

Nathan Rambeck -- Biblical Forgiveness - God and Man

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, it's a pleasure to be here this morning, and it's a good group of people. I am really excited about our picnic coming up. Was it next week or a week, right?
- The fifth, that's a week away. Is this the first time we've had a whole church social event like this since COVID? Since COVID, right?
- Yeah. So it's been a while. And I'm really looking forward to fellowshiping with everybody. Everybody, you are going to come, right? All right.
- Well, before we get into the message, this has been an exhausting week for me and my family, but such a blessing. We just got back last night.
- What time did we get back? Like 11 o'clock from Canton, Canton, Ohio. And there was, what, like 400 people there. All these families.
- [1 : 0 0] And it was an event called a scriptorium. Anybody ever heard of that? I'd never heard of it before. But the whole idea was to get a bunch of people together and recite scripture for three days.
- So we got to, our family got involved. In fact, I'm going to have all the kids come up. No, I'm just kidding. I wouldn't do that to you.
- But we had our kids do, what was it, 2 Corinthians chapter 9. Did I get that right? And give a recitation.
- But we went from Acts, as far as the whole group, not just us, but the whole group went from Acts to Revelation 3, I think, over three days.
- And it was just so neat to hear the word of God. And all these, mostly young people, it was mostly young people. But there were some adults and families together. Some were more interactive. But what a blessing to hear the word of God over those three days.
- [2 : 0 1] And then the joy we had in kind of memorizing that together for that event. So many precious saints there. And people.
- So anyway, let's get into the message. So Pastor Marv is going to be gone for three weeks. And so, in thinking about what to, you know, when you have just one Sunday, you know, you just kind of have to do a one-off.
- And the idea here was, well, let's do something where you can kind of build on it. And so, I ended up deciding to do something pretty basic.
- Christianity 101. You know, there's lots of depths to the scriptures, right? Lots of depths to the word of God. And even with the basics, right?
- You can go shallow. You can go deep. But I wanted to talk about the topic of forgiveness. And forgiveness seems on its face a pretty simple idea.
- [3 : 0 8] But when you start to get into the nitty-gritty of it, it can get confusing to some people. There are different ideas. We have, and I'll kind of split this up across these three messages into kind of two main categories.

We have forgiveness, which we might think of as vertical. You know, us and God. Forgiveness between us and God. You know, man and our creator.

And then we also have what you might call horizontal forgiveness. Forgiveness in restoring relationships between one another and how we ought to do that. And I think, you know, I'm going to start with the vertical, us and God, because that is a foundation, I think, for how we interact and forgive one another.

So hopefully today we'll be able to provide that foundation and provide some insight. There are a few questions that come up.

And let me, I wrote some of these things down. Here are some questions that come up when it comes to forgiveness. Why would I need to be forgiven?

[4 : 22] I mean, I'm a pretty good person. Right? It's not like I'm Hitler or something. Is God willing to forgive every sin?

It's a question that comes up, right? Well, what about this? Is he willing to forgive even this? What about the unpardonable sin?

Jesus speaks about that sin that will not be forgiven. He says, not in this age, nor even in the next to come. That's kind of scary. What does that mean? How do I know if I've committed the unpardonable sin or not?

How often do we need to ask God for forgiveness? Do we need to say our bedtime prayers every night and make sure that we ask for forgiveness? Do we go to confession, you know, once a week or once a month or once a year?

When I ask for forgiveness, do I need to name every sin that I've committed? Or do you just ask for general forgiveness? And then the last one I wrote down, what if I don't feel forgiven?

[5 : 37] And again, this is talking about our relationship with God. What if I don't feel forgiven? So I just wanted to provide those. Those are some questions I kind of wanted to address and get at in this whole topic.

So the first kind of big question is, what is forgiveness? And the Bible illustrates or uses an example of forgiveness typically in the form of a monetary debt.

And if you have a debt, you have a debt that you owe somebody. And that debt, and we even use this in financial terms today, you can have money that you owe to a bank or a lender of some kind.

And if you are not able to pay, you get into trouble, you declare bankruptcy, or even if you don't, and you are in a position where you can't pay, we say that that bank, that lender can decide to forgive that loan.

When you look at the original words in the Bible that talk about forgiveness, the word, the underlying root of that word is to put it away.

[6 : 48] So forgiveness is to put something away. And you think about a debt. A lot of times it's written down on a piece of paper. This is what you owe. And forgiveness is taking that debt and just putting it away, getting rid of it, sending it off.

