



Forgiveness – Total Freedom!

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There once was a little girl that wanted to make sure she got what she wanted for Christmas. She went to her Daddy, climbed up on his lap and said, "Daddy, what can I have for Christmas this year?" And he said, "What would you like for Christmas?" She gave him a whole list of expensive toys which she wanted for Christmas and then without a word of appreciation, she jumped off Daddy's lap and went to go play with her toys. Her concerned father spoke quickly, "Honey, haven't you forgotten something?" The little girl thought for a moment, then said, "O, yes," she shouted, "Charge it."

I want to tell you that God has already "charged" our sins to Jesus' account. Jesus paid the debt in full. Your debt is wiped clean. That's a beautiful thought. You can say, "Charge it" because the real gift-giver is God. Jesus has paid your debt in full. Your debt is completely paid if you've asked Him to do that. Have you ever wished you could have all your debts paid by someone else? Every month someone would just simply pay all your bills. Not realistic? Yes. But I want to tell you that each of us owe a great spiritual debt to Jesus. Everybody here is a sinner. And Jesus Christ has erased that debt. In fact, He deletes it from our bill and marks it paid in full!

Anyone who is familiar with computers and working with files knows how painful it is when you have worked on a file for hours that you haven't saved and then suddenly the computer shuts down or the power goes out. Your file is deleted, never to be found again! That indeed is a painful experience! But on

the other side of that equation is a positive experience! That's exactly what Jesus Christ does to your sins. They're gone forever! Deleted, forgiven!

David said in **Psalm 32:1, 2, " Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."** Aren't these verses special? He doesn't count your sins against you: they're all gone, they're all forgiven, they're erased, deleted. They are totally gone; your debt is paid in full. I like that. I believe that God enjoys forgiving sin. We really serve an awesome God. Jesus covers all our debt of sin with His blood. It's a good thing He does because if God were not willing to forgive sin, heaven would be totally empty of all human occupants. None of us could be there.

How do you receive forgiveness? Is there a big load of sin in your life? There might be. Every one of us has experienced sin in our lives. It is a heavy load to carry. Have you accumulated so many mistakes that you wonder if you can ever be forgiven? Can God forgive a sin that you keep doing? Suppose your problem is alcohol, or suppose its illegal drugs, or something. If you keep doing that, and then you pray, God, please forgive me this sin. Can He forgive that sin? While you're still doing it? Would you really like to understand how to receive forgiveness? How to know that you're forgiven? If so, read on! This sermon is for you. You can have your personal sins forgiven.

Here is how Forgiveness works: Forgiveness can be broken down into FOUR GIVES. Let's go through them one by one.

1) God GAVE His Son Jesus Christ!

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

So the first give was given by God Himself. God always initiates salvation. Salvation was given by Him. Thousands of years before you were born God formulated a master plan to rescue the human race: to rescue you and to forgive you of your sins. God did that to reclaim the human race from the ditch of death.

Now, we all need the forgiving hand of God. Because we can't pay our debt. There is not one person that is so good that they can save themselves and none so bad that God cannot save them. And so we totally depend on Him for salvation.

I want to tell you here that God is really a much better God than we give Him credit for. God is an awesome, loving God. I want to just point out: Try to grasp the enormity of His greatness by thinking about His willingness to forgive your sins.

There are many differences between us and God.

1. God can be everywhere at the same time. Have you ever wished you could be everywhere at the same time? We could get so much more done. We could actually keep all of our appointments. We could accomplish so much, but as we are, we can't.
2. God knows everything. How you ever wished you could remember somebody's name or that you

could do this a little better. We don't know everything.

3. God has all power, limitless power. How often do we wish for more power?
4. God is different than we are because he can forgive the sins of somebody else. I can't forgive anybody else's personal sin. No human can forgive sin.
5. God can **forget** my sin. Can you forget your sin? You know, that is a divine attribute: God can forget. No human being can do that. Oswald Chambers said: The most marvelous ingredient in the forgiveness of God is that he also forgets, the one thing a human being can never do. Forgetting is a divine attribute; God's forgiveness forgets. I find there are things I'd like to forget: the times that I have wronged someone, the times that I have hurt somebody; I can't forget those times. God has the ability to forget. Forgetting is a divine attribute, and God's forgiveness forgets.

