

# THE HIGH PLAINS PREACHER

Welcome to the High Plains Preacher! Stories about the Bible, high wind, fast horses, lack of moisture and other elements of life in the Texas Panhandle.

## The Woman with Mascara Running Down Her Face

by Fr. Jim Schmitmeyer

When we get caught doing something wrong, what do we do? When someone calls us out, what do we say?

*“Hey, sorry, pal. Didn’t mean it. Honest. Forgive me, all right?”* In other words, we clear our throats, cough up the word *forgiveness* and hope for the best.

This is how human beings deal with forgiveness. But what about God? What’s God’s “take” on the word forgiveness?

Interestingly enough, it has little to do with our saying “I’m sorry.” It has nothing to do with regret or wounded pride. Rather, because it is a “God” thing, forgiveness is a “deep” thing, meaning, it has everything to do, not with broken hearts or broken spirits, but broken *lives*.

Just ask the woman who crashed the party at the Pharisee’s house, the one with the mascara running down her face. Just ask King David the day he gets caught with his pants down. Or ask St. Peter, caught in a lie outside the jail where soldiers are getting ready to torture his Savior and Lord, the best friend he’s ever had, the one he’s just denied ever setting his eyes on.

You can ask that woman, you can ask King David, you can ask St. Peter about God’s forgiveness. But, it’d be better if you asked yourself.

Go ahead. Ask yourself, how it felt the last time you did something so embarrassing, so humiliating so—unforgivable—that the only response was to break down and sob? Uncontrollably.

St. Peter reached out for God’s forgiveness when he heard the rooster’s crow echo off the courtyard wall outside the Jerusalem jail. And he wept.

The woman who crashed the party at the home of a man named Simon. And she wept.

If you’re like me, you don’t want to think about *that part* of forgiveness. That part when you lose control. But, here’s the deal: God doesn’t ask for that response. He doesn’t expect that and I’m not sure if He even wants it.

When it comes to forgiveness—God’s forgiveness—He simply wants you to receive it.

Human forgiveness requires effort and discipline. Divine forgiveness is pure gift and it's a gift none of us deserves. But, when you're ready to receive it, God will hand it to you. And when he does, you'll never be the same.