

“Forgive Our Sins”

Part 2: His Forgiveness

Key Scripture:

“If we [freely] admit that we have sinned and confess our sins, He is faithful and just (true to His own nature and promises) and will forgive our sins [dismiss our lawlessness] and [continuously] cleanse us from all unrighteousness [everything not in conformity to His will in purpose, thought, and action].” 1 John 1: 9 (Amplified)

“For You, O Lord, are good, and ready to forgive [our trespasses, sending them away, letting them go completely and forever]; and You are abundant in mercy and loving-kindness to all those who call upon You.” Psalm 86: 5

Today’s Portion for the Journey:

The “Good News” of the Gospel is that we can be freed from captivity to sin and our sins may be forgiven. Hebrews 6 refers to the doctrine of repentance from dead works which is one of the foundational teachings of the church, upon which all other doctrines must be built.

God is “the Forgiver.” It is the very essence of God’s character to be forgiving. From the day that sin entered the Garden of Eden, He has longed to gather His children to Himself! One of the Hebrew names of God, described in the Old Testament is “El Nasa (Nawsaw)” or “A Forgiving God.” The Strong’s Concordance definition of this word (#5375) conveys the idea of “One Who Carries Away our Sin to remove it from us.” This word is also translated “to lift up, take, bare, carry, accept, exalt, regard, obtained respect .to bear, carry, support, sustain, endure, to be taken away, be carried off, be swept away, to cause one to bear (iniquity).

When John saw Jesus coming toward him, he said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! John 1:29 (NKJV) The meaning of the Greek word used in John 1:29 is almost identical to that used in the El Nasa for God. God’s forgiveness did not come cheaply or easily. In order for Him to pronounce us “forgiven” and “clean” He needed to pay the debt of our sins through His death on the cross. God’s forgiveness is only possible through the Cross of Jesus Christ, who bore our sins, suffered and died for us. His work is perfect and as a result of His death we can find perfect acceptance in the Beloved. (Genesis 4:7; Isaiah 56:7; Luke 4:19 (AMP); Eph. 1:6)

Take time to meditate and let the truth of God’s word regarding His forgiveness to penetrate your heart with gratitude for His forgiveness of your sin.

- ♥ Forgiveness is such an essential aspect of God’s character and every person that He is named a “Forgiving God.” One of the Hebrew names for our God is “God-Who-Forgives,” The Hebrew word for “forgive” is “sahlohch” (Strong’s #5545). This word means to pardon, spare, to relieve someone of the burden of their offense. The word

appears in the Old Testament 50 times and in each occurrence, it is used in the context of God forgiving man. Sahlohch never refers to man forgiving anyone for their sins for only God had the authority to forgive sins. This is why the Jews were so amazed when they heard Jesus say, “your sins are forgiven.” Ps. 99:8; Dan. 9:9; Ps. 103:1-5,12; Isa. 55:7; Jer. 33:8

- ♥ Jesus’s blood was poured out with His death on the cross so that there was a legal basis to forgive our sins and provide for His cleansing and rebirth as a new creation. God’s forgiveness not only demonstrates a legal transaction in which we are freed from the penalty of our sins, it includes His cleansing and newness of life. Matt. 26:28; Luke 23:34
- ♥ God’s forgiveness is perfect and complete. If we meet His conditions of repentance, we can have perfect faith that our sins are truly forgiven. 1 John 1:9; Isa. 1:18; Eph. 1:7
- ♥ The Word says that God forgets our sins and remembers them no more. The Hebrew word for “remember” is different from our conception of this word. It means, to call to the forefront of one’s mind, or to place one’s attention upon someone or something. So when the Word says God forgets, it means He no longer calls those sins to His attention or focus. It He does not dwell upon or rehearse our sins. It means He no longer holds our sins against us. In the final judgment, God will not “remember” those sins but instead will focus His attention upon Jesus and His provision for our cleansing. “One Minute Bible Love Notes” explains it this way, when someone says, “I owe you for lunch.” You might say, “Forget about it!” We are telling them we will pay for their lunch and to put out repaying us completely from their minds.” When someone sins against us, do we rehearse and repeat in our minds what they have done, keeping their “account” with us fresh in our thinking? Forgiveness means we need to let go of those sins and not recall them to mind over and over. Isa. 43:25-26; Heb. 8:12; Heb. 10:17
- ♥ The Lord’s forgiveness is perfectly complete!

- 1) **It is said that our sins are “blotted out.”** In David’s prayer for repentance¹, he asked the Lord to “blot out” his transgressions. This word is ‘maha’ (Strong’s #4229). It means to wipe away utterly; abolish, fully destroy. If our sins were written in a book, they would be erased so completely it would be as though they were never written. (See Isa. 43:25. A beautiful application of this word is found in Isa. 25:8, where the LORD promises that He will blot out every tear from our faces!

