

## Forgiveness

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Sin is everyone's greatest problem, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23)
  - A. Sin (ἁμαρτάνω, *hamartanō*) means to miss the mark (and so not to share in the prize), to err (especially morally), to do wrong, to violate God's law (**Thayer**)
  - B. To sin is to act lawlessly, or as a criminal (1 Jn 3:4), to arouse God's wrath against us (Col. 3:5-6), to ultimately face the sentence of Hell's eternal fire (Rev. 21:8).
  - C. Sin is the curse of our existence, the cause of our pain and suffering, the cause of guilt and hopelessness, the cause of death and eternal condemnation!
2. But sin is not the end of the matter because with the one, true, holy God there is forgiveness (Psalm 130:3-4 – "If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? <sup>4</sup> But **there is forgiveness with You**, that You may be feared."). Forgiveness is real!
3. That is what I want to talk about today—forgiveness.
  - A. I want to talk about it because I want you to know God's forgiveness.
  - B. I want to talk about it because I want you to see it as did David who said, "How **blessed** is he **whose transgression is forgiven**, whose **sin is covered!** <sup>2</sup> How **blessed** is the man to whom the **Lord does not impute iniquity**, and in whose spirit there is no deceit!" (Psalm 32:1-2).

### BODY:

#### **I. The wonder of God's forgiveness**

- A. Defined: (Heb. נָשָׂא *nâśâ'* and סִלְחָה *selîyhâ*; Gk. ἀφίημι *aphiēmi* and χαρίζομαι *charizomai*) – to send away, to completely cancel a debt of sin; to pardon the guilt of sin (**Vine/Thayer/BDAG**)
  1. Such a simple definition
  2. But what I want you to see is how profound it is in application to our lives!
- B. This is seen in God's dealings with David, the second king anointed by God to rule over Israel.
  1. As king of Israel, he was tasked with leading Israel in the ways of God, for Acts 13:22 tell us that God "raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, **who will do all My will.**'"
  2. God blessed David greatly, not only with riches, power, and honor, but also with **six sons** from **six different wives** (2 Sam. 3:2-5).
  3. But power and honor went to David's head resulting in bad decisions and sin.
    - a. For in 2 Samuel 11 we learn that at the time when kings were to lead their armies in battle, David sent others to do his job and stayed home.
    - b. As He leisurely walked on his roof, he saw a woman bathing below, lusted for her, took her, and committed adultery with her despite learning beforehand she was Bathsheba, the **wife** of Uriah the Hittite, a faithful servant and soldier in David's army!
    - c. That sin led David to shameless attempts to cover up his sin. And when these failed, he committed premeditated, cold-blooded murder, killing Uriah so Bathsheba could be his wife in hopes, again, of covering his sin.
  4. By all accounts, including God's law and even David himself, David deserved to die for despising God. For according to 2 Sam. 12:7-10 David had despised God's word, God's bountiful blessings, and God himself. For, that is what sin does.
  5. But what follows in the words of Nathan, God's prophet and mouthpiece sent for the conviction and condemnation of David's sins, is full of wonder!
    - a. Upon David's acknowledgement of his sin against God, 2 Sam. 12:13 reads, "And Nathan said to David, "**The Lord also has taken away your sin**; you shall not die!"
    - b. There it is! David terrible, heartless, senseless, ungrateful actions against God and their guilt were no longer his to bear. God had taken them away.
      - i. Yes, there were terrible consequences and suffering that His actions set in motion.
      - ii. And the consequential suffering and pain of sin, whether it be Adam's or the rest of the world's, continues in full force today. I feel its sting every day.
      - iii. But there is **forgiveness** with God! God takes away sin.

C. Forgiveness is amazing because:

1. It is a holy God's mercy and grace (Psa. 103:11-12 – "He has **not dealt with us according to our sins**, nor **rewarded us according to our iniquities**.<sup>11</sup> For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him.<sup>12</sup> As far as the east is from the west, so far has He **removed our transgressions from us**."").
  - a. David was keenly aware that forgiveness is about **mercy**, about God not dealing with him as his sins, his rebellion in the face of God's goodness, would demand.
  - b. He knew forgiveness is about **grace**, about God giving him what he do not deserve, about God removing his transgressions from him.
  - c. And we need to be keenly aware of that too! Always!
2. It is God's **pardon**
  - a. Num. 14:19-20 – "**Pardon**, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness, just as You also have **forgiven** this people, from Egypt even until now."<sup>20</sup> So the Lord said, "I have pardoned them according to your word").
  - b. Isaiah 55:7 – "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly **pardon**."
  - c. To pardon is to spare one from the punishment due them for their crime.
    - i. Pardon is that call received by the condemned from one of great power telling them their life has been spared...even as the executioner awaits.
    - ii. It is the freedom that follows in the face of the certainty of death.
3. Forgiveness is **life and hope** for those who seek God (Psalm 130:3-4 – "If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, **who could stand**?<sup>4</sup> But **there is forgiveness with You**, that You may be feared."").
  - a. Forgiveness means that **our sins are not amassed** and held against us!
  - b. Forgiveness means we can **stand** aright in God's presence rather than crouching in fear and self-condemnation.
  - c. Forgiveness means we can truly **fear God**, not in terror, but in **reverence** as those who are His children.

