

## The Beauty of Forgiveness

When we realize that we're \_\_\_\_\_ spiritually, we seek for mercy. God's gracious \_\_\_\_\_ helps us understand the beauty of forgiveness. We're here to \_\_\_\_\_ the Scriptures for God's will. We search God's Word, because it gives us a glimpse into the heart of the One who can save us and give us \_\_\_\_\_ life. We want to please Him and follow His instructions out of \_\_\_\_\_ for Him. We're not interested in pursuing our \_\_\_\_\_ agenda but in pursuing God's will.

Seeing the beauty of forgiveness, David said, "How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose \_\_\_\_\_ is covered! How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit!" (Psalm 32:1-2).

Someone has well noted that the beauty of grace and forgiveness is greatest when we realize the bitter misery and consequences of our sin. We love God most for His great sacrifice in the giving of Jesus upon the cross for our sins. "For Christ also \_\_\_\_\_ for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit" (1 Peter 3:18).

Forgiveness is not forgetting but "forgetting against." When God forgives us, He no longer \_\_\_\_\_ our sins against us (2 Corinthians 5:19). He no longer holds \_\_\_\_\_ against us so that we might be reconciled to Him (2 Corinthians 5:20). Humans can't undo their past sins, but God can \_\_\_\_\_ them against us so that we're no longer guilty or in sin. Psalm 85:2-3 says of God: "You forgave the iniquity of your people and \_\_\_\_\_ all their sins. You set aside all your \_\_\_\_\_ and turned from your fierce anger." Because Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ the punishment for our sins, God no longer counts them against us.

### Our reading today comes from 1 Timothy 1:12-16.

Ecclesiastes 7:20 says, "Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does \_\_\_\_\_ and who never sins." For that reason Psalm 130:3-4 says, "If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could \_\_\_\_\_? But there is \_\_\_\_\_ with You, That You may be feared." Without the grace and forgiveness of God, we would all be lost and \_\_\_\_\_ for eternal punishment. Without God's grace we have no \_\_\_\_\_.

But Micah 7:18-19 reveals the \_\_\_\_\_ of God: "Who is a God like You, who \_\_\_\_\_ our iniquity, And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ His anger forever, Because He delights in unchanging \_\_\_\_\_. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will \_\_\_\_\_ all their sins Into the depths of the sea." Because of His great love and grace, God has compassion on us and disposes of our iniquities and sins, so they are no longer on His \_\_\_\_\_.

Forgiveness is indeed a beautiful \_\_\_\_\_ on God's part. David wrote, "The LORD is compassionate and gracious, Slow to \_\_\_\_\_ and abounding in lovingkindness. He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not \_\_\_\_\_ with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is

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**Longer quotations may not appear in the Study Sheet, but can be read in the accompanying transcript.**

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His lovingkindness toward those who \_\_\_\_\_ Him. As far as the east is from the west, So far has He \_\_\_\_\_ our transgressions from us. Just as a father has compassion on his children, So the LORD has compassion on those who \_\_\_\_\_ Him” (Psalm 103:8-13). I’m deeply grateful for the God of all grace (1 Peter 5:10) who can \_\_\_\_\_ us in times of temptation and can forgive us when we sin against Him. What does forgiveness do?

First, forgiveness \_\_\_\_\_ one from the bondage of sin. John 8:34 says, “everyone who sins is a \_\_\_\_\_ to sin”; but verse 36 says, “if the Son \_\_\_\_\_ you free, you will be free indeed.” Romans 6:17-18 reminds us, “But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became \_\_\_\_\_ from the heart to that form of \_\_\_\_\_ to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became the slaves of righteousness.” God’s Word gives us the \_\_\_\_\_ to freedom from sin. Earlier in the chapter we \_\_\_\_\_ about that form of teaching that frees. Romans 6:3-7 says that our baptism into Christ means that “our old self was crucified with him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no \_\_\_\_\_ be slaves to sin; for he who died is freed from sin.”

Second, forgiveness releases one from the \_\_\_\_\_ or penalty that’s incurred by sin. Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is \_\_\_\_\_, but the free gift of God is eternal \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Sin separates us from God, and without forgiveness we’ll \_\_\_\_\_ separated from God eternally. Forgiveness releases one from the \_\_\_\_\_, in spite of what one may deserve. Forgiveness shouldn’t be confused with injustice, as when a guilty person \_\_\_\_\_ punishment through lies or bribes. Forgiveness is a pardon; the sin was \_\_\_\_\_ but now no longer matters because Jesus bore the punishment for our sins on the cross.