Another Hebrew word used in reference to the “clearing” or “cleansing” of iniquity is “Naqah” (Strong’s 5352) This word means to clear, acquit, cleanse, make clean, blameless, to free, exempt, to empty by pouring out the contents of something, to empty the cup of something leaving it clean and clear. Ps. 51:2

The Greek word for “blotted out” or is “exaleipho” (Strong’s #1813) from “ek” which means “out” and “aleipho” which means “to anoint. To wipe out, to wash out. The

¹ For further study of this incredible model prayer for repentance found in Psalm 51, see Portions for the Journey study 181 “Create in Me a Clean Heart.”

word signifies the obliteration or removal. It can refer to the removal of sin, words, or tears. Acts 3:19; Col. 2:13-14; Num. 14:18-21; Ps. 51:1

2) The Lord gives some beautiful pictures to help us understand the completeness of His forgiveness.

- ♥ He will “cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.” Micah 7:18,19
- ♥ He will remove the stain of our sins, making our hearts to be as white as snow. Isa. 1:18
- ♥ He removes our sin from us, as far as the east is from the west. The east and west will never meet! Ps. 103:1-5,12
- ♥ He makes us to be new creations, as if we had never sinned. We are delivered from the power of darkness and conveyed into the kingdom of His love. 2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 1:13-14

3) When we receive His forgiveness, we are freed from the power of sin as well as the penalty. We no longer need to carry the weight of guilt and condemnation. There is an even greater benefit than that! We are restored to relationship with our beloved Father and may come boldly into His presence. He pours out times of refreshing found only in the presence of the Lord. Acts 3:19

There are words that we use frequently but we often use them without really understanding what they mean or how they work on a practical level in our lives. Meditate on the following word and consider how the meaning of these words will change how we respond to these words.

1. Conviction: 2 Tim. 3:16 tells us that God’s Word brings conviction. The word for “conviction” as used in this verse means to bring correction, to straighten up again, reformation, rectification of the crooked with reformation or moral transformation, and is used figuratively of the straight paths of the LORD. Webster’s 1828 Dictionary described conviction as the act of compelling or convincing one to admit to the truth of a charge. Hence, conviction comes through the light of God’s Word as His light is shined upon our heart and causes one to come to a firm belief in the truth of God’s word regarding our sin and need for repentance.
2. Confession: In the Greek, the word for confess is “homologeō,” and it means to come into agreement, or oneness with God’s view point. Confession brings to the light and agrees with what God says about a certain sin. It means to take complete ownership of specific thoughts, actions, words and behaviors; to admit to God a patterns have harmed ourselves and others and have offended God.
3. Forgiveness: A legal term in which a debt that one holds against another is cancelled. God cancelled our debt of sin by paying the penalty Himself. We could never have paid the debt for our sin ourselves, the only payment sufficient was death. Jesus paid that debt with His own death on the cross. When God forgives, the Word says that He totally forgets, wipes the sins away permanently. He “sends them away, lets them go, completely and forever.”
4. Repentance: The word repentance means literally to change the mind, to turn or return, not necessarily to one’s starting point, but to cause one’s behavior and life to come into alignment

with God's will. True forgiveness comes not just through asking for forgiveness, it involves a readiness to change one's behavior. It doesn't simply mean, "Sorry!" When we come to the LORD to ask forgiveness for our sins, we must be repentant (willing and determined to change). Our whole lives, desires, motives and plans must be surrendered to God. We must be willing to hand our life over to God and seek His help to stop sinning. Corinthians establishes a very good differential between sincere Godly sorrow and worldly sorrow. As we repent by resolving to abandon our sins through a conscious choice to turn away from those specific sinful thoughts, attitudes, behaviors and actions, we can embrace deep and lasting freedom through God's forgiveness and empowering grace in our lives. 2 Cor. 7:11

5. Salvation: The result of placing our belief and trust in Jesus as our Savior. The Hebrew word for salvation is Yeshuah (pronounced yesh-oo'-aw) (Strong's #3444) is the same as the Aramaic word "Jesus." The word means salvation, victory and deliverance. It speaks of one's overall welfare and prosperity, both in bringing spiritual and physical health/healing and welfare. Vines Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words states, "Essentially the word means "to remove or seek to remove someone from a burden, oppression, or danger." ...The word is frequently used of removing or seeking to remove someone from the danger of defeat: Here the emphasis is "set free," or "liberate," in other words, to remove someone from a condition already upon him. Militarily the word can also be used of "helping," emphasizing the union of forces so as to forge a single and stronger fighting unit. The word appears in many prayer petitions: "Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God ..." (Psa. 3:7). This is a combination, therefore, of military emphasis (a prayer for deliverance from some enemy by forceful interference) and judicial emphasis (a prayer for that which is the petitioner's due and the obligation of the one petitioned, in God's case the obligation is self-imposed through the establishment of the covenantal relationship; cf. Psa. 20:9).