Forgiveness means God buries our sins and does not mark the grave. He doesn't leave the hatchet out, the handle sticking out. God doesn't actually mark the grave of your sins. When God looks at a Christian, He sees you as a person who is totally covered by the righteousness of Jesus Christ. That's what He sees when He looks at you. He doesn't think of all those sins. They're all forgiven. They're all blotted out. When He sees you, He sees a forgiven person. God does not have the ability to see through the blood of Jesus. God does not forget the sinner; he forgets the sin. When God looks on a Christian He sees you standing there covered with the perfect robe of Jesus Righteousness. He does not see your sin. God can't see through Jesus' blood. The blood of Jesus blots out your sins and God cannot see through that. In fact we know that's the case because **Isaiah 38:17** says, "**Behold, for my peace I had great bitterness; but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.**"

Have you ever seen your back? If you've seen your back it must have been in a mirror. But we do not have the ability to see our back. God does not have the ability to see your sins that are forgiven because they are covered by the blood of Jesus Christ, and they have been cast behind God's back.

So, the first step to receiving eternal life is to recognize that even though we don't deserve it--God has made full provision for it. **Romans 5:8** (This is one of the most beautiful verses in the entire Bible.) It says this: "**But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**" Now, you think about that verse. I've never died for anybody. If I did, I wouldn't be here to tell you about it. Jesus died for us, for me.

If we were willing to die for somebody else would it be somebody that was hurting us? Somebody who sinning against us? Yet that's what Christ did: He died for us - while we were sinners. I think that's marvelous.

I mean:

- To return evil for good is devilish;
- to return good for good is human;
- but to return good for evil is Godlike,
- that is forgiveness!

1) God Gave His Son, Jesus Christ!

2) **CHRIST GAVE HIS LIFE**

Not only did God give His Son, but Jesus gave His life. **Ephesians 1:7, "In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the FORGIVENESS of sins, according to the riches of His grace."**

Jesus willingly gave His life that you might receive full pardon from your most wicked, most desperate, and most repeated sins. They can be forgiven. Jesus' blood can blot out the reddest, the blackest record of your sins. **Isaiah 44:22, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud your sins."**

I was out mowing my yard the other day on a hot afternoon. It was so hot I was miserable. Then a cloud drifted between me and the hot burning sun. It was thick and completely obscured any and all traces of the sun. You couldn't tell that the sun was in that position. And the cool refreshing that came over me just totally changed my attitude about that hot lawn mowing experience. I thought about that. And God says, "I have blotted out your sins, as a thick cloud." Now you think about that. God says He will park a huge thick cloud over your sins: they will be totally obliterated, they will be gone. I think that's good news. They are covered. Even the hottest sin, even the brightest sin is fully obscured by God.

There is amazing power in the blood of Jesus!

John 18:1 Notice something that I had missed when I read it before. This is talking about the experiences of Jesus as He is just finishing the last supper, it's Thursday night, He's heading for the Mount of Olives and notice the route that He chooses to take. **"When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron (or Kidron), where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples."** Now that speaks a lot to me. I did a little research on this verse. You are aware, of course, that this was Passover weekend. Here the disciples are, going over the Kidron brook on the way to the Mount of Olives. The very next day the lambs would be slaughtered in the temple. In the temple court-yard there was a drain, a pipe that went down through the ground and emptied into the Kidron ravine. That drain drained the blood from the sacrifice area down into the creek. I believe that the very next day, according to what I could find out, 200,000 little lambs were going to be killed. Jesus knew that. When they walked over that creek he realized that His blood would not be the only blood that would be shed that weekend, but that His blood would be the only blood that would be able to erase your sins, and mine. And that's why He did that. Jesus knew that little creek would be red with the blood of all those lambs. He was not the only innocent lamb preparing for sacrifice. I am thrilled that Jesus chose to give His life that I may be saved.

Hebrews 9:22, "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." Jesus had to die on the cross. Jesus fully provided for our complete forgiveness. Every saint has a past; a forgiven past. And every sinner has a future, courtesy of Jesus.

- 1) God gave His Son
- 2) Christ gave his life
- 3) We must give our life to Christ**

Our part is actually threefold:

The **first** thing we must do to receive forgiveness is found in the Lords prayer over in Matthew. Only one petition in the Lord's Prayer has any condition attached to it. It is the petition for forgiveness. It says that if

we are to be forgiven, we must first forgive others. If someone has wronged you, you must forgive them. Please forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors. That's the condition. So you cannot receive forgiveness as long as somebody has been wronged by you or has wronged you and you have not forgiven him. So to receive forgiveness, we must first forgive others.

