

Sermon on the Mount Part XXVI Forgiveness: Conditional/Unconditional #2

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[0 : 00] If you will take your scripture sheet included in your bulletin for responsive reading, we have gone through this once, but we will do it again because the content is so important.

And let me explain a little bit about where we're coming from. Actually, the series that we are developing now is kind of like a mini-series within a larger series.

We started several months ago with the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, 6, and 7. And we have gotten into Chapter 6 after about 24 or 25 hours together in the Sermon on the Mount.

And we came to this passage, and we just had to develop it and extend it somewhat. So what we are presenting is kind of disjointed because I like to try and maintain continuity from one Sunday to the next.

But when we did this, it was a couple of weeks ago. And then last Sunday, because we had scheduled them way in advance last spring, we had the George Craig family with us for a concert, and they had all of their nine children here.

[1 : 16] And it was quite a morning. If you missed it last week, you missed a real blessing because they were something really extraordinary family. Nine children, gifted musically, and they are homeschooled.

Very, very unusual family. We enjoyed them immensely. But that meant another interruption in the series that we've been bringing on the Sermon on the Mount. So this morning, you're going to get a kind of a review.

And by the way, I still want you to be willing and eager to ask any questions that you may have. We'll provide a Q&A; period at the end of this.

And for a couple of reasons, the last time I asked you what your questions were regarding forgiveness, I jotted down your answers and the things that you wanted to cover and tucked those neatly away in my Bible.

But I can't find my Bible. I have no idea where it is. I've looked everywhere. And I've got probably a dozen others, but I have the one that I was going to use.

[2 : 24] So I may have to ask you, ask all those questions again. I don't know. And while I was looking for my Bible and unable to find it somewhere, I lost my cell phone.

So I don't know where that is either. And, yes, I tried calling it, but it was out of earshot or something. So you've got to love old people. Did you ever take something in another room to do something with it, and then when you got in there, you forgot what you came in the room for?

Lynette, don't tell me this is happening to my dear darling daughter. Or is it in the jeans? I used a different scripture sheet there.

So I don't know where I left it. Anyway, my name is in it. If you find the stray Bible, pretty soon I'll put a reward out for it. So let's read this, if we may.

And what I would also like to do is once we read the scripture, I would appreciate you turning over to the reverse side. And this has got to be probably one of my favorite quotes of all times, and it's not even in the Bible.

[3 : 36] But it's about the Bible. And we've been through it a number of times. But those of you who are familiar with the King James Bible, the original King James, know that it was published in 1611.

However, Miles Coverdale gave us the first complete printed English Bible in 1535.

And along with that, he gave us these rules for reading and interpreting the Bible. And I've often said, and so say I now again, if we could just get every pastor and every church that expounds the Bible to do so with these rules in mind, about 90% of the divisions that divide Christianity would melt

away.

I really believe that. So let's read the scripture first. And we are talking about forgiveness, the need for it and how it is obtained, and the conditions under which it is granted.

In your bulletin, the title is something like forgiveness, conditional and unconditional. Well, how can it possibly be both? We will see as the morning develops.

[5 : 01] So I'm going to read the regular print. Would you respond, please, with the bold print? And then we'll go to page two and we'll all read in unison what is there. For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

If you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions. Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification, according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

Do not agree with the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for this day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has to do in you. When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you alive together with him, having forgiven us all our transgressions.

Having canceled out the specific effect, insisting that the degrees advanced us, for it was possible to us, and he had taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

[6 : 33] When he had disarmed the rulers and authorities, he made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through him. Therefore, not no one is so packed as your judge, in your heart, to do the courtroom, or in respect to a festival, or a new room, or a side of the day.

Things which are a mere shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Now, let's read together, if we may, please.

It shall greatly help ye to understand Scripture, if thou mark, not only what is spoken or written, but of whom, and to whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances, considering what goeth before and what followeth.

And that's offered from Miles Coverdale, and we just maintain the old English print and spelling because, just because of the antiquity of it.

But the advice is so sterling and so valuable that I can honestly say, this has contributed to my own appreciation and understanding of the Bible, perhaps more than anything else in my 50-plus years of studying the Scriptures.

