

The Forgiveness of Sins

“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and **he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.** For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Isaiah 55:6-9

“Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: **Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?** And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.”

Matthew 18:32-35

Introduction:

1. When Moses asked to see Jehovah's glory, God declared His mercy, grace, and forgiveness of sins, which Moses later used in holy reasoning with God in prayer (Ex 33:12-23; 34:5-9; Num 14:17-19)!
2. No man has faced a Judge like the Lord; He cannot acquit or clear; you cannot snow Him like others.
3. He drowned and suffocated the human race with a flood of water in the days of Noah (Gen 7:21-24).
4. He annihilated seven nations of Canaan for their sinful abominations in the days of Joshua (Deut 7:2).
5. But He is also infinitely merciful – forgiving the sins of His elect and those who repent in humility, which makes Him a loving and merciful heavenly Father in Whom you can trust for time and eternity.
6. Ahab and Manasseh were two very great sinners in the O.T, but they were forgiven (II Chr 33:12-13).
7. A woman who was an adulterous was brought to Jesus, but He freely forgave her sins (John 8:1-11).
8. Jesus Christ, the Head of our church, has power to forgive sins (Matt 9:1-8; Mark 2:10; Luke 5:24).
9. We cannot cleanse ourselves or give a ransom to God for a brother (Job 9:30-31; Jer 2:22; Ps 49:7-9).
10. So the blessed God provided a Saviour to purchase the forgiveness of sins (Matt 1:21; I Pet 1:18-20).

The Glory of Forgiveness

- A. David committed the heinous crimes of aggravated adultery and calculated murder of a friend, but God forgave him immediately in one short verse, even after David had signed his death warrant by his harsh response to Nathan's parable (II Sam 12:13)!
- B. Do you understand the implications of the above facts? God's glorious thoughts and ways that are far above our thoughts and ways are His infinite superiority at forgiving and pardoning sin, even compared to the man after God's own heart (Isaiah 55:6-9)!
- C. Eternal life is full and final forgiveness, when the book of life overrides sins (Rev 20:11-15).
- D. A king on earth could alter feelings or life by forgiving or not (Prov 16:14-15; 19:12; 20:2).
- E. The faithful saying worthy of all acceptance is declared forgiveness in Christ (I Tim 1:15).
- F. We love to hear such words after offending or sinning: “I forgive you! Forget it! Smile!”
- G. Can you forgive your enemies enough to love them, to be God's children (Matt 5:43-48)?
- H. A great man defers anger and it is his glory to pass over, forgive, transgressions (Prov 19:11).
- I. Forgiveness is described as God hiding His face and blotting out (Ps 51:9), purging (Ps 65:3), casting behind back (Is 38:17), blotting sins out (Is 43:25), covered (Ps 85:2-3), removed (Ps 103:12), white as snow (Is 1:18), not remembering (Heb 8:12), etc.
- J. A presidential pardon is a close comparison, but God's forgiveness required His Son's death!

The Cost of Forgiveness

- A. The sin offering of Moses' Law and its blood requirement for forgiveness provides learning.
 - 1. Read Lev 4:22-35 and 5:1-10 for a brief description of offerings for sins of ignorance.
 - 2. Note that these requirements of blood are for *sins of ignorance*, known or unknown.
 - 3. There was sufficient *guilt* from such sins of ignorance to require the shedding of blood.
 - 4. He had to *lay his hands* on the animal's head, identifying it as his substitute for death.
 - 5. He then had to *kill it* (without a gun), which would be a rather personal ending of life.
 - 6. The blood would be distributed as a symbol, and the fat burned for a *sweet savor* to God.
 - 7. By this process, sins of ignorance were forgiven under the Old Testament of God.
- B. Our legal forgiveness of sins before God required the death of Jesus Christ (I Pet 1:18-20).
- C. Whether in Eden, by Abel, under the Law, or by Jesus Himself, a bloody death was required.
- D. Knowing the cost of forgiveness perversely, pagan religions desire the blood of children.
- E. Pagan religions like Catholicism teach purgatory and penance, ignorant of God's forgiveness.

The Effects of Forgiveness

- A. A woman who was a sinner came to Jesus in Bethany and was freely forgiven her sins, and the effect was to cause her to love Jesus much more than Simon the self-righteous Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50).
- B. Paul was forgiven many and horrible sins against Jesus and Christians, and it constrained him to burn himself out in the service of Jesus Christ (II Cor 5:14-15).
- C. We learn to forgive others as we have been forgiven and for we are forgiven (Eph 4:32; Col 3:13).
- D. We learn God will forgive to the degree we practice the forgiveness He shows us (Matt 5:7; Jas 2:13).
- E. God's forgiveness results in godly fear and reverence, not fatalistic hopeless lascivious despair.

The Enemy of Forgiveness

- A. The lying enemy of forgiveness is self-righteousness, which is one of the greatest of all sins.
 - 1. You cannot reason with a self-righteousness person, for they are right and righteous!
 - 2. They presume to be righteous by classifying and excusing their sins different than others.
 - 3. They think they know God, so they measure righteousness by their thoughts (Ps 50:12).
- B. The difference between a publican and Pharisee is great and for our learning (Luke 18:9-14).