I'm not going to keep that on our accounts anymore. But back to the first question I asked was, why would I need forgiveness?

And this is common for people to ask. Sometimes I'll go out and try to share the gospel with people on the streets. Or sometimes it might be somebody in a social setting or something like that.

And sometimes the question comes up, well, I'm a pretty good person. I don't really need forgiveness, or I don't think I do.

This actually came up very famously a few years ago during the presidential election. And I know you're not supposed to talk about politics, right?

[7 : 59] So maybe I'm treading on shaky ground here. But 2016 or whenever President Trump, this was before he was president, was being interviewed.

And the moderator, maybe this was a debate, I guess. I'm just reading the notes here. But he asked Trump, have you ever asked God for forgiveness for your actions?

And here was the response. Well, I'm not sure I have. I just go on and I try to do a better job from there. I don't think so. He said, I think if I do something wrong, I think I just try and make it right.

I don't bring God into that picture. I don't. Trump said that while he hasn't asked God for forgiveness, he does participate in Holy Communion.

When I drink my little wine, which is about the only wine I drink, and have my little cracker, I guess that is a form of asking for forgiveness. I do that as often as possible because I feel cleansed, he said.

[9 : 06] I think in terms of, let's go on and let's just make it right. And so, you know, a lot of Christians, when they heard that, and, you know, Trump is kind of, he's one of these champions, right, of the Christians.

But a lot of people were shocked when they heard that, right? Because this is a fundamental idea in the Christian faith that we need forgiveness.

There's a Bible verse that many of us have memorized that discussed this idea. It's Romans 3.23.

Does anybody know that one? I hear many people say, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. It's not just the few.

It's not just those really bad ones. But the Bible declares, and I think it's not just the Bible, right? You open up a newspaper, and what's it full of?

[10 : 08] Just the sins of all the world, right? We see a lot of times the consequences of it. In the book of 1 John, the first chapter, John makes this really great point.

And he says this, if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. So if we say that we don't have any sin, we're just lying to ourself, right?

And it's not good to lie to yourself. But we have a tendency to do that. So all men are under sin.

We've all made mistakes. We've all committed. We've all done things. Sin is, in very simple terms, it's something that we do that would hurt somebody else.

It might be something that hurts your wife, your friend, a stranger. Or it might be something that hurts God, when we're talking about sinning against God.

[11 : 17] In some cases, I think we can even sin against ourselves, right? You can hurt yourself. But what is it that this sin does?

And why does this sin need repair? Why does there need to be a fix? And we go back to the very beginning, right? And that very first sin in Genesis chapter 3.

We call that the fall. And what happened when Adam and Eve sinned? What did they do?

They hid. Yeah, I'm hearing this. They hid from God. And so we see this idea that when sin comes into our lives, it creates, especially when it comes to God, it creates this separation.

And we'll talk about this in later weeks, too. It's the same with people, right? When we sin against one another, it creates this separation, this rift. And that is the problem that needs to be resolved.

[12 : 22] Just a few other examples in the Bible where we see this idea of separation, where our sin, or the sin of man, can cause this separation between God.

Remember on Mount Sinai, I don't know if you remember, Moses got the Ten Commandments from the mountain, from Mount Sinai, after the Exodus. And there was this, as we read about it, we read that the people of Israel were invited to talk to God themselves, to go up on the mountain.

And what did they say? They said, no way. God is really scary. They said, how about, Moses, how about you just go? Why don't you go, you talk to God, you come back and you tell us, and whatever you tell us from God, that's what we'll do.

And that's just another example, another illustration, right, of sin in the heart, and it causes a separation. Another one, Isaiah chapter 6, talks about when God called Isaiah to, and here, let me actually open up to that one.

Isaiah chapter 6. I'll read it. When God called Isaiah to be a prophet. In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of his robe filled the temple.

[13 : 54] Above it stood seraphim, each one had six wings. With two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried out and said, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. And here is the response from Isaiah when he saw God.

Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

We see this a lot when people come face to face with God or sometimes an angel. And what happens a lot of times? They tremble, right?

There's fear. We see a holy God and a sinful man, and there's fear that causes a separation. We don't want to draw close to that. It's too scary. And then we have in Isaiah 59, verse 1 through 3, and I'll read this.

[15 : 05] Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, nor his ear heavy that it cannot hear you. But your iniquities, iniquities is sin, your iniquities have separated you from God.

And your sins have hidden his face from you so that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity. Your lips have spoken lies. Your tongue has muttered perversity.

And so that's the big problem. That's why forgiveness is needed. We're separated from God. So there are different possible remedies to this.

And one is, well, couldn't God just kind of overlook it? I mean, does he really have to deal with these things?

Are my mistakes really that big of a deal? We tend to minimize our own sins, right? And in Romans, Paul talks about, if you're familiar with Romans, Romans, the first several chapters, the whole idea is Paul establishing that everybody, whether you're a Jew who's under the law or you're a Greek who's never even heard of the law, that every single person is under sin.

[16 : 30] The Jew, when it comes to the law, they fail to keep it. The Greek or the non-Jew, they didn't have the law, but what do they have?

They have this law in their heart, right? We call that a conscience. They haven't kept it. But one of the arguments he gives to solidify this idea that everybody has this conscience, because we tend to justify ourselves, right?

That I'm a pretty good person. I'm not that bad. But he says, well, who are you, O man? And let's see where, I'll give the reference. Yeah, Romans 2, chapter 2, verse 1 and 3.

Therefore, you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge. For in whatever you judge another, you condemn yourself. For you who judge practice the same thing.

Or the same things. We know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?

[17 : 39] God is a God of justice. And we tend to minimize our sins and magnify those of others. But he's saying, hey, when you magnify the sins of others, you're doing the same thing.

You're really magnifying your own. And we ought to. So, we have these ways of justifying ourself.

I remember back in, oh, this was back 15 years ago, maybe. We had the digital age upon us. And everybody, in order to listen to your favorite musical artist, what did you do 20 years ago?

Or let's say 30 years ago. What did you do? You bought a cassette tape, right? Anybody here ever buy a cassette tape? Now, I'm not going to go back. Some of you bought records, I know.

Yeah. Okay. So, some of us bought records and then wait. But after records was not the cassette tape. It was the 8-track. 8-track. I never, I saw them laying around, but I never bought an 8-track.

[18 : 47] But I got cassette tapes, right? And then after cassette tapes, we have CDs. And now, they don't even put CD players in cars anymore, do they?

If you want to listen to music, what do you do? Turn on Kayla. Turn on Kayla. Everything's online, right?

Everything's digital, right? So, you, yeah, unless you're on the radio, you got to, you know, you got to either find a CD player somewhere on eBay or wherever it is, or use one of these streaming services.

But back when this whole thing was happening, this revolution of digital, people would just grab the music off of their CDs and they'd just push them up online and share them with their friends.

And it was like, oh, great. I don't even have to go out and buy anything. I can just, I can just download the music for my friends. And people figured out how to share it, not just with their friends, but with the whole world.

[19 : 46] And so, everybody would find a website or wherever they could find the music. And this became somewhat of a problem. You know, our music industry, which tends to not to be a stalwart industry of virtue, right?

If you listen to the music that's out there today, it's pretty crummy, a lot of it. You have to really dig around to find something that's worth listening to.

But during this time, the music industry kind of grew a conscience. And they're like, wait a second. Stealing is wrong. You shouldn't steal music.

And so, you start to see these warnings about music. But for many people, it doesn't seem like a big deal. I mean, I'm just only downloading one or two songs. But what happens?

You have a million people, 10 million people, 100 million people downloading all this music for free. And the people who worked so hard to develop that music, and again, a lot of it's trash, but they don't get paid for the work that they're doing.

[21 : 02] Another one that I think about when it comes to kind of minimizing sin, pornography. It's so rampant. Such an issue in our culture. And for many people, it's not that big of a deal.

You know, I just look at a few pictures here and there. But God himself, right, he has the grander view, maybe, that we don't have. He sees the big picture.

He sees, you know, it's just a few pictures here from this person and a few pictures here from that person. And then you have millions of people creating a market for the trafficking of human beings in the most vile way, creating this industry that surpasses the entire Hollywood movie industry, all the sports industry.

It's a pornography industry. It's tragic. It causes so much pain and misery. And it's just because, you know, of a little sin here and a little sin there.

And so, while we might be tempted to minimize our sin, we should see with the eyes of God and realize the big picture.

[22 : 17] But, oh, so the next question. So, is God really required to forgive sinners? You know, sometimes I think about this. On that very first sin in the garden, Adam and Eve.

Adam and Eve, they rejected God's will, what he asked. And they sinned against God.