[8 : 00] And there isn't anything complicated about it. It's very common sense-like when you read over it. Really, that's the way we ought to interpret and understand all literature, not just that which is in the Bible.

So, back to our responsive reading page again. I want to point out to you what happens if you do not take into consideration Miles Coverdale's information.

You will note the first indication of the bold print. It's taken from Matthew 6, verses 14 and 15, and it says, If you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

On the other hand, the first verse, If you do forgive others for their transgressions, then your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. You cannot find a more conditional statement than that.

It's just two little letters, but they communicate so much. It is if. If you forgive others for their transgressions, if you do not forgive others, then those conditions must be met, or your forgiveness will not be forthcoming.

[9 : 18] However, when you look down further upon the page, we read, When you were dead in your transgressions, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions.

How do we square that with what Christ said earlier? For some, the solution is rather simple.

It's very sad, it's tragic, but it makes sense to them. And it goes something like this. Well, you see, in this last reference, when it says, You see, that was written by the Apostle Paul.

That was his viewpoint. Do you know who said that?

Jesus Christ said that. And because He is who He is, He is the Son of God, He is the supreme authority. So, we can safely set aside what Paul said, because after all, Paul was just an ordinary human being, like you and me.

[11 : 00] And we eagerly take up that which Christ said, because He is the real authority. And for them, that solves it. And as a result of that kind of thinking, teaching in the Bible, content in the Bible, other than that which was offered by Jesus Christ Himself, is marginalized, set aside, demeaned, depreciated.

And the idea is, well, if Jesus said it, you can take it to the bank. But if somebody else said it, like Paul, or Peter, then, then, you know, they're just giving their opinion, but they're not the authority. Christ is the real authority. And after all, wouldn't you rather, wouldn't you rather connect with Him than anyone else? And you know, on the surface, that sounds rather logical. But it is biblically, totally, completely, illogical. We must understand, that the words of Paul, are the words of Christ.

The words of Isaiah, are the words of Christ. The words of Moses, are the words of Christ. Nothing in the Bible, comes with more authority, or validity, than anything else in the Bible.

[12 : 28] Nothing in the Bible, is more inspired, than anything else in the Bible. You will read portions of Scripture, that are more inspiring, and more interesting, and more enlightening, than other passages, but they are no more, the word of God, than any other.

You can get back, into the book of Exodus, and if you start around chapter 25, you will find the dimensions, of the tabernacle given. The bars are supposed to be, so long.

The gates supposed to be, so long. The items of furniture, for the tabernacle, are supposed to be, such and such dimensions. Boring. I mean, really boring.

It's almost like, reading an insurance policy, or maybe worse. And there is a tendency, to discount that, and consider it of no significance, at all. Because after all, who cares, what the dimensions, of the tabernacle are, or what the ark, of the covenant is, or how long it is, and how tall it is, and all that.

This is all immaterial. It doesn't matter. Yes, it does matter. And the reason it matters, is because, it comes, from the source itself. It comes, directly, from, God the Holy Spirit, who inspired the Bible.

[13 : 49] and it is, all inspired. Not, some of it, more than others, but it is, all the word, for all scripture, is given by inspiration, of God, and is profitable, for correction, for instruction, all the rest, of these things, that Paul mentioned, when he wrote the Timothy.

So, while we tend to, make levels, of authority, apply to the Bible, they are really, invalid. Now, to be sure, there are certain passages, of scripture, because the Bible, is given to us, incrementally.

The Bible, didn't just, drop down from God, out of heaven. But, God inspired, individuals, some 40 of them, over a period, of 1500 years.

So, the Bible is, was, a book in progress. It was a book, that was growing. that was being, added to, as the times changed, and as the centuries changed, and the millennia, rolled on, God was revealing, more and more, about himself, his plan and purpose, to chosen vessels, whom he used, to write the scriptures.

So, we have, one author, of the Bible. That's God, the Holy Spirit. We have, many, human writers. You would be surprised, how many people, just don't understand that.

[15 : 15] Some who even, profess themselves, to be Christians. They think, well, men wrote the Bible, they just, wrote their viewpoint, what they thought about life, and how they saw it, and they just, wrote that stuff down, and people collected it, and that's how we've got it.