## II. Old Covenant and Forgiveness

- A. The priestly services were focused on forgiveness (Lev. 4).
  1. The priests officiated over the **sin offerings**, killing an applying the blood of unblemished animals before the Lord, and burning the rest on the altar and outside the camp.
  2. These sacrifices and services were established by the Lord so that as Lev. 4:20 says, "...the priest shall **make atonement for them, and they will be forgiven**."
- B. The Psalms speak of God's wondrous forgiveness.
  1. David sought relief in God's willingness to forgive (Psalm 86:4-5 – "Make glad the soul of Your servant, for to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul.<sup>5</sup> For You, Lord, are good, and **ready to forgive**, and abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You."").
  2. David praised God for the revival forgiveness brings (Psalm 32:1-5 – "How **blessed** is he **whose transgression is forgiven**, whose **sin is covered**!<sup>2</sup> How **blessed** is the man to whom the **Lord does not impute iniquity**, and in whose spirit there is no deceit!<sup>3</sup> When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long.<sup>4</sup> For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. Selah.<sup>5</sup> I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"; and You **forgave the guilt of my sin**."").
  3. We need to fully absorb what is being said here.
- C. The Temple was about forgiveness (1 Kings 8:30, 33-36 – "Listen to the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place; hear in heaven Your dwelling place; hear and **forgive**..."<sup>33</sup> "When Your people Israel are defeated before an enemy, because they have **sinned** against You, if they turn to You again and confess Your name and pray and make supplication to You in this house,<sup>34</sup> then hear in heaven, and **forgive the sin** of

Your people Israel, and bring them back to the land which You gave to their fathers. <sup>35</sup> “When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain, because they have **sinned** against You, and they pray toward this place and **confess Your name** and **turn from their sin** when You afflict them, <sup>36</sup> then hear in heaven and **forgive the sin** of Your servants and of Your people Israel, indeed, teach them the good way in which they should walk. And send rain on Your land, which You have given Your people for an inheritance.”).

1. Five times in this prayer Solomon asks God to forgive as they pray toward the temple!
- D. Israel’s hope for the future focused on forgiveness (Jeremiah 31:31-34 – “Behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup> not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord. <sup>33</sup> But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. <sup>34</sup> They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the Lord, “**for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.**”).
1. The new covenant of Christ would bring the reality of full, complete forgiveness, where sins would be remembered no more!
  2. That reality is ours today to receive and enjoy by faith in the Lord.

### III. The New Covenant of Christ and Forgiveness

- A. The coming of salvation in Christ was heralded first by John the Baptizer.
1. Zacharias, John’s father, prophesied of this concerning John (Lk. 1:76-77 – “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare His ways; <sup>77</sup> to give to His people the knowledge of **salvation by the forgiveness of their sins**”).
  2. John himself directed the people to Jesus saying, “Behold, the Lamb of God **who takes away the sin of the world!**” (John 1:29).
- B. Jesus forgave sins while upon this earth.
1. At the house of Simon the Pharisee Jesus forgave a woman, a sinner, of her sins (Lk. 7:44-48 – Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. <sup>45</sup> You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. <sup>46</sup> You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. <sup>47</sup> For this reason I say to you, **her sins, which are many, have been forgiven**, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.” <sup>48</sup> Then He said to her, “**Your sins have been forgiven.**”).
  2. I think this woman understood the value of forgiveness, of what Jesus had to offer! Would you do what she did to gain forgiveness from Jesus?
  3. Jesus’ forgiveness was not hindered by the number of her sins, which were many!
- C. The gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, is about forgiveness.
1. The apostles preached salvation by forgiveness at Pentecost, offering it to all who will obey in faith (Acts 2:38-40 – “Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ **for the forgiveness of your sins**; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> For the promise is for you and your children and **for all who are far off**, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” <sup>40</sup> And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “**Be saved** from this perverse generation!”).
  2. Paul was called by Jesus to preach forgiveness to the world (Acts 26:16-18 – “But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; <sup>17</sup> rescuing you from the **Jewish people** and from the **Gentiles, to whom I am sending you**, <sup>18</sup> to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the

dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive **forgiveness of sins** and an **inheritance** among those who have been **sanctified by faith in Me.**”)

3. Forgiveness is the gospel’s blessing to all who come to Jesus (Eph. 1:3, 7-8 – “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,...<sup>7</sup> In Him we have **redemption** through His blood, the **forgiveness** of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace<sup>8</sup> which He lavished on us.”)
- D. God’s forgiveness will change you and motivate you to be like Jesus.
  1. It is the motivation to be forgiving of others (Eph. 4:32 – “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”).
    - a. When we consider how often God takes away our sin, our forgiveness to others must be limitless (Matt. 18:21-22 – “Then Peter came and said to Him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”<sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.”).
    - b. When we consider the wonder of God’s forgiveness, it is no surprise that God will not forgive us unless we forgive others (Matt. 6:14-15 – “For if you forgive others their sins, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.<sup>15</sup> But if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive you your sins.”).
  2. Forgiveness drives a Christian to grow in godly character (2 Pet. 1:5-9 – “Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge,<sup>6</sup> and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness,<sup>7</sup> and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.<sup>8</sup> For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>9</sup> For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, **having forgotten his purification from his former sins.**”).
  3. Do not let God’s forgiveness be wasted on you, for it to come to nothing in your life!

#### CONCLUSION:

1. God forgives sin! And that forgiveness is everything—it is salvation, life, purity, joy, hope, peace, and motivation to be like Jesus.
2. And that wonderful forgiveness is yours to receive and live by if you will trust in Jesus today, giving your life and heart to him!
3. Will you be forgiven today, having your guilt and its condemnation removed by God’s grace?
4. Will your respond to the good news and be saved in F-R-C-BP?