24 NKJV).