

FIVE MINUTES WITH TOM MOOTY

(Column Number 1901)

"I'M SORRY - OR NOT!"

It seems like I can remember some days "way, way, way back there" when we fellers had run out of good stuff to do - and somebody drug out a board game called "Sorry". It might just be a figment; but I can remember something about a game called "Sorry". I might be confusing whatever I remembered as a board game (or was it a card game) with some moving picture cowboy who had a horse named, "Trigger"; but, I do remember it was something or somebody named something or somebody!

You need to know this; at the heart of that game is the acknowledgement that SAYING "I'm sorry" is not quite the same as BEING sorry; and, actually that is quite true! Keep reading, please!

So, when the thought entered my furtive imaginative mind to write about "being sorry about stuff"; I guess that furtive, imaginative mind just started running wild.

To keep up with the these masterpieces; I usually keep a couple of Willie Green's Print Shop nota pads in my pocket and start furiously (and furtively) writing when I get a thought on a topic for a column. (I don't know what "furtive" really means; but I just thought I would throw it in here - you know - just for good measure.

Here is what I wrote one day in the last two or three weeks: "I'm Sorry" is more than just a phrase or two words; it is a state of mind, an attitude". I actually wrote that to show up on our church sign (her name is "Ima" - "Ima Sign"); but it'll do for this as well.

Hey; do you realize that the Bible never uses the words "I'm Sorry" or "you should be sorry". "Godly sorrow", yes - 11 times; and, by contrast, the words "forgive", "forgives", "forgiven" and "forgiveness" show up at least 119 times by an unofficial count.

Is that because The Lord would rather we say, "Please forgive me" rather than saying "I'm sorry?" And, if so, why would that be.

Well, you see, saying "I'm sorry" is basically one-way; from us to whomever; and it doesn't call for a response from whomever that other person or Entity is.

The Apostle Paul was inspired to tell the First Baptist Church of Corinth: "I do not repent over making you sorry with my letter; but, instead, I rejoice because your sorrow (which is good) lead you to repentance (which is better) because Godly sorrow ("The Sorrow of God") leads repentance to salvation (which is best) which will never be regretted; but the sorrow of the world leads to death". (2 Cor 7:8-10).

"Sorrow" is used in Scripture mostly in the physical sense; but when it is coupled with the word for "Godly" which makes it "The Sorrow of God" it becomes an agent to bring about the transformation to "forgiveness" (if that is what you need) or "salvation" (if that is what you need). But, please note, "sorrow" by itself is "the sorrow of the world" and IS NOT Salvation!

In every case, "The Sorrow of God" which is, by definition, genuine and whole-heartedly felt is like unlimited refills on your coffee at your favorite restaurant. But, what if you went to a strange restaurant and ordered refill after refill of your coffee - and then were presented with a bill for each and every cup you ordered? That would be a major bummer wouldn't it?

I know, I know, you should have asked if refills were free; I know, I know. But that just illustrates the big difference in the way the world "does business" and how God performs. God will forgive you if your heart is clean, your sorrow is genuine, and your forgiveness of others is up to speed!

While the world expects us to pay for our sins; God expects to, wants to, desires to forgive us of our sins - and He surely will!

Why not ask Him for forgiveness? Hey! The price has already been paid-in-full - at Calvary!

Tom Mooty has served the West End Baptist Church as Supply Pastor, Interim Pastor, Pastor, Senior Pastor, and Very Senior Pastor for a cumulative time of 34 years in three terms beginning in 1971. Mooty has written these columns for The Cocke County Banner; The Morgan County News; and The Newport Plain Talk. Enjoy - and Share!