God's Forgiveness of Us

- A. There is the *Eternal Phase* of the forgiveness of sins, in which God elected to show mercy.
 - 1. The mercy behind the forgiveness of sins was God's choice to show mercy (Rom 9:15).
 - 2. Acceptance in the Beloved and forgiveness of sins are both based in election (Eph 1:3-9).
 - 3. God only does in time what He purposed from the beginning of the world (Acts 15:18).
 - 4. He wrote the names of His elect in the Book of Life before the world began (Rev 17:8).
- B. There is the *Legal Phase* of the forgiveness of sins, in which Jesus Christ paid for our sins.
 - 1. As the just and holy God of heaven, He required a Substitute to pay for sins (Rom 3:24).
 - 2. He cannot acquit or clear sinners without a proper and right substitute (Ex 34:7; Nah 1:3).
 - 3. God bruised the Lord Jesus Christ in our place (Isaiah 53:4-12; II Cor 5:21; I Peter 2:24).
 - 4. It took Christ's blood and death on the cross to pay for our sins (Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; 2:13).
 - 5. This phase of forgiveness is most glorious (I Cor 6:11; Heb 1:3; 8:12; 10:10-14,17-22).
 - 6. Therefore, the elect are free from all accusations and charges (Rom 8:33-34; Rev 12:10)!

- C. There is the *Vital Phase* of the forgiveness of sins, in which the Spirit gives us a new man.
 1. No elect person could ever be allowed in heaven without a sinless new man (Rev 21:27).
 2. The act of regeneration is a washing and makes us vitally righteous (Titus 3:5; Eph 4:24).
 3. Consider the close relationship of legal and vital forgiveness at Corinth (I Cor 6:9-11).
- D. There is the *Practical Phase* of the forgiveness of sins, in which we confess for fellowship.
 1. Though legally forgiven forever without record of our sins by the death of Jesus, there is still a practical relationship with God that can be marred by sin (Eph 4:30; I Thess 5:19).
 2. It is by repentance and confession we obtain subjective forgiveness in our consciences.
 3. It is by repentance and confession we obtain or restore fellowship with God our Father.
 4. This forgiveness is based in the mercy of God and blood of Christ, but depends on us.
 5. This conditional forgiveness is precious (Job 33:27-28; Ps 32:5; Prov 28:13; I John 1:9).
 6. Without confession and forgiveness, we are estranged from God (Ps 66:18; Is 59:1-2).
 7. Even when God chastens us, which is His love, He forgives mercifully (Ps 78:38; 99:8).
 8. The invitation, promise, and threat for practical forgiveness should move us (Is 1:16-20).
 9. We can even confess our sins of ignorance for God to cleanse (Ps 19:12).
 10. You confess by acknowledging your sin (Ps 32:5), admitting its folly and vanity (Job 33:27-28), and requesting forgiveness (Ps 51:9).
 11. We must be able to pray for God to forgive us our sins as or for we forgive others their sins (Matt 6:12-15; Mark 11:25-26; Luke 11:4).
- E. There is the *Final Phase* of the forgiveness of sins, in which we shall be declared forgiven!
 1. In the great Day of Judgment, the elect will be declared forgiven from the Book of Life.
 2. Though we shall give an account of our lives, we shall be forgiven before the universe.
 3. The Lord will confess us, and God will receive us (Matt 25:34; Heb 2:13; II Pet 1:8-11).
 4. The wicked shall be cast into the lake of fire, but we shall be ushered into eternal glory.

Our Forgiveness of Others

- A. There will be *Personal Offences* against us we should forgive freely and fully due to Christ.
 1. Since all men are sinners, including church members, there will be many such offences.
 2. But we are told to forgive others easily in light of our forgiveness (Eph 4:32; Col 3:13).
 3. Like the rest of us, Peter had a problem with us, which Jesus corrected (Matt 18:21-35).
 4. If you have been forgiven 10,000 talents, how can you fault another for 100 pence!
 5. We must be able to pray for God to forgive us our sins as or for we forgive others their sins (Matt 6:12-15; Mark 11:25-26; Luke 11:4).
- B. There are *Public Offences* against God that we should forgive freely and fully as a church.
 1. Of course, we must follow the word of God in excluding sinners from our communion.
 2. But when we see godly repentance and sorrow, we should be eager and quick to forgive.
 3. We should consider carefully the inspired instruction as to our privileges (II Cor 2:6-8).
 4. And since the angels rejoice in heaven at such an event, we should kill the “fatted calf.”

Conclusion:

1. No matter a person’s past, there is free and full forgiveness in Christ (I Cor 6:9-11; II Cor 2:6-8).
2. The Lord’s Supper should be your body and blood, but it is His body broken and blood shed for you.
3. The cup of the New Testament is to remind us that He will not remember our sins (Heb 8:12; 10:17).
4. So great is the forgiveness of the Lord Jesus Christ that He forgave those at the cross (Luke 23:24).
5. Forgiveness – for personal offences and for public sins – should characterize all our dealings always.
6. We should be willing to forgive even our enemies, as Stephen did (Acts 7:60; Matthew 5:43-48).

For Further Study:

1. The sermon outline, "Jesus Loves Losers," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/jesus-loves-losers.pdf>.
2. The sermon outline, "Starting Over," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/starting-over.pdf>.
3. The sermon outline, "10,000 Talents," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/ten-thousand-talents.pdf>.
4. The sermon outline, "The Forgiveness of Sin," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/forgiveness-of-sins.pdf>.
5. The sermon, "Jesus Came for Sinners," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/jesus-came-for-sinners.pdf>.
6. The sermon outline, "Self-Righteousness," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/self-righteousness.pdf>.