

Forgiving Ourselves Can Be Difficult

A true story in Battlefields and Blessings tells of a Pennsylvania family with four sons. The two oldest sons moved to New Orleans five years before the outbreak of the Civil War and never returned home for a visit. They sought to build new lives and businesses in the South. The two younger brothers, George and Frederick, remained home in Pennsylvania to help their father.

When the Civil War started, both of the eldest sons joined the Confederate army to protect their new homeland in the South. Meanwhile, the two younger brothers joined the Union army.



During the 1862 Battle of Fredericksburg, the two younger brothers were on the front line of a difficult battle. “As the rifles of the Confederates fired into the Union lines, the Union forces retreated, but not before rebel mine balls hit George and Frederick – both dropped dead. The rebel soldiers, clad in rags, robbed the dead Yankees of their money, clothes, and canteens. One rebel reached a dead soldier who lay facedown and turned him over. To his horror, he looked on the face of his youngest brother.”

What if this was you? Can you imagine the remorse and sorrow of seeing your brother lying dead in front of you? You were doing your duty in the assault of the enemy, yet killing a family member was not your intent. Could you forgive yourself? What would Jesus want you to do?

“Christians make mistakes, and we seek God’s forgiveness. Yet, often, we find no peace because we cannot forgive ourselves. Undoubtedly, the Confederate brothers found it difficult to forgive themselves for what happened. The father also found it difficult to forgive himself for allowing his sons to fight in the Civil War. Jesus Christ died to remove guilt and shame from our lives. Jesus paid the price for us, and He forgave those who nailed Him to the cross. If you have asked God to forgive you, He has forgiven you. We owe it to the Lord to forgive ourselves and others.” Jesus died so we can live.

The Bible Says: *Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus, the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. (Acts 13:38.)*

Question: What do you need to forgive yourself for? What would Jesus want you to do?

Closing Prayer: Dear Lord, Life happens. Our decisions are imperfect, even when we have the best intentions. Help us to forgive ourselves, move on with our lives, and be the person you made us to be. Jesus died for the forgiveness of our sins. Let Jesus’ sacrifice not be in vain. Let us forgive ourselves. Amen.

Battlefields & Blessings, Stories of Faith and Courage from the Civil War, by Terry Tuley, March 12 story on page 76.