So, you've got all of these, opinions in the Bible, and you've got a whole lot, of contradictions, because these guys, didn't see eye to eye, at all. Nothing could be, further from the truth. And yet, this is, a commonly, held viewpoint, among the masses.

And in an, infinitesimal effort, to try and correct this, this was, the first issue, that we addressed, when we released, the subjects, in Christianity Clarified.

Because, we started with the Bible, because if people, don't get that right, nothing else matters. That becomes, our source book. And that's why, we started with the very first, three, CDs, with 23 minute sections, each, dealing with the authority, of the scriptures, inspiration, and all the rest of it. Trying to lay, that kind of foundation, because the, the ignorance out there, about this issue, is appalling. And frankly, it is embarrassing. It ought to be embarrassing, to the whole church.

[16 : 30] Because, this thing called, the Church of Jesus Christ, has been around, for 2,000 years. And frankly, it has done, a pretty inadequate job, of communicating, the nature and character, of God, and his plan and program.

And I say that, as a member, of the embarrassed clergy, right along with them. We have not done, our God justice. We have not done, his word justice.

The ignorance, of the masses, even many of whom, are in our churches, on Sunday morning, and consider themselves, to be Christians. The ignorance, is appalling. And there is just, no excuse for it.

So, like I said, in my infinitesimal way, because they didn't know, what else to do. We have, prepared these, Christianity clarified, and we just want them, circulated, as much as people, are able to do it.

So, we have got a situation here. We have got something here, that appears to be, a clear cut contradiction. After all, Christ said, if you don't forgive others, then your father, will not forgive, your transgressions.

[17 : 38] And then, Paul says, that we have, enjoyed, the forgiveness, of all our transgressions. How are you going, to square those?

And as I've said, this is one thing, that leads people to say, ah, you see, the Bible's got a lot, of contradictions in it. Here's one right here, this says one thing here, and says another thing there. That's a contradiction. Well, you could take the same, approach, and you could say, well, the Bible has contradictions, because, back in the book of Exodus, and Leviticus, and Numbers, it tells, people, what they are allowed to eat, and what they are not allowed to eat, what their diet is to consist of.

And, when you come over, to the New Testament, and some things that, Peter wrote, and that Paul wrote, Peter was told, by God, that which God hath cleansed, that call thou not, uncommon or unclean.

This sheet let down from heaven, containing all manner, of four-footed beasts. And, they were mixed animals, some that you could eat, and some that you couldn't eat. And, Peter was told, rise Peter, kill and eat.

Peter, nothing doing. I've never eaten at him. I'm on a kosher diet. I'm a Jew. I wouldn't eat any of that stuff. And, God told him, that which God has cleansed, that call thou not, uncommon.

[18 : 58] Thus, legitimizing, all these meats. How do we square that? That does appear to be a contradiction. It isn't a contradiction, so much as it is, a progression.

Because, things have changed. And, you could make the same application, with the sacrificing of animals. And, that's the example, that I always choose to use, because it's the most glaring, the most obvious one. And, when you tell people, that the Bible, is a book in progress.

The Bible, is a book, that developed over time. And, from the front of the book, to the back of the book, Genesis to Revelation, God is increasingly, revealing himself, more and more, and more, as you go through the Bible.

And, there are updates. We all, who tinker with computers, know what updates are. They give you a new program. They make improvements in it.

They give you an update. What does that mean? It means that, the old update, doesn't apply anymore. That it's been, replaced with something new. And, everybody's happy about that, because we consider that, an improvement.

[20 : 02] And, in a way, I can't call the Bible's, updates an improvement, but, they are, a truthful, a truthful, progression, of the plan, and program of God, that is not revealed, at all, in the beginning of the book.

And, as you move on through the book, it's talked about, and then some of the prophets, get into the picture, and they start talking about, things that are to come, but they haven't come yet.

And, then as you move on through, human history, many of them have come. One of which, we'll be celebrating, very shortly. The incarnation of our Lord, Jesus Christ. And, that was prophesied, way, back in Genesis, chapter 3, when the seed of the woman, would crush the head, of the serpent.

That was a promise, that God made. And, he waited for, four thousand years, before he fulfilled it.