Third, forgiveness creates the opportunity for a \_\_\_\_\_ beginning. Second Corinthians 5:17 says “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation (a new creature); the \_\_\_\_\_ has (passed away, it’s) gone, and the \_\_\_\_\_ has come!” Forgiveness means God has cleared out the old record of sin, and God looked upon us as if we had \_\_\_\_\_ sinned. His past, your past, my past, no longer matters to God, for we have \_\_\_\_\_ to sin and have undergone a new birth in Christ. With the past buried by the love of God, God and man can now start a new covenant relationship, brought about by the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus. This new birth (John 3:3-7) allows a person to \_\_\_\_\_ over with God. One can think, act and speak like \_\_\_\_\_.

Fourth, forgiveness is the \_\_\_\_\_ by which God reconciles the world to Himself. Reconciliation involves repairing a division caused by \_\_\_\_\_ between two parties. Sin causes hostility, anger between God and man. But reconciliation \_\_\_\_\_ the favor, and a loving relationship, between God and us. Second Corinthians 5:19 says, “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not \_\_\_\_\_ men’s sins against them.” Reconciliation is the bringing back into \_\_\_\_\_ a world that was alienated by sin.

Sin completely separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2), so that God no longer even \_\_\_\_\_ our prayers. Forgiveness restores the relationship by \_\_\_\_\_ the sin that causes the separation. When God forgives our sins, we can once again \_\_\_\_\_ God through Christ. Forgiveness is really better than merely forgetting, for by forgiving us God demonstrates His \_\_\_\_\_ to us (Romans 5:6-8) by sending Jesus to die for us. We at that time were powerless, ungodly, and sinful. But His love for us \_\_\_\_\_ us to love Him as well. What this does is it heals the \_\_\_\_\_ relationship and causes it to be one of love and stronger than ever. The cross reaches out to us in love and “compels us” to love Him and to \_\_\_\_\_ Him. “And he died for all that those who live should no \_\_\_\_\_ live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised again” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

Forgiveness is not an \_\_\_\_\_ of the sin that people commit. Forgiveness implies a \_\_\_\_\_ has been done, and God never approves of sin. Forgiveness does not \_\_\_\_\_ what people do. Sin is not a trivial thing, but \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord Jesus His life. Forgiveness is not justifying what they did. Forgiveness doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ a sinful act into a righteous one. Forgiveness is not denying what they did; forgiveness \_\_\_\_\_ exposes and recognizes sin for what it is. Forgiveness is not turning a \_\_\_\_\_ eye or acting like something never happened; nor is it merely forgetting about something so serious. Forgiveness doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ to take what is immoral and what is wrong, to take it seriously. Forgiveness doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ sin is harmless; sin is wrong because of its destructive and harmful nature. Sin always causes somebody to get hurt, and every sin is an \_\_\_\_\_ to God.

God's forgiveness of our sins is a great \_\_\_\_\_ of love and grace. God is not naïve but fully aware of the evil that has been done; nothing escapes His \_\_\_\_\_. Because He's aware of the harmful \_\_\_\_\_ of our sins, we marvel at His gracious love to be willing to forgive. When God forgives, He chooses to keep \_\_\_\_\_ record of wrongs. He removes our sins and releases us from the guilt. When He forgives, He refuses to \_\_\_\_\_ us for those forgiven sins. Once forgiven, God doesn't endlessly \_\_\_\_\_ us of what we did. He doesn't any longer \_\_\_\_\_ those forgiven sins against us. Since God is merciful, He doesn't give us what we \_\_\_\_\_. He sees us for what we have \_\_\_\_\_, and not for what we did in the past.

Forgiveness is an \_\_\_\_\_ of the heart and will. Just as God chose to give up Jesus to the cross because He loved us, God chooses to accept the atoning \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus for our sins because He loves us. Jesus willingly and lovingly chose the path to the cross to bear our sins in His body, so that we might \_\_\_\_\_ to sin and \_\_\_\_\_ to righteousness. By His wounds we are healed of sin (1 Peter 2:24). Even though we had grievously sinned against God, God has had compassion on those who fear Him in Christ. He knows we are weak and helpless and in \_\_\_\_\_ of saving. Forgiveness opens the door to our salvation.

