

Lesson Four – How Can I Find Forgiveness?

To this point we have found out how to be sure we are saved in 1 John. We have found out how to overcome temptation in 1 Corinthians chapter 10. Last week we sought to answer the question how can we win over worry in Matt chapter 6.

So let's go again to the scriptures and see if there is clear evidence that we can actually be forgiven for our sins.

We all have to live with the **valid guilt** associated with the deeds we have done. It is the removal of guilt that can actually make us "feel forgiven."

The classic Bible story on forgiveness is the Story of King David and the twisted story of his sin with Bathsheba. We find the history of events in 2 Sam 11-12.

In chapter 12 God sent a messenger, prophet named Nathan, who told him a story of greed and insensitivity concerning a man's only little lamb. David was enraged and wanted justice for the man that lost his Lamb. Nathan boldly said to David (2 Sam 12.7) – "You are the man!" David was stricken with conviction concerning his sin. Psalm 51 and 32 are the record of David's personal conviction and battle with self over his sin. Ps 51 is the initial confession and restoration. Ps 32 refers to the same event but looks back on it revealing to us what it means to experience deep and liberating forgiveness of sin.

1. Unconfessed carries its own **punishment**. (v.3-4)
 - a. When can try to ignore our sin but God won't ignore it. Sin is a **fellowship breaker**. God intends to have fellowship with us.
 - i. Verse 3 – It will **isolate** you. He kept silent.
 - ii. He was in a prison of **loneliness**; no one to talk to and no one to confide in. – Not even God. *Ps 66:18 If I regard (cherish) iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.*
 - b. Verse 3-4 - It will **drain** your strength away. "Bones growing old," speaks of losing vitality, energy, enthusiasm.
 - c. **Selah** – "Think about that!" Sin creates **guilt**, guilt creates **shame** and shame damages the way we **see ourselves**. Many people have a poor self-image or low self-esteem because of **unconfessed** sin.
2. Confession of sin brings forgiveness and forgiveness is **powerful**. (v.1-2)

- a. Blessing is the **by-product** of forgiveness. Here are ideas people have of where to find happiness:
- i. –
 - ii. –
 - iii. –
 - iv.
 - v. No one can experience true happiness or blessedness unless they have a way to deal with their guilt. Guilt is very stubborn, it just doesn't **melt** away. There are 4 words for sin used and in each case the person has been declared blessed.
 1. Transgression: it means to **step across** the line; to go too far. It is defiant disobedience against God.
 2. Sin: it means to **miss the mark**. God has a standard and it is an inflexible standard. He does not grade on a curve.
 3. Iniquity: speaks of **perversion** or distortion of what is right. Satan is the chief pervert of the universe.
 4. Deceit: deception, **lying** for advantage or to escape responsibility.
- b. Forgiveness is the remedy for our **guilt** (v.5). In David's case he was guilty of all four sinful failures in progression. But everything changed when he confessed his sin without any more cover up. We have a hard time with confession. We want to:
- c. Forgiveness is total and **complete**. When we are weighted down by Satan's continual reminder of sins long confessed and forgiven it might do us good to think about what God does with our sin:
- i. He lays them all on Jesus. Isa 53.6
 - ii. Jesus takes them away. Jn 1.29
 - iii. They are removed an immeasurable distance, as far as the east is from the West. Ps 103.12
 - iv. They can't be found. Jer 50.20
 - v. The Lord Forgives them. Eph 1.7
 - vi. He cleanses them all away by the blood of Jesus. 1 Jn 1.7
 - vii. He cleans them white as snow or wool. Is 1.18; Ps 51.7
 - viii. He abundantly pardons them. Is 55.7

- ix. He tramples them under foot. Micah 7.19 (NASB)
 - x. He remembers them no more. Heb 10.17 - God can't forget but he refuses to remember.
 - xi. He cast them behind his back. Is 38.17
 - xii. He cast them into the depths of the sea. Micah 7.19
 - xiii. He will not put them on our account (impute) Ps 32.2; Rom 4.8
 - xiv. He covers them. Rom 4.7
 - xv. He blots them out. Is 43.25
 - xvi. He blots them out as a thick cloud. Is 44.22
 - xvii. He blots out the proof against us, nailing it to the cross. Col 2.14.
- d. When the Bible says (Heb 9.22) that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness for sins we need to take notice. Jesus blood has been shed for us: there is remission or forgiveness **available**.
3. Forgiveness begins with a one step **process**. (v.5) Acknowledge; **Confess** your sin. Our sin may affect other people and indeed it will but it is primarily and insult to God himself. Ps 51.
- a. Sin's guilt is inescapable
 - b. Sin's weight is **relentless**
 - c. Sin's attack is against God. Against you only have I sinned!
 - d. Sin's punishment is totally **justified**.
 - e. Sin's forgiveness is restorative.
 - f. *1 Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
4. Forgiveness is based on a **promise**. V.1 Blessed is the man who... acknowledges – who confesses. The happiness that we seek is impossible until the barrier is removed. *Is 59:1 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.*
- a. Righteous people are **blessed** people. Our sin has disqualified us for membership in God's family and all the accompanying joys; yet forgiveness based on redemption though Jesus blood has made us

righteous. We are separated sinners before we confess and we are declared righteous after we confess.

- i. 2 Co 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*
 - ii. Ro 3:21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely (as a gift NASB) by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*
- b. Forgiveness always erases sin **guilt**; yet not always all of its earthly **consequences**.
- c. Forgiven people **forgive people**. If a person is unforgiving toward another then he is damaging his own testimony. The Lord's prayer say forgive us as we forgive others.
- i. Eph 4:32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. ---*
 - ii. Col 3:12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.*

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. Ps 32.1-2.

We should always take advantage of God's gracious forgiveness **personally** and we should also share the news of God's forgiveness **generously**.

There is a fountain filled with blood – William Cowper (1772)

1. There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains:
Lose all their guilty stains,
Lose all their guilty stains;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.
2. The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in His day;
And there have I, though vile as he,
Washed all my sins away:
Washed all my sins away,
Washed all my sins away;
And there have I, though vile as he,
Washed all my sins away.
3. Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its pow'r,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Are safe, to sin no more:
Are safe, to sin no more,
Are safe, to sin no more;
Till all the ransomed church of God
Are safe, to sin no more.
4. E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die:
And shall be till I die,
And shall be till I die;
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.
5. When this poor, lisping, stamm'ring tongue
Lies silent in the grave,
Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing Thy pow'r to save:
I'll sing Thy pow'r to save,
I'll sing Thy pow'r to save;
Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing Thy pow'r to save.

Pastor, I have a Question.
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