You can test the bigness of your soul by determining how willing you are to forgive somebody else. The bigness of any man is manifest in the number of little things he is able to overlook in others. Do little things bother you? The more those little things that bother you the smaller the person you are. The more you can overlook the bigger you are. God must be really big because He is able to overlook so much in my life. As we grow in Christ-likeness we become forgivers like Him. We pardon to the degree that we love. And when you have big love like God does, you are willing to pardon in a big way. And God wants to pardon you. He wants to forgive you. He wants to cleanse you from sin. **Colossians 3:13, "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."**

The **second** thing we must do to receive forgiveness is found in **I John 1:7, " But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."** That's how forgiveness for sin, that's the technical basis of forgiveness: Jesus blood is the purification agent. Now **verse 8. " If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."** We are all sinners. Every one of us needs forgiveness. And now the next beautiful **verse 9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** That's what God will do. He will take care of it. If we do what? The only "if" is our part. IF we confess our sins, He is a faithful and He will forgive our sins. There's no question about that. The only "if" is if we do the confessing.

Christians confess their sins to Whom? To the minister? To the local priest? Who do we confess our sins to? We confess them all the way up to God, Himself. Not to some earthly priest but to our Heavenly High Priest-Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is in the heavenly sanctuary. Jesus Christ is our High Priest. When you kneel down in a quiet place and admit your sins to Him, you are praying directly to God Himself.

Confession in its broadest meaning includes repentance. It is more than being sorry for your sins. To repent means to change your mind. The Greek word for repentance is "metanoia". Meta- means change; -noia means mind. It means a change of mind. When you change your thinking, you change your actions. So repentance means "to change your mind and your actions.

Now, God cannot forgive a sin that you cherish. Let's say your sin is doing something immoral. You do that, and you ask God to forgive you, and you go do it again, and you ask God to forgive you, and then you go and do it again. Is God forgiving you? You must stop that sin. He gives you, along with the package, the power to overcome that sin because it says here **inverse 9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just..."** He will not only forgive our sins but He will purify us, He will cleanse us from all unrighteousness. He gives with the package not only the pardon but the power to live the Christian life. He will give you a new experience. Then with your total heart you cry out to God for deliverance and forgiveness, then forgiveness will become yours. God will give you a new heart. A new experience will become yours.

Thirdly, we must ASK God to forgive us. "Forgive us our debts..." and He will do that.

Now let us go to the final give in forgiveness.

- 1). God gave His Son
- 2.) Jesus gave His life
- 3.) We give forgiveness to others and give our life
- 4.) God gives His complete perfect forgiveness and salvation to us.**

That's where forgiveness comes from. It's a gift. We don't earn it. We ask God to give it to us.

An illustration: Do you like to take a walk on a nice, sandy beach? There are several things you will notice as you take your daily walk. Many mornings you could see sand-castles where people had been out there the day before building these castles. Other people enjoyed digging holes in the beach, some built things up, some dug things down - different personalities. You could find all sorts of things on the beach. Some days you will find Foot-tracks, foot-prints everywhere. Other days it would be as if no human being had ever stepped on the beach. The difference was what can happen during the night. Some nights the wind could come up, the waves could come in and wash over that beach and totally obliterate any and all traces of human activity. All the sand-castles could be levelled. All the holes could be filled in. Everything could trackless. Something to think about! That is just like God's forgiveness. When God forgives you, you are totally free of sin. None of the traces of sin remain in your life. They're gone completely.

Micah 7:19, "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." When God pardons, He pardons in a big and complete way. Our sins will be completely gone as though they never existed.

One cleansing wave will do it. And the closer you walk along the beach to the water, the sooner your marks will be erased. When you walk near the water, and look behind you, the foot-prints are already mostly washed away. The closer you walk to Jesus, the sooner your sins will be gone. Jesus is the water of life! And you can receive forgiveness today. You can receive total forgiveness of your sins today. That's the good news. The good news is that it's free! You can receive free forgiveness for all your sins that you've ever committed. You can receive it today, free, directly from the Source. And the other good news is that it doesn't come by a Postal letter carrier! You can receive forgiveness straight from God Himself. There's no hindrance, it's straight from Him. I love our Divine Forgiver. Will you give your life to Him just now? He waits to make you as white as snow and forgive your darkest sin!