Standing on Hope

February 2020

We are already in the second month of 2020! Wow, time seems to go more quickly with each passing year. You may have noticed that you did not receive a prayer letter from me in January. Hopefully, you missed reading it! But I have changed to sending out letters every other month. Since December 2018, I have had the privilege and great learning experience to write monthly about what God has been doing in my life as well as through the North Central ministry with CVM. I am so thankful to continue this in 2020. So keep an eye out every other month now for my prayer letters!

February is a very exciting month for us in the North Central region. We are hosting our Real Life Real Impact retreat in Minneapolis on February 14-16. This is the yearly event where veterinary students and professionals from around our region gather for a weekend of fellowship, learning, worship, and networking. CVM is hosting 11 such events around the country and Canada this winter. We enjoy speakers who connect our profession with our faith. Some of our session titles this year are:

- Let God’s Plan Be Your Hope for Student Debt
- You ARE Qualified: Trusting Jesus Through the Triumphs and Trials of Clinics and the 1st Year in Practice
- Hope, Prayer, and Tensile Strength: The Ministry of Veterinary Medicine

We are so excited to be able to provide a special time of refreshment and community for our students and professionals amidst the extremely busy rigors of school and practice. If you think of us on Valentine’s Day weekend, your prayers would be so welcomed. Please pray that our students would feel Christ’s love surround them and that the professionals would feel a sense of rest and refreshment. Also, it’s Minnesota in February. So, let’s pray that the weather allows for passable travel!

As the region rep, my responsibility, in addition to coordinating and overseeing the event, is to present the keynote session on Saturday night. This year, we have been studying Joshua 1:9 (Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.) As I thought about what it looks like to be strong and courageous today, the Lord placed the idea of forgiveness on my heart. So this is the subject I will be sharing with our RLRI participants.

I learned so much about forgiveness as I was preparing for this. Jesus taught us to be counter-cultural and forgiving one another is definitely against what our culture tells us to do. Society tells us to hold a grudge and “make people pay for what they have done.” When someone wrongs us, our gut reaction is to think: Why in the
world would you do that? Why did you think it was ok to do this to me? We want the offender to recognize and understand that they have wronged us! But the only thing we can control when others offend us is how WE react.

Forgiveness is countercultural not only because it forgives a debt but it also requires dismissing our demand that the offender owes us something. That “something” could be an apology or even an acknowledgment of the wrongs committed. This is why the call to forgive truly may be the hardest thing we have ever done. But we must forgive because through Jesus’ sacrifice, God forgives us. Ephesians 4:32 tells us: “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” These seemingly simple instructions take such perseverance and can even take a lifetime of effort.

I hope to convey to the students that forgiveness is NOT letting the offender off the hook or excusing the sin. It is releasing the hurt and the anger to God; even transferring the “guilty” from your hook over to God’s hook. Forgiving someone who has hurt us is not just an event or a feeling but it takes time and is a true act of courage. Forgiveness is also not reconciliation and that is an important distinction to make. Reconciling a relationship may not be appropriate, but forgiving is commended of us.

Since the Lord has forgiven us and thus tells us to forgive others, we can consider the hard work of forgiveness as work that we are doing for the Lord and not for men. When we show the world that we can dismiss a debt, no matter how large, the world sees the story of the Gospel at work! As we go through 2020, I hope that we can be strong and courageous and choose to forgive. Thank you all so very much for your prayers and support. I can’t wait to report on what the Lord does at Real Life Real Impact!

Elizabeth Mendoza
206-945-5799
emendoza@cvmusa.org

Contributions are solicited with the understanding that the donee organization has complete discretion and control over the use of all donated funds.