

The Sea of Forgetfulness

Jeremiah 31:34b "...for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

The first two lessons covered sin and the need of repentance. Now we will take a look into forgiveness- God's and our own.

The need for forgiveness.

To forgive is to release. You release pain, guilt, condemnation, judgment, and bitterness. This is needful to have complete freedom.

Let's define forgiveness:

1. to absolve a debt ("It is finished")
2. to give up all claim on account of
3. to cease to feel resentment for

1 Samuel 2:25 "If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall entreat for him?..."

- The word "entreat" means "intercede or judge."
- If we sin against one another, man will be the judge.
- If we sin against the Lord, then we have to seek His forgiveness
- Without His forgiveness, there is no other way our sin can be dissolved

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

- When confess (or admit) our sins to God, His Word says He will forgive us and cleanse us.
- There is no "maybe" included here.
- The words "faithful and just" could also be interpreted as "true and holy." He cannot lie.

Hebrews 6:18 "That by two immutable things, *in which it was impossible for God to lie*, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:"

- This scripture does not say that He chooses not to lie.
- In other words, it is NOT saying that He can lie, but because He is righteous and holy He doesn't.
- It is impossible for God to lie. It is not within His capacity.

So upon knowing that God cannot lie and His word says that He will forgive our sins when we admit them to Him, let us now explore the aspect of forgiveness.

God's Forgiveness

When God forgives, He forgives completely. God has no halfway point. He is whole (complete).

All the things of our life are being recorded in heaven. We cannot fathom this because can't always remember what took place a week ago. But the scripture is plain:

Revelation 20:12 “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

- The “books” are the records of our life.
- We will be judged by the things written in those books.
- Of all the books spoken of here, there is one that we want our name to be in: *the book of life*.
- These books are not written because God cannot remember; but for a written record of proof.

Through His forgiveness, we receive a pardon from the punishment of sin.

- Numbers 14:19-20 “Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now. And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to thy word.”
- Nehemiah 9:17b “...but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.”
- Isaiah 55:7 “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”
- Jeremiah 33:8 “And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.”

Pardon means “a release from the penalty of an offense.”

Since the “wages of sin are death,” there must be a price paid. We owe that price due to our sinfulness.

There are the words to an old song that still ring true:

- “Oh Calvary, Oh Calvary would you please, please speak to me; Tell me how much I owe, I want to repay;...”
- Since the debt was greater than we could ever afford to pay, there needed to be another way.
- That is why we need God's forgiveness.

The Scapegoat

Looking back in the Old Testament, we find that sin required sacrifice. Death is the penalty of sin.

What we also must realize is that along with the price, there must also be a removal of that sin. That is where the scapegoat comes in.

Leviticus 16: 16-22

16 And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.

17 And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.

18 And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the LORD, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about.

19 And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.

20 And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat:

21 And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness:

22 And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

- Once the death had taken place and the atonement through the blood had been accomplished, then the sins of the people were symbolically placed onto the head of the goat and he was released into the wilderness to never again return.
- This important for us to remember. Their sins were no longer remembered or brought up to haunt them. They were free.

Jesus would become our scapegoat. The Bible says that God robed Himself in flesh and came to dwell among us.

John 1:1,14 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

- We see here how the Word was God, then we see that the Word was made flesh.
- Interpreting this scripture text is simply saying God was made flesh and dwelt among us.

Matthew 1:23 "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

- Of course we understand that this scripture is referring to Jesus.
- Jesus is "God with us."

1 Timothy 3:16 "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

- Again we see the scripture referring to God being manifest (visible) in the flesh, justified (righteous) in the Spirit, seen of angels, preaching unto the Gentiles, being believed on in this world and then received up into glory.

- The only person this happened to was Jesus. So it is necessary to understand that Jesus was simply God in flesh.

Only one person could truly pay our penalty for sin and that was God Himself.

While He was being crucified on the cross, OUR sin was placed upon Him for Him to carry to a place that would never find us again.

- Matthew 27:46 "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"
- He was feeling forsaken because the weight of the world's sin was upon Him and the flesh was hurting due to the absence of His holy presence.
- When He took upon Himself the sins of this world, He could no longer retain the Holiness of God within His flesh.
- Jesus, the Lamb of God, taketh away the sins of the world.
- John 1:29 "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."
- Jesus became our Scapegoat.

The blood-stained pages.

In looking back at the books of our life, we are reminded that there is a record of all our sins. It is a constant reminder of all the wrong decisions and the hurtful things we have committed.

1 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."

- The blood of Jesus is what cleanses us from sin.
- In order for our sins to be remitted or removed, there must be a blood applied to our life.

Once the blood has been applied, our lives have now become blood-covered. The pages of our life are now blood-stained. When God looks at our history books, all He sees is blood-stained pages.

He remembers our sins no more because they are now blood-covered by His blood that He shed upon Calvary.

Let's read a little from the book of Hebrews.

Hebrews 10:10-17

10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,

16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

The forgiveness of self.

If God can forgive us, then we must forgive ourselves. The one way we will set ourselves up for a fall is if we hang onto our guilt of our past.

I like to use the illustration of the windshield of a vehicle. That windshield is big and wide and allows us to see what is ahead. Located on that windshield is a rearview mirror. It is small and mostly inconspicuous, but it has a purpose: to show us what is behind us. It is important for us to see what is behind us; but it is more important to see what is ahead. If we drive looking in the rearview mirror, we are most definitely going to have an accident.

The same applies to our life. If we are moving forward and we are constantly looking into our past, we are going to have nothing but problems.

- Isaiah 51:1 "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged."
- In other words, remember where you came from, but don't live by it.
- Release your guilt through God's forgiveness.
- Keeping your guilt is known as condemnation, because you are condemning yourself of your sin.

Romans 8:1 "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

John 5:24 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

John 3:16-18

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

I am NOT interested in your past, but only in your future.

God does not require us to be sinless to come to Him. For if we were sinless, we would have no need of Him.

You must forgive yourself and be free of your condemnation realizing that that God Almighty has taken your sins away and given you a new heart that is clean and pure and sinless.

Could we pray together right now?

Jesus we come to You this evening in Your name. We thank You for the sacrifice that You gave on Calvary for our sins. We ask that You would forgive us of our sins and purge our hearts and create us in a new heart and a new spirit. Take away our sins today and forgive us for our iniquity. Help us to forgive ourselves and keep us from condemnation. We seek Your power in our lives and we surrender our hearts to You right now. Thank You again for Your love, Your mercy and Your grace. In Jesus name, Amen.

Next week we will study the subject of water baptism.