And I ask myself this question. Did God have to forgive them? Was that something that he was duty-bound to do? Yeah.

No, it's not something he had to do. It's something that he chose to do because of his love. And that's every single day.

Not just with the first sin from Adam and Eve, from our first parents. But each and every day, he makes a choice to overlook. In Numbers, this is the Old Testament.

[23 : 20] This is the God of the Old Testament. Sometimes people make a difference between the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament. But here's in Numbers, chapter 14, verse 18. The Lord is long-suffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression.

But he by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth degree. God doesn't overlook sin. He will bring judgment, specifically on Judgment Day.

But he is so long-suffering. Abundant in mercy. Mercy is that virtue, right? Where you're willing to forgive. And God, his mercy, it seems like, is infinite.

But here it says, he is abundant in mercy. And then Psalm 103, verse 8 says this. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.

So God is very willing to forgive. And we see that over and over throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament.

[24 : 21] For anyone who's willing to tell God, God, I'm sorry. God is more than willing to step in and say, I forgive you. So what is the purpose of forgiveness? And why would God forgive us and not just give up on us?

Forgiveness is all about restoration. Restoring a broken relationship. Because whether it's us sinning against God or us sinning against one another, it's that separation, it's that rift.

And the separation is a relational separation. And that is what needs to be restored. God wants to know us.

He wants to know you. He wants to know me. For Israel, he wanted to know them. He wanted to be their God. He wanted them to be his people. He wants us to know him.

And God wants to dwell with us. So not just a relational connection, but also a proximity. And that's the storyline.

[25 : 30] That idea that God wants to dwell with us is the storyline from the beginning of the Bible to the end. So in Genesis, we read about Adam, and it says he walked with God in the cool of the day in the garden.

Adam walked with God. That's what God wanted. He created this man and mankind in general to walk with him. Later on, with the nation of Israel, God had this complex blueprint that he put together for this thing called a tabernacle and later a temple.

And it had all these things and clothing and candles and washing implements.

And then there were different rooms in this tabernacle and temple. And all that was, this is where God wanted to live.

He wanted to dwell with his people. And we know that in the Old Testament, God's relationship was mostly focused on a relationship with a group of people. So the idea was, I want to dwell with my people, the people of Israel.

[26 : 47] And so build a place for me to dwell with you. Let's see, what else? We see that God frequently speaks of Israel, again, this nation, this group, as his bride.

And he is the groom. And is there any closer relationship in life than that between husband and wife? Especially newlyweds, right? And then later on in the New Testament, we read in Ephesians 2 that God is creating out of us the body of Christ, a temple for him to dwell.

So this idea, this is a string throughout all the Bible. And then ultimately at the very end in Revelation, Revelation 21, it says this, verse 22.

But I saw, oh, well, I skipped one. And then not only dwelling in the body of Christ as a whole, but the scriptures say that our bodies individually are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

God wants to live individually in us. And he does for those who are willing. 1 Corinthians 6, verse 19. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

[28 : 06] But then ultimately, God is building. Jesus said to his disciples, I'm going to prepare a place for you. I'm going, and I'm going to prepare a place for you. And we read in Revelation about what that place is.

It's this place called the New Jerusalem. God's going to create this place, this city. And let's see, did I put down a scripture? Yeah. Chapter 21, verse 22.

But I saw no temple in this city. It's talking about the New Jerusalem. But I saw no temple in it. For the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need for the sun or the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it.

The Lamb is its light. And so ultimately, in the end, God wants to build this city for his people. And he will be the temple. His presence will be throughout the entire city.

And we will live with him forever. So sin has created a separation. God does not want that.

[29 : 08] He wants to live with us. He wants to dwell with us. So forgiveness is the answer. But how do we receive forgiveness from God? Are there conditions? Are there requirements?

What do we have to do? Does God just forgive everybody automatically? Just overlook everything? We talked about that. No. He doesn't overlook. There are conditions.

So in the Catholic world, our Catholic friends, they believe and teach that you need to join the church, partake of sacraments like water baptism and Holy Communion.

And then you need to regularly confess your sins to a priest. To regularly receive that forgiveness. So that's one view.

There are some Protestants even. I remember this. I was talking to Jamie. We homeschool the kids. And so we're finding curriculums to teach the kids. And so you don't read through the entire curriculum, right?

[30 : 10] You just kind of flip through it and see if it looks like a good curriculum. And then there's mathematics. But some of it is Bible, right? We want to teach them the Bible. And some of it has Bible mixed in with the other things, which is neat.

