

Thy Kingdom Come (Day 10)
Saturday 30th May 2020

‘If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and **forgive their sins** and heal their land’
2 Chronicles 7:14

The Scriptures provide us with amazing statements about God character, for example saying, God is compassionate and gracious slow to anger and abounding in love. He will not always accuse nor will he harbour his anger forever; He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. The Psalmist reiterates it in this way,

‘For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the East is from the West, so far as he removed our transgressions from us.’
(103:8-12)

When we read the Chronicles passage its clear that God is expressing a concern that those who are called by His name recognise their sin, turn from it, confess it, and in doing so God will respond with healing.

Forgiveness is a great blessing offered to us by God and whenever we read about forgiveness it is usually in reference to our sin, for example....

Leviticus 4:35: In this way the priest will make atonement for them for the sin they have committed, and they will be forgiven.

Luke 5:20: When Jesus saw their faith, he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

Some people ask, if God is a loving God, why then doesn't He just forgive everyone? Now thats an interesting question. God is abounding in love and is willing to forgive and will remove our transgressions from us, so why cant He? When we consider God simply as a God of love we lose sight of the fact that God is also, Holy, Righteous and a God who will demand justice for those who have been mistreated, oppressed or injured by others and broken His commands in any way.

Think about it, what type person be who as a judge let every criminal who came before him/her off without sentencing them as their deeds deserved, he simply pardoned them without them even showing any remorse or admitting to their guilt. In an earthly court we would be angry and demand that the judge be sacked for gross misconduct, dereliction of duty and gross mis judgement, incapable of doing their duties and upholding the law.

God, no matter how much He loves, cant simply sweep our sins under the eternal rug so to speak, as if they never happened. The righteous will cry out against God for being unjust. The big problem for humanity is, every one of us has broken God’s laws and so all have sinned, (whether we admit it or not). The Scriptures tell us, God is a righteous and Holy God who has rules and there is no sin in heaven. The book of Romans tells us, ‘The wages of sin is death’ (Rom 6:23), and that is sins just punishment.

For a person to find true forgiveness, he or she must admit their sin. This is called confession. If a person tries to pass off sin as a mere mistake, human failing, or temporary

lapse of judgment; or if he or she simply denies the sin altogether, it is a barrier to forgiveness. We can all be good at making excuses for our sins, but to admit our sin is to humble ourselves and admit our wrongdoings. It may even be in our culture what Scripture calls sin is found to acceptable and this is a challenge to us. But we must not forget, society will judge us by their rules, God will judge us by His. If something is acceptable in our culture and it is not in God's and we pursue this sin, guess what!!

See Psalm 51 as David acknowledges his sin saying this, 'Against you alone have I sinned'. Just because something has been made legal in the courts of the world doesn't mean it is right in the courts of heaven and God will judge.

We have to admit our guilt, John puts it this way,

'If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.'

(1 John 1: 8-10)

In the Old Testament, God set up a system which the priests could intercede between God and the people and a sacrificial system was adopted. This was only ever a temporary measure which reminded the people, there is a cost to sin and the sins cost demands a life be taken. Moses writes,

"When anyone is unfaithful to the Lord by sinning unintentionally in regard to any of the Lord's holy things, they are to bring to the Lord as a penalty a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value in silver, according to the sanctuary shekel. It is a guilt offering. They must make restitution for what they have failed to do in regard to the holy things, pay an additional penalty of a fifth of its value and give it all to the priest. The priest will make atonement for them with the ram as a guilt offering, and they will be forgiven."

(Leviticus 5:15-16)

The writer of Hebrews observes, "The law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (**Hebrews 9:22**). However, the blood of sacrificial animals did not actually pay for sin. It simply postponed the judgment until a better sacrifice could be offered to pay the full penalty of sin and make forgiveness possible.

Read Hebrews chapter 10 for a fuller account of the sacrificial argument.

Holy Communion

One of the joys of coming together as the family of God is to break bread together and share the cup of wine which reminds us of Jesus sacrifice made for us. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. And in so doing establishes a New Covenant made in His blood, which was poured out for the forgiveness of sins. (**Matthew 26:28**)

Acts 10:43: All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

Acts 13:38: Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.