Two types of forgiveness we experience in our Christian walk:

- a. We are forgiven, cleansed and made new at the point that we believe in Jesus as our Savior. He will wash away the sins of our past and make us into a new creature. Our relationship with the Lord is established. Eph. 1:7
- b. The process of sanctification which is the daily continual cleansing through confession of our sins and a repentant heart. Once we have given our hearts to the LORD, it should be a high priority to bring sin to the LORD when He reveals it to us, so that we can have clean hearts and receive the filling of His Holy Spirit on a daily basis.

Digging Deeper in the Word

The good news is God's forgiveness is instant and our sins are completely removed: Through Jesus' death on the cross and through his resurrection, He earned our forgiveness. Our slate is wiped clean. When God looks over our 'criminal record' there is no mention of the sins we previously confessed on our rap sheet. If we stumble and fall back into that specific sin, God's offer of forgiveness is still valid, we only need to return to him once again. There is no limitation on God's offer. 1 John 1:9; Micah 7:18,19; Ps. 85:2; Isa. 43:2

1. "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world." God is a forgiving God, whose very nature and covenant give us an assurance that He will forgive and cleanse us when we ask with a right heart. Meditate on these verses that describe God's forgiveness. Summarize what happens when God forgives us and what His forgiveness looks like in our lives. Matt. 26:28; Acts 10:43; Acts 26:17-18; Col. 1:13-14 (Amp); Col. 2:13 (Amp); Ps. 103:2-5; 12; Ps. 32:5; Ps. 51 (entire ch.); Isa. 43:25; Isa. 1:18; Micah 7:18-19; Acts 3:19.
2. Repentance and forgiveness is a daily, continual process by which we ask God to cleanse us from the stains of that day. Ps. 32:1,5 (Amp); Lam. 3:21-24
3. God, in his mercy and wisdom, convicts us of specific sins. He is a masterful surgeon, using his sharp two-edged sword (his Word) to go right to meat of the matter. (Hebrews 4:12). In modern terms, God's conviction is more accurate and exact than the most advanced surgical laser. He pinpoints very specific sins in our lives in the hope that we will come to him for forgiveness and walk with him into freedom from the bondage of those specific sins. 2 Tim. 3:16
4. Before we can experience forgiveness, we first need to believe that God has forgiven us and stop allowing condemnation to bind us to our past sins. It may be difficult for us to feel God's forgiveness. There is no condemnation in Christ. When He forgives us, we are forgiven. Condemnation comes from our own hearts or from the enemy. When we don't forgive ourselves, we hold ourselves in chains that keep dragging us down, back into the very sin we want to avoid. As we embrace God's forgiveness we give God the permission to snap that heavy chain, releasing us from the overbearing weight of guilt and self-loathing. Rom. 8:1; Isa. 52:1-3
5. Forgiveness is not an emotion, it is a legal transaction. Jesus stands with you in the court of Law, and says. "I have taken the punishment for this sin on the cross and I rose from the dead so this one can be set free." We do not need to wait for a warm fuzzy feeling to know we are forgiven. We only have to look to the Cross, a stark reminder of the price God paid in order that he could pronounce forgiveness over his beloved children. Jesus paid the price; he took our place, and took our punishment. 1 John 1:7-9; 1 John 2:1-2; Hebrews 7:24-25
6. We can pray for others to be forgiven, but it is God who sets them free when they repent for their own sin. When we pray, the Holy Spirit sends His light and truth into the person's heart. Conviction comes when truth is revealed in a person's heart. Num. 14:19-21; John 20:22-23
7. Additional Scriptures related to forgiveness: Look up each passage and meditate on what the LORD is teaching you about His forgiveness. Luke 7:47-48; Luke 24:46-47; Ps. 103:3,12; Ps. 130:4; Acts 26:18; Eph. 1:7; Jer. 31:34; 33:8.
8. Salvation also includes healing and Jesus often connected physical healing with the forgiveness of sins. The Paralytic Matt. 9:2,5; Luke 25:17-20
9. Unfortunately, while God completely frees us from any eternal consequence of our sin upon our confession to Him, we are often left with the earthly consequences of our sin. For example, those who have committed a crime may be forgiven by God, but will still have to face the consequences that society demands. Those who have abused their bodies may have health issues that remain. Those who have harmed others through their sin may have to live with the

damage this has caused. God is there to repair and restore and we can pray that He will bring healing to those we have harmed. Even though God forgives us when we confess our sins to Him, we cannot be assured or presume that people we have sinned against will forgive us even if we take full responsibility for our actions against them. We are not responsible for their responses to our desire to be forgiven. We can make restitution and seek to right what wrongs we have done as much as that individual feels comfortable to allow. Restitution could require paying for the damage we have caused others. It could mean legal ramifications in the court system. We can pray for that person to be healed and leave them in God's hands. Rom. 12:18; Heb. 12:14-15

What is God Speaking to You Through this Lesson?

What is your Response to God?