And we really like the opportunity to do that through homeschooling. But one of the kids came to us one day. It's years ago. And if I'm remembering this correctly, Jamie will let me know if I'm not remembering it correctly.

But I think the idea was she or one of the kids came and said, I read here and it says here that we have to go and we have to ask God for forgiveness. At the end of every day, ask God for forgiveness.

I was like, okay. I didn't realize that was in there. Because that's not something that we taught our kids. And we'll get into that in a second. But I found out later, I was talking to a friend of mine who was familiar with the curriculum and where it kind of came from.

And he said the whole idea is there's this whole concept of keeping short accounts. Has anybody ever heard that phrase? I hear a few people. I'd never heard of it before that time. But the idea is, you know, keeping short accounts.

[31 : 23] You want to make sure there's not too much time from the last sin that you committed, right, to where you kind of get right with God again. Right? And that actually makes me think of my own father.

My dad became a Christian in the Navy, early on in the Navy. I think he was around 20 years old. But he had grown up in church.

But the church that he was in, the impression that he got, and I don't know if this was explicitly taught or he just, you know, this is just the impression he got. But the impression that he got was, the Christian life is you ask God for forgiveness for your sins.

And then you're good with God. And if you die, you go to heaven. But if you sin between that period, right, your last sin that you ask for forgiveness for and the time you, you know, get hit by that bus, if there's a sin that you haven't asked for forgiveness for, you're out of luck.

And that was his view. And later on, he found out that God's grace was different from that.

[32 : 44] But that's what he grew up with. And a lot of people grow up with that, even in Christianity. So, looking at the Old Testament and the New Testament, God's willingness to forgive and show mercy and grace has never changed.

But I do want to talk real quickly, because here's another bit of confusion. Even though his willingness to forgive has not changed, the conditions and even the means by which we receive forgiveness, that has changed.

And that's really important. And we need to follow the storyline in the Bible to understand and make sure that we understand. The Bible is a book of progressive revelation, you know, from Adam and Eve until now.

And there have been changes. And we need to, as Paul said, rightly divide, make a distinction between what was then and what was now. So, let's talk about what the conditions were in the Old Testament for forgiveness.

One, you had to repent. You had to be humble. You had to show sorrow. It says this. This is a popular verse that many of you will probably know. But this is talking about forgiveness at a national level. Because that's how God mostly dealt with people back in the Old Testament.

[34 : 11] 2 Chronicles 7.14. It says this. So, repentance.

Turn from your sin. Turn from your sin. Turn to me. That's what repentance means. It means to turn. Turn around. Turn from that to God. And then, talking about personal forgiveness, Psalm 32.5 says this.

I acknowledge my sin to you. And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said I will confess my transgression to the Lord. And you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

So, I confessed my sin. And acknowledged that I was a sinner. And God, you were willing to forgive me.

But the other thing that came up under the law of Moses was this other thing that you needed to do. And you had to do it at least every year. And what was that?

[35 : 20] Sacrifices. Yeah. These animal sacrifices. And I'll just read one scripture. A lot of times the New Testament does a better job of kind of summarizing stuff in the Old Testament.

Sometimes in the Old Testament you've got to read a lot of scriptures to kind of get the point. But in Hebrews it says this. And according to the law, almost all things are purified with blood. It's talking about animal sacrifices.

And without the shedding of blood, there is no remission. And that word remission is the same as forgiveness. There is no forgiveness unless there is the shedding of blood through a sacrifice. And so that was something that God required as a condition of forgiveness.

You have to be sorrowful. You need to repent. You need to offer these sacrifices to me. And that's a pretty good deal, right? I mean, if you are under condemnation, if you're a sinner without any hope, I'm going to do whatever I can, right?

I'm going to put on the sackcloth and the ashes. Put the ashes on my head. Sometimes that was done. That's to show repentance, to show sorrow. That was something that they did. If I need to, I'm going to get those animals, whatever I can afford, whether it's the dove, if you were poor, or if it was a full-sized bull, if you had some money.

[36 : 33] And I'm going to take that and I'm going to go through it. It's a bloody mess. Has anybody seen an animal sacrifice before? Or, I hate to, well, maybe some of you shouldn't do this, but, like, if you go on YouTube, you can look it up.

It's a very sobering thing. And we see that a lot of blood was spilt that way in Israel. But it was something that God wanted to show, right?

The price that needed to be paid for sin. And so the sacrifices were required. So what about forgiveness in the New Testament?

And this is where I think a lot of confusion comes in. We look at the ministry of Jesus. And one of the things that a lot of people miss, and one of the things I really appreciate about this church, is making a clear distinction about when did this age of law start?

When did it end? And when did this new age of grace, where we are saved by grace, where did that transition happen? And a lot of people think, well, you know, you've got the Old Testament and the New Testament.

[37 : 44] But it's important to, as we look and understand, we read the Gospels. We read about the ministry of Jesus. He said that he, even himself, right, he established a new covenant, right?

And that's why we call the New Testament the New Testament. New Testament means new covenant. And he said, what did he establish the new covenant in or on?

It was established on his blood, right? It was established on his blood. And so everything before Jesus shed his blood, all Old Covenant.

So when Jesus taught, he was teaching under the Old Covenant. Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day. He kept the law. He commanded everybody else to keep the law.

He said, some of you, he said, you like, he said, you pretend like you keep the whole law? He said, you Pharisees, they don't have, the Pharisees didn't have farms, right? They just lived in the city.

[38 : 47] A lot of them, they were teachers of the law. He says, but you know what you have? You have these plants, your herb plants, right? Anybody have an herb plant they put on the windowsill?

You just, you don't have a huge garden, right? You just grow some like, what, dillweed and mint or something like that. Anybody do that? No? Okay. Yeah, and so you imagine these Pharisees, they have these little plants.

And the law said that you had to give 10% of your crop to the Levites, right? And so he said, you guys, you got these little plants, and you tithe on these little plants that you got on your windowsill, yet you neglect the weightier matters of the law, which is mercy and justice specifically.

And so what did he say about that? He said, ah, forget about that other stuff in the law. Just focus on the mercy and justice. That's not what he said. He said, you should have done the mercy and justice without neglecting everything else because Jesus taught to the nation of Israel, and he taught them to keep the law of Moses.

We read in the Lord's Prayer. Who here has said the Lord's Prayer more than 100 times? Yeah, most of us. The Lord's Prayer is something almost all of us know.

[40 : 13] And, of course, now that I'm on the spot, I'm going to try to recite it. I don't want to mess it up. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. You can say it with me.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And so he was teaching. When we pray, we ask God to forgive us our trespasses, forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

So it seems like there was a requirement. In fact, it says, excuse me, Jesus made it clear in Matthew chapter 6, and I'll read this, the end of the prayer.

And then he says this, he followed up, That's a threat, right?

[41 : 28] He says, If you don't forgive men their trespasses, I'm withholding forgiveness. And so this is something that you have to do. There's even that parable of the unforgiving servant.

And I didn't put down the reference, so I'll have to do this from memory. But this actually came up this weekend. I was talking to a good friend of mine. I hadn't seen him in 15 years. He was at this scriptorium event that we went to.

And he told me the story of this event that happened years ago since the last time we saw him. And he had a stroke. And it was devastating. He thought he was gone.

He thought he was going to die. He had four or five kids at the time. All very little. And, but he ended up kind of making through it.

But it took him, I think he said nine months, to recover enough to be able to even walk, I think. And then multiple years later, and I think he's probably still recovering in some ways.

[42 : 28] But he said this. He shared this. He said, I was thinking, why am I suffering like this? He said, this is like torment.

And an idea entered his mind. He said, the unforgiving servant. The unforgiving servant. He was tormented. And if you know the parable of the unforgiving servant, there were two servants.

One owed a lot. One owed a little. The master forgave the one who owed a lot. And then he, in turn, went. And he didn't forgive the one who owed a little.

And what happened to that man? He was ultimately sent to prison or, I can't remember specifically. But he was not to, that was a requirement.

And so that was something that Jesus taught. You have to forgive to be forgiven. But again, we need to keep in mind, that was something that was part of Jesus' teaching under the Old Covenant.

[43 : 36] All right. To kind of move on. So I want to wrap this up. But what about now?

What about forgiveness for us? So the forgiveness offered to us is of a very different kind. While under the Old Covenant, sacrifices had to be made year after year after year.

It says this in Hebrews 9. But Christ came as a high priest of the good things to come with the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is not of this creation.

Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood he entered the most holy place. Once, one time, and for all, for everybody, having obtained eternal redemption.

For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

[44 : 52] And so Jesus provided that sacrifice one time for all. So back in the Old Testament, you do it every single year, every single year. You got sins from the last year, you got to go give the sacrifices.

