

Quit Worrying about That

A young boy's father died in a car wreck when the youngster was 12 years old. He read it in the newspaper before anyone got word to him to tell him about it.

When he saw that picture of the family car smashed-up on the front page of the newspaper, and read that his dad had died in that accident, he was thrust immediately and painfully into the shocked numbness of deep grief.

Strangely, one of his very first feelings was that of guilt. He had remembered how some months before at a family picnic he was showing off with a baseball. At one point, he got careless and threw wildly; the ball hit his dad in the hand and broke his thumb. The boy felt horrible. He said to himself, "What a terrible son I am! I have caused my dad great pain."

It seemed that was all he could remember after his father's death – the pain he had caused his dad. Finally, the boy went to see his pastor and told him about these deep feelings of guilt, and about breaking his father's thumb.

In recalling that counseling session, the boy said, "I'll never forget how my pastor handled that. He was so great. He came around the desk with tears in his eyes. He sat down across from me and said, 'Now, Jim (the boy's name), you listen to me. If your dad could come back to life for five minutes and be right here with us, and if he knew you were worried about that, what would he say to you?'

"He would tell me to quit worrying about that," Jim said.

"Well, all right," the minister said, "then you quit worrying about that right now. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, sir," Jim said, and he did.

That minister was saying, "You are forgiven. Accept the forgiveness, and make a new start with your life."

The young boy did make a new start. And today, many years later, he is the bestselling author of more than 40 books, a preacher, pastor and an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church. He served as senior pastor of St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Houston, Texas (more than 7,500 members), from 1984 to 2006. He is the Rev. Dr. James W. (Jim) Moore.

This past Easter, we celebrated the Risen Lord who had come back to life, and assured His disciples that they were forgiven. Peter had denied Jesus three times. Thomas had doubted. All the disciples had forsaken Him.

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But Christ came back and forgave them.

He still comes today to share with us (for we all have sinned), the joy, the encouragement and the forgiveness that He longs to give.

Do you have some need to be forgiven?
Jesus can do it, whatever it may be.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter