

Forgiving an Auschwitz Guard

Corrie ten Boom survived the Holocaust, but her family did not. They were Dutch Christians caught by the Nazis for hiding Jews in their home.

She watched the horrors of the genocide from the Auschwitz concentration camp, and barely survived.

Following the war, she became famous for her book, *The Hiding Place*, which shared the story of her family. The popularity of the book gave her the opportunity to share her faith with thousands of people on speaking tours.

One such evening, after she had spoken about the forgiveness of Christ, a man approached her – an individual she recognized as one of the guards from Auschwitz. Corrie immediately felt all of the horror, pain and hatred from those years of persecution.

He told her that he had listened to her talk and informed her that he had been a guard at the death camp. She admitted to him that she recognized him.



Crying, he asked if he might receive the forgiveness of the Christ of whom she had spoken.

Corrie thought to herself that she could not, but she remembered the command of Christ to love your enemy and to forgive 70 times seven the person who has wronged you.

She prayed that Jesus might give her the strength to forgive the man, and as she prayed, she felt a sensation begin in her heart and flow through her hand as it touched his. Then she heard herself saying, “In the name of Jesus Christ, I forgive you.”

The man collapsed to her feet and wept as he uttered a prayer of thanks. Corrie later discovered that he had become a minister of the gospel and that many people had come to Christ through his ministry.

We never know how far God can spread the love that we give. For those of us in Life Care and Century Park, we are in a prime position to allow the love of Christ to flow through us by our words and our actions to people who are hurting and need hope in their lives.

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Indeed, we have perhaps received love from someone who was born from such an act of loving and extending forgiveness to someone else. We love our enemies because we recognize that Christ died for them, too. We love our enemies because we know that the power of love is stronger than any depth to which we can fall.

The Bible is clear on this subject: *If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head* (Romans 12:20 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter