

The Forgiveness of Sins

“Keeping mercy for thousands, **forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin**, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.”

Exodus 34:7

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, **forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.**”

Ephesians 4:32

Introduction:

1. When Moses asked to see Jehovah’s glory, God declared forgiveness of sins (Ex 33:12-23; 34:5-9)!
2. Do you understand the implications of this fact? His glorious thoughts and ways that are far above our thoughts and ways are His infinite superiority at forgiving and pardoning sin (Isaiah 55:6-9)!
3. No man has faced a Judge like the Lord; He cannot acquit or clear; you cannot snow Him like others.
4. He drowned and suffocated the human race with a flood of water in the days of Noah (Gen 7:21-24).
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. David sinned heinous crimes of aggravated adultery and murder, but God forgave him, even after David had signed his own death warrant by his response to Nathan’s parable (II Sam 12:13)!
7. Ahab and Manasseh were two very great sinners in the O.T, but they were forgiven (II Chr 33:12-13).
8. A woman who was a sinner came to Jesus in Bethany and was freely forgiven her sins (Luk 7:36-50).
9. A woman who was an adulterous was brought to Jesus, but He freely forgave her sins (John 8:1-11).
10. Jesus Christ, the Head of our church, has power to forgive sins (Matthew 9:6; Mark 2:10; Luke 5:24).

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).
- 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!
- 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).