There was a change made with the cross. Another verse from Hebrews 9. For Christ has not entered the holy place made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us, not that he should offer himself often, as the high priest enters the most holy place every year with the blood of another.

He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world. Is Jesus being sacrificed? Is he dying on the cross every year? No, just once. Once and for all men.

But now, once at the end of the ages, he has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. So there's a change. There's forgiveness you had to ask for multiple times. Multiple times.

But now, God has provided a way to have forgiveness once and for all. The debt is paid in total. And so what do we have to do to get this?

[46 : 07] Do you have to ask, do you have to do sacrifices? No. Really, what it comes down to is we need to change our location.

And we need to live somewhere else. And this is a whole other sermon you could preach. But I'm going to read a couple of verses. Ephesians 1.7 says this, In him, in him, if we live in him, if our address is in him, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

Colossians 1.14 says something similar. In whom? A little bit different. Anybody ever done a Bible study looking at all the places where it talks about in him, what we have in him? This is just one of them.

We have forgiveness. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. God forgives us through Christ's blood, every sin that we've ever committed in the past and everyone in the future.

And for some people, this is just too unbelievable. How could that possibly be? But it's not just a transaction of forgiveness.

[47 : 17] But here's a little bit more insight into it. In Colossians 2, Paul says this, verse 13, And you being dead in your trespasses, in the uncircumcision of your flesh, were in sin.

Even when we were in sin, he has made us alive together with him. Having forgiven all of your trespasses. But he doesn't stop there.

Having forgiven all our trespasses right when we're forgiven are in the past. He says this, So it's not just a forgiveness.

But he takes the whole thing, the law, that is the one that's judging us, and he takes it out of the way.

It's nailed to the cross. So there's nothing left to condemn us. So back to some of our questions.

[48 : 23] How often do we need to ask God for forgiveness? Just once. Just once.

God has an offer. He offered us through the blood of Christ a gift. He said you can have eternal redemption, atonement for all of your sins.

You can live in Christ. You can have your life there. Just one time. And that's it. It's done. There's nothing left to do.

Never again do we have to go to God for forgiveness. Go to a priest or, you know, say our prayers every night to make sure that those sins are forgiven.

We don't have to worry about it because we know they are. And God wants us to believe that that's true. And for some of us, it's hard.

[49 : 25] How could, I mean, does God know what I did? And he's just going to forgive it?

All of it? All of it. And so, practically, you know, we still sin against God, don't we?

We sin against each other. And we know that sinning against each other is also sinning against God, right? Any sin is a sin against God. But so what do we do? Do you just forget about it, try to put it out of our mind?

No. I think it's good to show, always show sorrow, right? It's good. It's good for us. And God forbid that any of us would ever sin any day. But it does happen, right?

And we sin against God and against one another. But instead of saying, God, will you forgive me? God wants us to believe him.

[50 : 23] And so we can come to God and we can say, God, I screwed up big time. I messed up. Or maybe it's just a little one, right? But whether little or big, we can go to God and say, God, I messed up big time.

Thank you for forgiving me. I'm so grateful that I have forgiveness and redemption from you. What if you don't feel forgiven?

That's okay. Feelings are kind of fleeting anyway, aren't they? Right? God doesn't want us to feel forgiven. He wants us to believe him. That's what he wants. Right?

When, remember Peter walking on the water? Did Jesus want him to feel safe on the water with the winds and the waves?

He didn't care about his feelings. He said, just believe me. Believe me. Do we need to keep short accounts?

[51 : 24] Make sure we say our prayers every night? No, we don't need to keep short accounts. We don't have an account. You have a mortgage, right? You get a bill every month.

You pay your mortgage and it tells you how much you owe. And it's the same payment every month. But, you know, anybody get those statements and it shows you, this is how much you have left. You know, you've got this much debt. And, you know, this month you paid this much.

And so much went toward interest and another two principal. And it has an account. There's an accountant somewhere, right, keeping track of all these things. And I'm glad it's not me because I hate that kind of stuff.

But anytime there's any kind of loan, right, there's somebody that's got to keep track of these things. But when it comes to those of us who are in Christ, we don't need an accountant, do we?

The debt is paid. It's gone. There's no paperwork. It's been sent away. It's been nailed to the cross. And so what?

[52 : 27] We just get to enjoy the Lord. We get to enjoy our life with him. We get to enjoy dwelling with him without fear, living in peace with him.