Ephesians 1:7: In [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

In Christ, who gave himself up for us freely, became the atoning sacrifice that would pay the price for the sins of the world. In justice being demanded and the penalty paid in full God upholds his righteousness and in giving His own life upon the cross expresses his love for each of us as He takes the punishment we deserve.

So if anyone is to say, that is not justice as the person didn't suffer, no they didn't but a greater suffering was meted out and God himself who chose to bare the punishment that should have been ours, taking it upon himself.

So God's justice was upheld in that the penalty for sin was made. The blood of animals could never ultimately pay the price, only God could, the perfect sacrifice.

What is truly astonishing is the only requirement God asks of humanity is that they humble themselves and pray, turn from their wicked ways and God will forgive them. With such amazing grace that saved a wretch like me, God now asks us to do the same and extend that forgiveness to others.

“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you”
(Colossians 3:13).

There is a stark warning in Scripture about withholding forgiveness, remember the unforgiving servant who was forgiven a great debt by his master but refused to forgive the one who owed him such a little amount in comparison. This parable Jesus tells demonstrating just how little sometimes we grasp what it cost Jesus who knew no sin, to take upon himself all of our sins. The command from God is that we must forgive others. This is an important characteristic of the Christian, so much so that Jesus reminds us about it each time we pray the Lord's prayer, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us...'

How can I forgive and forget?

We sometimes hear the phrase, 'forgive and forget' but Hthat is sometimes easier said than done, sometimes our scars are so deep we just cant forget.

Extending forgiveness is not about letting someone off the hook, we are not the judge, a more fearsome judge awaits if they don't repent. By extending forgiveness lets us of the chain that binds us to the person and sets us free so we can receive God's healing. But this is a conscious effort on our part, we must let it go and let God deal with it.

The biblical definition for us forgiving is this.....

In the Bible, remembering and forgetting do not have to do with retention of information in the brain. In Genesis 8:1, after the flood, "God remembered Noah." Does this imply that for a while God had forgotten about Noah, misplaced him among the flood waters, and then one day He remembered and thought He had better check on him? No, the biblical concept of remembering has to do with "choosing to act," and *forgetting* means "refusing to act" on the basis of something. When the Bible says God "remembered" Noah, it means that God chose to act on Noah's behalf and sent a wind to help the waters recede more rapidly. God promises that, under the New Covenant, "I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more" (Jeremiah 31:34). God does not forget that people have sinned, but, when He forgives, He chooses not to act on the basis of those sins. It is

similar to the sentiment expressed in 1 Corinthians 13:5 where “love keeps no record of wrongs.”

In the phrase *forgive and forget* means *not to continue* to hold that sin against the wrongdoer or take it into account in future interactions. A person may remember that it happened, but he or she can choose not to act on it—that is biblical forgetting.

Here are some questions to ponder in relation to forgiveness:

- Have I confessed my sin and received God’s forgiveness?
- Is there anyone whom I have sinned against and from whom I need to ask forgiveness?
- Is there anyone who has sinned against me and has asked me for forgiveness, but I have refused forgive?
- Is there anyone I am holding a grudge against for past wrongs?
- If there is an unresolved issue, will I simply “let it go,” or will I go talk to the offender about it? (Continuing to hold a grudge is not a biblical option!)
- Would I be willing to forgive if the offender asked me for forgiveness?

What is forgiveness in relation to salvation?

Forgiveness is an integral part of salvation. When Jesus forgives us, our sins, trespasses, iniquities, and transgressions are erased, wiped off the record.

It is impossible to have salvation without forgiveness. Salvation is God’s deliverance from the consequences of sin. God’s salvation in Christ is the ultimate example of forgiveness and the cross reminds us of this. Have you accepted the forgiveness of God, have you repented, confessing your sins and received His loving grace?

Pray for your 5

Asking God to reveal to them their sins that offend Him and that the Holy Spirit will lead each of them into confession and receive God’s wonderful grace and forgiveness.