And then, John the Baptist, came on the scene, and said, behold, the Lamb of God, takes away, the sin of the world.

Here comes Jesus, down the road, to be baptized of John. So, you see the progression, over thousands of years. And, we've got this same thing, in all of scripture.

[21 : 27] When you talk about, animal sacrifice, being necessary, back in the Old Testament, instituted by the Lord, commanded to Israel, all these animals, thousands, and thousands, and thousands, of innocent animals, day after day, after day, morning sacrifice, and the evening

sacrifice.

What's that all about, anyway? It's all about, establishing, in the mindset, of the nation of Israel, the principle, of substitution.

The principle, of, the innocent, dying, for the guilty. And, what's that all about? It's all about, sin, and forgiveness.

Do you realize, that's what, the whole Bible, is all about. It's, sin, and forgiveness. That's, why there is, an incarnation.

That's, why God, became man. That's, why there is, a Bethlehem, and a manger. It's, because, he, who knew no sin, was made, to be sin, that we might, be made, the righteousness, of God, in him.

[22 : 40] That's, what this whole thing, this whole book, cover to cover, is a story, of redemption. It begins, with paradise.

First two chapters, paradise, Eden, wonderful. No, infractions, no, sin, no, guilt, no, death, no, disease, none of those things.

And, as, God, looked upon, all that he created, he pronounced it, very, good. He was really pleased. And, then something, ugly, happened.

Something, that God, did not create, entered the picture. And, that was this, ugly thing, called sin.

And, it's a curse. You, are cursed, with sin.

And, so am I. And, that's why we're going to die. And, that's why God, had to provide, a redeemer.

And, that's what Bethlehem, is all about.

[23 : 51] The father, sent the son, to be the savior, of the world. So, with all of those, animal sacrifices, that these Jews, went through, day after day, day, all of this blood, and the altar.

They would bring, this animal in, and examine it, make sure it didn't have, any blemish on it, or anything. Then, the priest, would take its head, and pull its head back, take that sacrificial knife, and slit its throat.

Gory scene. Just gory. And, every time, that poor, innocent animal's, heart beat, meat, it served as a pump, to rid the body, of all the blood.

So then, it could be either, offered, or, eaten. And you know, that was the priest's income. The priest got the meat. That's how the priest, fed the family.

Because they didn't have crops, they didn't have land. Priests weren't given, any land. The Lord said, I will be your portion. And all the other tribes, had the land of Israel, the promised land, had it all divvied up in Plos.

[24 : 59] You go over there today, and you drive from one area, to another, and instead of saying, you are now entering, Clark County, or Montgomery County, it says, you are now, entering, the tribe, of Zebulun.

Or the tribe of Naphtali. Or the tribe of Asher. It's fascinating. But the priests, the tribe of Levi, they didn't get any land. They lived off, of those who had land.

And they would bring, their offerings into the temple, and the priest would divvy them up. And the meat that was offered, unless it was a whole burnt offering, the meat would be, parceled out to the priests, and their families.

And that's how they had, kind of like a built in, religious welfare system. And that's how the priests, were cared for. So the children of Israel, learned early on, the principle of sacrifice.

Would it have been possible, to assign meaning, and value, and understanding, to the sacrificial death, of Jesus Christ, if it hadn't been, for all of those thousands, of animals, sacrificed for hundreds, and hundreds of years, by the Jewish community?

[26 : 09] That set them up, for being able, to make a connection. And still, you know, the majority of them, didn't make it.

And they still, don't, today. But the time is coming, when they will. And sometimes I think that, the Jewish community, back then, was as negligent, and as ignorant, of their own faith, as what a lot of Christians are today, of our faith.

There's not a whole lot of difference. And that's sad. So this forgiveness, this forgiveness, has to do, with the balancing, I call it the balancing, of the moral scale, of the universe.

Because God, is just, and God, is holy, and God, is righteous. He cannot, simply, dismiss sin. He has to, execute, justice, because, because it's in keeping, with his own character, and nature.

That's what it means, to be holy. And we really, don't, very well understand that, because none of us, have ever been there. But that's what he is. And that's what he requires.

[27 : 28] He requires, that sin, be paid for. So he, put in motion, this extensive, involved, sacrificial system, of all of these animals, and all the details, about them, all because, they were going to point to, that one, ultimate, supreme sacrifice, when it would be made.

And that's, what Jesus Christ, is all about. That's why he came. He came, to provide, a forgiveness for us, that would otherwise, not be possible.

And yet, we find this condition, that's mentioned back here, in Matthew chapter 6. And, ought that not to be obvious, to you, that, Matthew chapter 6, and the Sermon on the Mount, and the conditionality, laid down, for these, practicing Jews, was on, the other side, of the cross.

This was obviously, before Jesus died. In fact, this was early on, in his ministry, which was only about, three or three and a half years. But this is very early, in his ministry, and Matthew records it, early in his book.

So, we've got a situation, that developed back there, in accordance with, the Jewish law. And the Jewish law, did make, forgiveness from God, stipulated upon, the Israelites, forgiving one another, of their transgressions.

[29 : 02] You see, this was a, huge family. That's all the nation, of Israel was, was a huge family. In fact, that's all the whole world is, is a huge family. I mean, we're all related. We're all brothers, and sisters.

Different names, and different colors, and all the rest. But we're all related. We all came from, the same two parents. We're all brothers, and sisters. And, these, these, this Jewish nation, this peculiar people, that God raised up, under these, dire circumstances, in Egypt, and brought them out of the land.

And you know the whole story. They, were a, very, different, special, people, to the Lord. And they were, raised up of God, to be a light, to the Gentiles.

They had, a special connection. They had a special in, with God, that they were not to simply use, on themselves, and for themselves, but they were to use that, as a reference base, for reaching out, and being a light, to the Gentiles.

But frankly, they weren't all that interested. And for the most part, they didn't. And you read the story, about Jonah going to Nineveh, and his heart wasn't in it, to say the least.

[30 : 14] So, we've got, conditions imposed, upon the children of Israel, that must, that absolutely, must, be kept, within the confines, of Israel, the nation.

And not extended, to anywhere else, because they don't apply, anywhere else. They never did. They never did, apply anywhere else. The law, that God gave, to Moses, Ten Commandments, for instance, with which everyone is familiar.

Understand, he didn't give those laws, to the Egyptians. He didn't give them, to the Assyrians. He didn't give, Genesis, Exodus, Levitics, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

He didn't give that, to the Babylonians. He didn't give it, to the world. He gave it to Israel.

Exclusively to Israel. To nobody, but Israel. And most Gentiles, don't have a problem, with that.

Especially, when you say, you don't sacrifice animals, to you. Oh, well, no, we don't, we don't do that. Why don't you do that? Well, because, that's, that was back for then.

[31 : 21] That's, that's back then. Precisely. It was all for back then. And when Christ said, what he did, about forgiveness, and making a condition, you will not, who was he talking to?

Miles Coverdale, would ask you, who was Jesus talking to, when he delivered the Sermon on the Mount? He was talking to the seed of Israel. He was talking to the Jew.

They were there in the audience. They were there in the land of Israel. They spoke his language.

They knew his customs. He was addressing Jews, as a Jew. Is that so hard?

Miles Coverdale. Hmm. It shall greatly help you to understand Scripture, if thou mark not only what is spoken or written, but of whom, and to whom.

With what words? At what time? At what? When did Jesus say that? He said that early on in his ministry, when the crowds were gathered there, hanging on every word, and he delivered those three magnificent chapters that we call the Sermon on the Mount, and they were all given under the Old Testament mosaic, motif, and economy.

[32 : 45] Jesus did not arrive on the scene, baptized of John, and then say to Israel, okay, everybody, I'm here now. New Testament has begun.

The Old Testament is set aside. It's a whole new thing now. No, it wasn't. No, it wasn't. When Jesus was baptized of John, he was baptized of John because that's what a Jew was supposed to do.

And he did it. He fulfilled everything that the law required and imposed upon the Jews. Jesus Christ was an ideal Jew.

He was a perfect Jew. He was circumcised on the eighth day. That's Jewish. His parents went to the temple when he was about seven weeks old, recorded in Luke 2, and introduced him to the temple.

