

Forgiving Trespasses

Steve Goodier, an ordained United Methodist minister and author of numerous books about personal development and inspiration, tells about observing a sign in a church parking lot that read: "Parking for Church Use Only. Violators will be towed."

Goodier suggested that it might be more effective if some humor were used, such as: "Parking for Church Use Only. Violators will be baptized and expected to tithe."

That should clear the lot.

One church posted a sign that read: "We forgive those who trespass against us, but they will be towed all the same."

We've all had people trespass against us in one way or another. And we have done our share of trespassing.

The dictionary defines trespassing as an offense, transgression or error against others. Trespassing covers a huge territory.

Although not always intentionally, I know I've trespassed plenty over the years, and more people than I can remember have trespassed against me.

In his book *Lee: The Last Years*, author Charles Flood reports that after the American Civil War, Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee visited a Kentucky lady who took him to the remains of a grand old tree in front of her house. There, she bitterly cried that its limbs and trunk had been destroyed by Union artillery fire. She looked to Lee for a word condemning the North, or at least sympathizing with her loss.



After a brief silence, the general said, "Cut it down, my dear Madam, and forget it."

He seemed to know that as long as she continued to recount her losses, she'd never get over them. She had to release the North from her debt in order to find anything like happiness again.

There's much I've had to cut down and forget. It's the only way ahead. It's the only way to really live after loss, hurt or insult. Cut it down and forget it.

(more)

People will always trespass against us. But there comes a time to cut the tree down and forget it.

In the end, although cutting that tree down is rarely our first impulse, it is the best final response to those who trespass against us.

But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (Matthew 6:15 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter