Forgiveness

It’s Easter Season, a time for joy and resurrection. Sometimes we cant forgive and therefore can’t rise. I don’t mean in then next life. I mean now. We can’t rise in our hearts when we hold on to hate. We must let go and forgive. Only then, can we be truly free and focus on joy. But First we need peace. Forgiveness brings inner peace. This brief story is about forgiveness.

Once upon a time, there was a young, thin, well-groomed waiter named Joe who worked at a popular Tex-Mex restaurant. Now when a waiter’s section was all filled up, he might ask for additional tables too if he could handle it. Joe was doing well so he asked to take on a big party that had just arrived. He even recognized some friends in the party.

“Hey, Sally . . . Bill! How you guys doin’? Just comin’ back from a softball game, I see. How’d the “Tudes” do?” Their nickname was short for “Attitudes.”

“We won! We’re glad to have you waitin’ on us. Were ready to celebrate. Can we start off with a round of waters? Oh! . . . and I ‘d like a lemon wedge and an orange wedge with my water. Sally said being finicky. “Maybe then we’ll be ready to order.”

“I’ll get it right away.”

Joe went to grab the waters but when he got to the bar, they were all out of orange wedges. A barback had to head back to the cooler to get some but had to clean up a spill first. It would be a minute. Joe attended another table for a second.

Meanwhile, Kaz, a good friend of the party, went over to greet them. Kaz had played with the Tudes the past year but wanted to work more hours. He was a stout, muscular guy with a goatee and sideburns.

“Kaz! What’s up? We miss you! We won today!” Bill said excitedly.

“Congrats!” Kaz responded.

“Hey . . . “ Sally said. “I don’t know what’s takin’ so long. All we wanted was a round of waters. Can you take our table?”

“Sure! No prob.” Kaz went to get the round of waters. Joe had got caught up for a minute with another table, but he returned to the party to explain the delay.

“Oh! We’re all set now.” Sally said. “Somebody . . . Kaz picked us up. Thanks anyway though.”

Joe was livid. That party was worth a big tip. He approached Kaz.

“Hey! You stole my table! That’s not fair!”

Kaz grinned. “They wanted me. Anyway, what are you gonna do about it?”

Joe was furious but he was no match for Kaz. He went to tell the manger. When he told the manager, the boss responded.

“Look, Kaz is a good waiter. People love him. Work it out. Stuff happens.”

But Joe retorted. “It’s not fair . . . he stole my table!” Joe even began to curse loudly.

The boss sighed with sadness. “Look I hate to do this but I’m going to have to let you go. We don’t need cursing in this restaurant. It sets a bad example. You’re fired.”

Joe was heartbroken. He headed to a nearby pub, downed one too many beers and on the way home got in an accident and died. When he stood before the throne of God, Jesus had had a serious countenance.

“Joe, why did you drink and drive and have anger in your heart for your brother?’

Joe stood trembling.

“But he stole my table and I got fired!”

Jesus responded sadly.

“Joe. Kaz’s judgment doesn’t concern you. I will handle that. I asked you a question. Why did you drink and drive and have anger in your heart for your brother?”

Kind of a sad story! The point isn’t that Joe went to Hell. No one can know how Jesus will judge. The point is Joe was focused on Kaz but neglected himself. Even Purgatory is a good place. If we go there, our foot’s in the door. We just need a shower first. Still, we can’t presume Heaven either this leads to lukewarmness which Jesus condemns. We must be ready. Are you ready?