It says this in Hebrews chapter 10. Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus, boldness, through the blood of Jesus because of his blood, by a new and living way.

This is a new way. It's not the old way. It's the new way, which he consecrated for us through the veil, that is his flesh, and having a high priest over the house of God. Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Our hearts racked with guilt sometimes. But we can go to God boldly, just like you would your parents, you know.

If you have a good relationship with your parents as a child, you've done something wrong, you go boldly. Mom, Dad, we can do that with God.

[53 : 35] And really, that's the solution to our sin problem anyway. Right? When it comes down to it, did having the law help us? No. Reading Galatians, which we're studying in the adult Sunday school class, did that law help?

No. It just showed us that, yeah, we're losers. We've messed up. Yeah. We broke that one and that one too. But what we need, right, to live upright is we need Him.

And so we can draw near to Him in full assurance of faith. We don't have to be afraid. We don't have to tremble like those did in the Old Testament. We don't have to tremble and quake at the mountain of Sinai and say, Somebody else go to God.

You talk to God. I don't want to talk to Him. We just get to go to Him ourselves any time we want. God, I need help in this time of need, in this time of temptation maybe.

So, and this ultimately is the gospel that we preach. This is the gospel. That Christ died for us one time for all and accomplished something that doesn't require confession of sin over and over and over.

[54 : 54] But we can have confidence in Him. It says this in 2 Corinthians 5, verse 18. Now all things are of God who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.

That is that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us that word of reconciliation.

This is what God's offering. It says, my offer is, is that I will become reconciled to you and I won't impute any of your trespasses to you.

If you're willing. Now if you're not willing, then, well, I have to do justice on judgment day. But if you're willing, I have this free gift and all you have to do is take it and it's done.

It's finished. It's accomplished. And for many people, this is hard to believe. How would God do something this amazing?

[55 : 58] I mean, don't I have to do penance? Listen, you know, I lived in the Philippines as a kid and one of the things that I saw with my own eyes is, and this is a tradition that I think in the Philippines, I'm sure other places, I haven't really seen this in the U.S., but during Easter weekend, you'll see people walking down the street, some of them carrying crosses, some of them will whip themselves, they'll take whips and they'll whip themselves, trying to do penance.

Trying to gain that forgiveness, making sure that I'm trying to get right with God. And somebody needs to tell them, it's done.

It's finished. But some people might ask, well, you don't know what I've done, though. That's true.

But what I would say in response to that, you evidently don't know what Christ did for you. He accomplished it all.

He paid for every sin, for every taint, for every blemish. He said, for when we were still without strength, in due time, Christ died for who?

[57 : 23] The righteous? The ones who had it mostly together? Christ died for the ungodly. And that's the gospel that we preach.

So there's just one thing you have to do. And I'll put out this call. This is the gospel.

To trust on Jesus Christ. Not to trust in yourself. Right? When the Bible talks about us believing on him, putting our faith in him, there's a contrast. Because you can put your faith in yourself.

I'm going to do it. Or you can put your faith in him. He did it. Two things. Sometimes the hardest is the...

So the faith sometimes can be difficult for some... But I don't find that to be the hardest. Do you know what the hardest part is? The humility. God, I need you. But that's all God needs.

[58 : 21] He needs a little bit of humility. A little bit of faith. And you can have eternal forgiveness once and for all. If that's something you've never done, you can do that anytime.

The Bible says today is the day of salvation. Today is the day. Don't wait until tomorrow. If you don't know for sure that you are living in Christ right now, then make it your goal to look into that.

And make sure that you have confidence that you are in him. And have your life hid in Christ with God. Amen? Alright, let's pray. Father, I'm so grateful to you for what you accomplished.

This is basic stuff, but it's stuff that so many people still don't know, still don't understand. I ask that you would work in us, even for us Christians, even for me.

We've been at this for a little while. Sometimes it's hard for me, even, after all these years, to really believe that all my sins are paid for once and for all.

[59 : 35] How could it possibly be? But it is true. Put that faith in our hearts, Father. Father, as that person said in the Gospels, I believe, but help me in my unbelief.

Father, put that faith in our hearts to believe you that our sins are forgiven and washed away. And, Father, there are those who have not made that decision that you would work in their hearts as well to make that decision, to just receive the free gift.

It doesn't cost anything. You don't have to promise anything. You just have to trust in you that you would work in hearts and minds today in that respect. In Jesus' name, amen.