And Simeon was there, and Anna was there, and they held that seven-week-old Jesus, and they presented a sacrifice for him because he was the firstborn son.

[33 : 50] And that was really significant because if you didn't provide the appropriate sacrifice for your firstborn son, then you had to give him up.

You had to hand him over to the priest because he was the firstborn, and the Lord had to claim on the firstborn. Remember Samuel? Remember Hannah, how desperate she was to have a baby? Couldn't have a baby. And finally, she told God, she said, if you will give me a son. She was married to Elkanah, and Elkanah had another wife.

Her name was Peninnah. Wouldn't you like to have a name like Peninnah? Peninnah. And every time, every time, every time Hannah turned around, Peninnah was pregnant again, and she'd just rub it in to Hannah.

She'd given Elkanah, I don't know how many children, and Elkanah would try to cheer up Hannah and say, oh, that's okay, honey. That's all right.

[35 : 02] Don't you worry about it. I've got you, and then you, but she wasn't, and she told the Lord, if you'll give me a son, I'll give him back to you all the days of his life.

And God heard her prayer, and little Samuel was born. And after she weaned him, she took him to the temple, handed him over to Eli, his little baby, and said, here, I'm fulfilling my promise.

He's yours. I'm not going to redeem him. I'm giving him to the temple. Well, Jesus was redeemed. It has nothing to do with sin, but it has to do with a replacement for your firstborn child.

If you're not going to give him to the Lord, then you've got to redeem him, and they've redeemed him. And that was all Jewish. You won't find the Egyptians doing that, or the Babylonians, or anybody else doing that.

This is a Jewish thing. So when Jesus gave this Sermon on the Mount, he was a Jew, giving it to Jews, talking about Jewish things that Jews could understand. And one of the conditions was, you need to forgive others, because then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

[36 : 13] Now, fast forward 30 years. The cross. When Jesus Christ died on that cross, everything changed.

I mean, you talk about a whole new ballgame. Everything changed. This was the most radical change of all. We're told in Romans 10.4, For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Wow. You mean Jesus Christ, who he was and what he did, took the place of all of those requirements of the law?

Yes. And we are told that he wiped out the ordinances and all of those things that were against us. There are no words that I have to explain the importance and the difference it made when Jesus Christ uttered those words, it is finished.

That was absolutely the, the turning point for the entire universe. And it happened right there in the space of three hours on a lonely hillside outside an obscure place in the world, middle old Jerusalem.

[37 : 37] And after that, what happens? Well, forget about sacrificing animals for the goodness of sins. Forget about the Day of Atonement that comes in October, Yom Kippur. Forget about that.

That's all passe. Nobody is saying those things are wrong. We're saying that they are wrong now to try to implement them and obey them. They were right for the time that they were given.

But they were given for another time, for another people, in another place. Leave them there.

Benefit from them. We read them and we understand because all of Scripture is for us.

But not all of Scripture is to us. So when Jesus Christ died on that cross, the forgiveness that He made available to all who put their trust in Him as their substitute, as their innocent victim who died where they deserve to die, what you receive is forgiveness.

No conditions. It is a blanket forgiveness. It is a complete forgiveness. It is a total forgiveness. All my sins are gone, gone, gone.

[38 : 51] All my sins are gone. Buried in the depths of the deepest sea. All my sins are gone. And that's not conditioned upon this or that or something else.

When you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior, you receive forgiveness for past, present, future sins.

Some people say, I just can't believe that God would forgive me for sins I haven't even committed yet. Remember, when Jesus Christ died for your sins, none of them had been committed yet. They were all future. We've got to see this from God's perspective. And from God's perspective, when you receive his forgiveness, you receive, you receive the very righteousness of Jesus Christ. That's what Paul was talking about in Philippians chapter 3. that I might be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is through faith in Jesus Christ.

[40 : 05] And when Paul concludes that second Corinthians, he says, God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made, or that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

That means, when you receive Christ as your Savior, you receive his righteousness. righteousness. What does that lack?

Nothing. What did Paul mean when he said, and you are complete in him? He meant, there isn't anything left to be done, either by God or by you.

