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"Come away by yourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile!..." Mark 6:31  
Are you ready to accept the invitation?

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### Very Good News!

*"I did not come to condemn the world, but to save it" (Jn. 12:47).*

It is all too easy in these lengthy passages from the Gospel of John (such as this twelfth chapter) to miss the nuggets of Good News buried in them. And this is such a nugget. Indeed, it is Very Good News.

But for many Christians, it is news too good to be true. Far too many of us have found reasons for condemning ourselves and/or others. One cause of this is a very subtle, very hidden form of spiritual pride that manifests itself in this way:

*God's forgiveness comes too easily (just look at that story of the prodigal son!). God's standards are too low. My standards are much higher – higher even than God's! – so high that even I cannot reach the bar that I myself have set. Therefore I am not, cannot be, forgiven. Instead, I am condemned, regardless of what Jesus has said and done.*

I have heard that contorted, painful conviction expressed many times, and ways, through my years as a priest.

Why are we harder on ourselves than God is on us? Is it that we are convinced we're not worthy of such love, such mercy? That we have not earned it, or merited it?

If that's what you think, you are absolutely right – because God's merciful love cannot be earned, or merited, and worthiness has nothing to do with it. Is there even one person in the Gospel to whom Jesus said, "You are not worthy, and so you are not forgiven"?

Jesus has not said that to you either.

*Jesus, help me to become free enough to forgive myself of that which you have already forgiven. Then I will finally be able to forgive others, in your name and in mine.*

*Patrick Foley*