

Polly's Pondering

Last Sunday, Terrie Foltermann walked in with her eyes tearing up after hearing a chorus of a song on the radio. Out of curiosity I looked up the song and played it before worship. Those of you who were there might remember I sang the chorus. It was powerful and perfectly suited for that service. Since then, I have listened to that song 100 times. Let me share the words with you.

Heard the Preacher talking about three wooden crosses.
Up on a hill everyone to see
Two sinners on the outside couldn't save themselves if they tried
All I could think is man that sounds like me.

I've been the one on the left full of guilt and regret
Long gone on the wrong side of living
I've been the one on the right always looking for a fight thinking I could never be forgiven
I'm standing here today overwhelmed by grace cause I know who paid my cost
Thank God for the man on the middle cross

He didn't have to do it but for me he went through it
A love like that I'll never understand
Lord knows I don't deserve it and I know I couldn't earn it
Mercy rained down on this desperate man

The cross is where he went but that ain't where he stayed
He brought me back to life when he rose up out of that grave
Someday I'll stand before Him See Jesus face to face
I worship and adore him for a life forever changed.

I've been the one on the left full of guilt and regret
Long gone on the wrong side of living
I've been the one on the right always looking for a fight thinking I could never be forgiven
I'm standing here today overwhelmed by grace cause I know who paid my cost
Thank God for the man on the middle cross

This song makes me acknowledge my need for Jesus, but it also points me to the truth that God already knows my need and the causes for it. You see knowing my need is important but understanding that I can turn to God even in my need is more important. The Hebrew people have a name for this God, *Elohay Selichot*; it means "The God Who Forgives."

There was a time when the religious leaders of the people of Israel officiated a solemn festival, in which God's people were confessing their sins and crying out for cleaning. At a point during that service the leaders stood and used a song to point all of God's people to *Elohay Selichot*, "The God Who Forgives" because they knew that it is only in the presence of a righteous and grace-filled God that we are able to confess and it is only through a merciful and forgiving God that we are able to receive the forgiveness that washes us clean and sets us free from fear of judgement, and the bondage that comes with shame and guilt. The words of that song is recorded in Nehemiah chapter 9. Here it is in part.

"They refused to listen and failed to remember the miracles You performed among them. They became stiff-necked and in their rebellion appointed a leader in order to return to their slavery. But You are a forgiving God, a gracious and compassionate, slow to anger abounding in love. Therefore You did not desert them." Nehemiah 9:17

And here is another song you might recall. "Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to him belong. They are weak but he is strong."

May we never stop singing songs about *Elohay Selichot*, The God Who Forgives. May we never stop sharing songs with others.