God is also forgiving for His \_\_\_\_\_ sake. Think about this; God said, "I, even I, am the one who \_\_\_\_\_ out your transgressions for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins" (Isaiah 43:25). Sin \_\_\_\_\_ a separation and hostility between the sinner and God. Forgiveness \_\_\_\_\_ that bitterness, and anger, and hatred over some past offense. Psalm 103:9 says God "will not always strive (or fight) with us, nor will He \_\_\_\_\_ His anger forever." God would rather \_\_\_\_\_ those who come to Him humbly, lovingly, and penitently than remain angry forever.

The point of God's forgiveness is reconciliation. He wants to have a \_\_\_\_\_ relationship with you and me. Through Christ He is reconciling the \_\_\_\_\_ to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19-20). This gracious forgiveness leads us to \_\_\_\_\_ our ways. We love because He \_\_\_\_\_ loved us (1 John 4:19). Ephesians 4:30-31 says to us, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be \_\_\_\_\_ to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." Because we are forgiven by God's \_\_\_\_\_, we don't let sin reign in our lives. Because we are forgiven, we \_\_\_\_\_ the old ways of sin with a life of good deeds that honors the Lord. Because we are forgiven, we aren't afraid to lead other people to God's forgiveness.

With confidence Christians can \_\_\_\_\_ in the grace and the forgiveness of God. They can say, "By God's grace I'm washed, sanctified, and justified in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. I'm forgiven and can have a \_\_\_\_\_ conscience. I'm once again a \_\_\_\_\_ with God. The old man of sin has died. I'm \_\_\_\_\_ again into God's family with newness of life. I pray to my Father with confidence, knowing that He will do \_\_\_\_\_ than I ask or think. I'm blessed with the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. I'm a fellow \_\_\_\_\_ with the saints in the kingdom of heaven. I'm a \_\_\_\_\_ of the body of Christ with a purpose and function. I have \_\_\_\_\_

spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ. Jesus has prepared for me a permanent dwelling place in \_\_\_\_\_ with my Father, where He will show me the “immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.”

Occasionally someone asks, “Did God \_\_\_\_\_ forgive my sins?” I answer yes. You can find His \_\_\_\_\_ in the Word of God, and God keeps His promises. God said, “For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will \_\_\_\_\_ their sins no more” (Hebrews 8:12). You can count on the promises of God, because God is \_\_\_\_\_. God was able to forgive those who crucified Christ on the day of Pentecost when they \_\_\_\_\_ and were baptized (Acts 2:38); God was able to show grace and wash the sinners of the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; and God was able to \_\_\_\_\_ away the sins of the apostle Paul who was at one time the foremost of sinners, the chief of sinners, but he was baptized and his sins were washed away (Acts 22:16). So we can have confidence that He’s \_\_\_\_\_ to save us as well.

Recall 1 Timothy 1:15-16. “I thank him who has given me \_\_\_\_\_, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though I formerly was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent opponent. But I received \_\_\_\_\_ because I acted ignorantly and unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to \_\_\_\_\_ sinners, of whom I am foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost (the chief), Jesus Christ might \_\_\_\_\_ his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.” God can forgive you too, if you will humbly \_\_\_\_\_ Him.

David said, “For You, Lord, are good, and \_\_\_\_\_ to forgive, And abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You” (Psalm 86:5). God will forgive if we \_\_\_\_\_ our hearts to Him. Isaiah 55:7 says, “Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly \_\_\_\_\_.”

We can call upon God like David did in Psalm 51:2; “Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion, \_\_\_\_\_ out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin.” God is gracious and wants \_\_\_\_\_ people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. God doesn’t want anybody to be \_\_\_\_\_. Sadly, some won’t accept God’s provision to save us and instead \_\_\_\_\_ to remain accountable for their sin.

God has called us through the \_\_\_\_\_, which has God’s power to save (Romans 1:16). God calls us to \_\_\_\_\_ to His message. The gospel is the good news of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. When we place our faith in Christ, turn from evil to good, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and are baptized into Christ, God Himself washes away our sins and forgives us. When by faith we’re clothed with Christ in baptism, we become children of God (Galatians 3:26-27) and we’re born again (John 3:5). In baptism God redeems us and reconciles us to Himself. When we’re baptized, God adds us to His kingdom, the church. Oh, I hope and pray that you aren’t saying no to God. I hope you’re saying yes to Him, that you want and need to become a Christian.