



Letters About Forgiving Others

Colossians 3:12-13; 1 Corinthians 13:5

Ranger Reggie bounded into the Mail Center and waved as he headed to the counter. “Hello, Campers! Ranger Reggie here! Welcome back to the Mail Center!”

Safari Sam walked through the door. Focused on the white envelope he was turning over and over in his hands, he nearly tripped over a camper’s feet as he walked toward Ranger Reggie.

“Hello, Safari Sam. What have you got there?” Ranger Reggie asked, as the campers stretched their necks to see what Safari Sam was holding.

“Oh, hello, Ranger Reggie. Hi, campers.” Safari Sam held up the envelope. “It’s another letter from Ranger Drosselmeyer.” He slipped behind the counter and folded his arms across his chest, still holding the envelope.

“Well, what does it say?” Ranger Reggie asked impatiently.

Safari Sam shrugged. “I’m afraid to open it. What if Ranger Drosselmeyer is still mad at me for those tricks I pulled on him?”

“Well, you did apologize,” Ranger Reggie reminded him, “so you should open the letter and see what he has to say.”

**“I guess you’re right,” Safari Sam agreed. He opened the letter and read,
Dear Safari Sam,
Thank you for being honest. You are already forgiven. Read
Colossians 3:12-13.
Sincerely,
Ranger Drosselmeyer.**

Safari Sam looked at Ranger Reggie. “Colossians 3:12-13? Hmm. What do you think he means?”

“There’s only one way to find out . . . Mail Time!” Ranger Reggie was already at the mailbox lifting out the Bible. “Here it is! See what it says, Safari Sam.”

Safari Sam took the Bible and read the verse, “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and

patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

"What do you think of that, Safari Sam?" Ranger Reggie exclaimed.

Safari Sam wrinkled his nose. "I think whoever wrote that letter didn't know Ranger Drosslemeyer."

"But, I think he knew your heart and he knew you need to forgive," said Ranger Reggie.

"I need to forgive?" asked a red faced Safari Sam. "Why do I need to do anything?"

"God wants you to forgive, just as He has forgiven you." Ranger Reggie said gently.

"Yeah . . . but . . . well . . . forgiving is hard!" said Sam.

"You're right. Forgiving is hard, but it needs to be the first thing we do. When we hold things against people and continue to bring up the things they have done to hurt us, it is harder for us to be close to the Lord." Safari Sam stared as though he didn't quite understand Ranger Reggie's explanation. "You see, Safari Sam, when we hold a grudge, we are not acting like Jesus. When Jesus forgave your sins, did He continue to hold those sins against you?"

Sam thought for a moment then quietly said, "No."

"Does Jesus bring remind you of those sins again and again?" Ranger Reggie asked.

"No, I guess not," said Sam. "I understand now, but what if he doesn't say he's sorry."

"Forgive him anyway." Ranger Reggie smiled.

"But, what if he does it again?"

"Forgive him anyway." Ranger Reggie repeated.

"But, what if he really hurts my feelings?" Asked Safari Sam.

"Ask God to help you forgive him and then forgive him anyway. After all, does Jesus put conditions on our forgiveness?"

"No, Jesus forgives us unconditionally," Sam said. "And, I guess he wants me to do the same. I wonder if our animal of the day is a forgiving animal."

Ranger Reggie laughed. "I've got an idea what today's Creature Feature is going to be, but let's get our Camp Critter Clue."

"Yea!!" the campers cheered, as Safari Sam called out for Wild William. The strange little man appeared on cue and Safari Sam asked, "Wild William, who is today's featured creature?"

Wild William ran his hands through his hair, causing it to stand up even wilder than before. Then he said, "It's more than just their wooly coats that separate them from the goats."

Ranger Reggie looked around warily, and then sidestepped to the opposite side of the stage. "I'm always attacked by the featured creature, so I'm going to stand somewhere safe!" Just then a lamb raced across the stage and ran right into Ranger Reggie's knees. He fell to the ground and yelled, "Ahhh! Not again! Get him off! Get him off!"

Safari Sam ran across the stage and cornered the lamb. "I've got him! I've got him!" He petted the lamb's soft wool, then picked him up and gently gave him to Wild William. "Awww, what a sweet little lamb."

Ranger Reggie just shook his head as he watched Wild William carry the lamb out the door. "More like a wretched little lamb!"

Safari Sam frowned. "No, Ranger Reggie, little lambs are pure and innocent."

Ranger Reggie pointed toward the open door. "Well, I don't know about that critter, but Jesus was pure and innocent."

"You mean because He never sinned?" Safari Sam asked.

"That's exactly right!" Ranger Reggie agreed. "And, God not only forgives us our sins, but He forgets about them! He sees us as if we are as innocent as little lambs." He glanced up towards the barn's rafters. "I think Orville has a letter that explains it best!"

The campers knew what to do and shouted, "Hey Orville, come on down!"

Orville swooped down from his nest and dropped an egg into Safari Sam's open hands. "Orville laid an egg with a letter inside!" He exclaimed and opened the egg to reveal the letter. "It's from Paul's letter to the Corinthians. I remember this letter. It talks about love. It says, 'It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.'"

"The Bible teaches us that Jesus died to save us all, and He forgives everyone who believes in Him!" Ranger Reggie added.

"So, that's why Ranger Drosselmeyer said I was already forgiven!" Safari Sam suddenly realized. "He knew what these campers know—only Jesus can forgive our sins! If Jesus can forgive me, I'm sure I can forgive Ranger Drosselmeyer."

"I think that will make God very happy. That's the very reason we make our pledge to serve Him!" Ranger Reggie said. "Let's say our Camp Venture Camper's Code together."

Everyone stood up and raised their right hands. They said, "I will love God with all my heart. I will love my neighbor as myself. I will be a light wherever I go!"

"We're out of time, Campers!" Safari Sam announced. "Let's head over to the flagpole and sing our Camp Critter song together!" He jumped off the stage and the campers followed him out the door to the camp flagpole.