It is all done. When Jesus said it was finished, he really meant it. He really meant it. Your redemption was complete. It was wrapped up in him. And to personalize that, you exercise this thing called faith, which is nothing more than your belief or your trust or your commitment, your reliance upon this one who died for you.

And he gives you in return for your faith. Our faith is our response to what he did for us. And his response is our, his response he gives to our faith.

[41 : 34] He regenerates us. He forgives us all trespasses. That is a blanket forgiveness. And that's so difficult for Christians to understand or to get a hold of because I just can't believe God would forgive me for this or for that or something.

And then they struggle with this. Keeps people awake at night. I don't know whether God has really forgiven me. Well, if you don't know whether God has really forgiven you, you ought to be awake at night because there isn't anything in the world you need more than that.

And how do you know that he's forgiven you? Have you put your faith and trust in Christ? Yes, I have. Then God has forgiven you. Well, I don't feel like it. Well, it's not based upon your feelings. It's based upon what God said and God says he's forgiven you. If you can believe him, then you've got a place for rest, a place for relaxing.

Jesus Christ did not die for you so you could be uptight about things for the rest of your life. He wants you to be at peace. He wants you to have inner security, inner stability.

[42 : 49] This is what makes you a joyful person, having that. And that's what God wants us to be. But there has to be a basis for the joy. And the joy is predicated upon what God said in his word.

So, what Paul said, understand this now, what Paul said when he wrote this to the Colossians is what Christ said.

Please understand that. Paul is not giving his viewpoint to be compared with Christ and then you decide which one you're going to go with. No, no. What Paul is giving is an update that Christ is giving.

And he's giving it through Paul. Just like he gave some through Luke, just like he gave some through John, through others. This is his revelation to Paul. And Paul comes on the scene with an entirely different agenda that is just so off the wall as far as they were concerned that they just couldn't countenance it.

And they even tried to kill him because they thought he's teaching against the law of Moses. Well, in fact, he was teaching against the law of Moses because the law of Moses is now defunct.

[44 : 04] Today, today we are engaged in a conflict called war on terrorism and it's accommodated by all kinds of technological instruments, savvy weapons, devices, everything that is amazing.

It's just amazing. Would anybody here be interested in fighting the war against terrorism with World War I? Armament?

Of course not. Be no contest, would it? So, all we are saying is that Jesus Christ has provided us with an update and the update is found in the abundance of revelations that he revealed to the

apostle Paul and Paul has recorded them.

And we have this update from God. What Christ is saying in the gospels is what was then and what Paul is saying is what is now and you know what?

The time is going to come when there will be another update from Paul and that will be found in the general epistles and the book of the revelation which will update even what Paul is giving us because there is a progression involved.

[45 : 23] And if you see that, it is liberating, exhilarating, exciting. It makes the Bible come alive and make sense like it never did before. It is marvelous beyond words.

Well, as usual, I blew your time. I'm sorry. I will not have time for Q&A.; I just can't believe that clock.

I hate that thing. Yeah. Yeah. I know. It's not mutual. But I just want you to get a handle on these things.

If you see them, they just vibrate with life. It's just amazing how understanding this makes everything in the Word actually fit.

It comes together like it's supposed to. Pray with me, please. Father, we cannot ever get over the reality that you loved us and sent your Son to do for us what we couldn't do for ourselves.

[46 : 30] We are just so enamored with that great loving act that we never expect to get over it. We're so grateful for the reality of it.

And our prayer is that here and now every person in this room knows the joy and the peace that comes from trusting in an utterly reliable Savior.

Thank you. Thank you so much. And the words thank you seem so inadequate. We don't know how else to express it. We are so grateful for what you've extended to us through yourself, dying on that cross and opening the way of full and free access to you for a wonderful incredible blanket of forgiveness.

Thank you so much for what little understanding we have of it. And as much as we think we have, we know we've barely scratched the surface, but we know enough to cause us to rejoice.

And we do. Thank you and bless you for being the God you are. In Christ's wonderful name. Amen. Now next week we will have a Christmas message, so we'll have to depart again a little bit, but we'll get back to the Sermon on the Mount and continue that on into the next year.

[48 : 03] And we thank you for your indulgence over these broken sessions like this, but don't know how else to do it when we've got other things going on.