

The Transforming Power of Forgiveness

It's inevitable that some of our prior life choices have caused deep pain and loss in us and in others. And others have also sinned against us.¹ For now, let's focus only on this forgiveness from Jesus that deals in full with every barrier between God and us. **His** forgiveness models for us every other aspect of forgiveness.

Does your pain and loss and hopelessness rear its ugly head at times? Do these seem like a troll demanding a high tax to drink from God's refreshing spiritual water? Please don't despair or hide. It's **free** for us. Jesus already paid the high price in full. Look at Jesus' heart. Acknowledging our felt need for Jesus actually activates the full provision of Jesus in and for us.

When Jesus saw those unclean by Jewish standards, for instance the lepers and the prostitutes, His **first impulse** was compassion, moving Him to help. This compassion rises up in wave after wave in Jesus' ministry (Matthew 8:2-3; 9:36; 14:14 as examples). Their need and responsiveness qualify them to come. And Jesus is the same today (Heb.13:8). The Son of God moves toward, touches, heals, embraces, forgives those who least **deserve** Him yet truly **desire** Him. Divine mercy is ready to burst forth at the slightest prick. And this goes for you and me today.

1. Thank God for His FULL Forgiveness

Jesus has **already** paid in full for every sin we have ever committed or that has been committed against us. Forgiveness through Jesus is available for all. Lean close into Jesus. Acknowledge the pain and loss ("*confess*") in order to **thank** God for the abundance of a God who delights in us.

Let's explore the unassailable basis for our full forgiveness.

Jesus died in our place on the cross, as our substitute, His life for ours. He took *once* for *all* time *all* the punishment for *every* one of your sins and mine. Through our active choice of faith, He removes **all** grounds for guilt and condemnation *forever*. He restores us to *intimacy acceptance* and *adventure* with God. Are you aware of even **one** of your sins that Jesus has **not** taken on Himself?

[When Jesus] had offered for **all** time **one** sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God [since] by **one** sacrifice he has **made perfect forever** those who are being made holy. [Where] these have been forgiven, there is **no longer** any sacrifice for sin (Hebrews 10:12-18, **emphasis**).

Chew on these verses for a while. One sacrifice. For all times. No longer any other possible sacrifice. Makes us perfect forever, even as we are growing in holiness on our journey.

We owed God an unpayable debt for the sin we committed. Christ has taken each one of these upon Himself ("*Himself for me*," Galatians 2:20), along with all our guilt and shame and condemnation...past, present, and future. We were born spiritually dead, separated from God. In exchange, Jesus has gifted us a new, cleansed life with a new identity. One aspect is as a "*beloved child*." While dying on the cross, Jesus cried out...

"It is finished" (John 19:30).

"*Finished*" is a commercial term meaning that the last payment on a demand note has been paid. Stamp "*Paid in Full*" over all our past, present and future transgressions. Burn the

¹ All three of these aspects of forgiveness are in the devotional I wrote, available on Amazon.Com, "*Times of Refreshing*."

mortgage for the debt we owed because we violated God's love and trust, justice and holiness. *We are now free indeed!* Drink deeply of His river of delights (Ps 36:8)!

Yes, Jesus released us from the debt we owed God. It's all wiped out. Yet He invites us into more, much more. Jesus took sin's high cost on Himself (past, present and future sins), paid the debt *we* owed **in full**, and brought this toxic waste to the cross. The death of Christ is the only place in the universe where this debt against the Father's love could be paid in full. I look at Jesus' cross as a great spiritual toxic waste dump. Only the Creator could pay in full for creation's sins against Him. Only the perfect man Jesus could die for other men and women.

So all authentic forgiveness is based on Christ's merit and works, not on anything we do, thank God. The Father, Son and Spirit yearn for a deepening relationship with His treasured children. He therefore provides a sure way to remove the barriers and open the way into full **acceptance**. Any other view of our good God is a false image.

Through faith in Christ, we are so fully and finally forgiven that the Bible pushes language to its limits to describe this blessing. God's mercy has thoroughly removed from us the stain of guilt and shame, condemnation and judgment. His grace (His action-love) restores us to "*life to the full*," launching us on a purposeful *adventure* with Him.

When we receive Jesus by faith, our choice shatters the vice-like hold that condemnation's "*cousins*," guilt and shame, had exerted to block us from embracing God's loving initiative. Have you run across any of guilt/shame's other "*cousins*," self-loathing, fear of judgment, prejudice or favoritism? Or the opposite, lethargy towards God?

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1).

"As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us"
(Psalm 103:12).

How far is the east from the west? Stop and think how far our sins have been removed from us, please. If you travel due north from any point on earth, eventually you will cross over the North Pole and begin to go south. If you journey continuously east, however, you will never reach west. *What's God saying?*

Our sins are removed an infinite distance from us. At the cross, Jesus made full and final provision for our sins. *He paid in full the debt we owed the Father*. All this leads to our full **acceptance** in Christ and free access into our Father's presence. How forgiven are we through faith in Christ? Be amazed at these few word-pictures from Scripture.

1. **My sins** are removed from me as far as the east is from the west (Ps. 103:12).
2. **My sins** are hidden behind God's back where He cannot see them (Is. 38:17b).
3. **My sins** are made as white as newly fallen snow and freshly sheared wool (Is. 1:18).
4. **My sins** are totally blotted from the record (Is. 43:25).
5. My sins have disappeared like the morning mist is dissipated by the first warm rays of the sunrise (Is. 44:22).
6. **My sins** are not to be found, even after a worldwide search by God and His friends (Jer. 50:20).
7. **My sins** have been hurled into the deepest sea and God has posted a "*No Fish'n*" sign (Micah 7:19).

Which one of these penetrate most deeply into your heart today?

*Are you convinced that Jesus **already** paid in full for every last one of your sins. **Thank Him!***

2. Ask Forgiveness from Those who You Sinned Against

Our intimate relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit will be attacked by all kinds of deceit and lies. And if we join the Accuser in hammering ourselves or others, we experience the same counterfeit “evidence” of bondage today as we did in our past life. We forfeit God’s gift of daily, *experienced* freedom through the obedience of faith, even though God has unshackled us from sin.

They overcame [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death (Revelation 12:11-12).

The devil or Satan is called the “*accuser of God’s people*” (Revelations 12:10b). **Guess why?** Accusing Christians is a large part of the daily job description for his henchman...and they do it well. So, when we accuse *ourselves*, and hang on to the past without asking God and others for forgiveness, we join with our enemy, Satan. Stop it! Believe God that our life is now Jesus’ life and His history ours. Don’t ignore or stuff. Don’t cauterize the wound. We overcome attack:

1. *With the power of the blood of Jesus bringing forgiveness,*
2. *With our verbal affirmation of God’s faithful care, including forgiving every sin, and*
3. *With the sweet surrender of our wholehearted allegiance to God (Revelation 12:10b).*

When I sin against another on my journey of life, how do I respond?

Keep short accounts! *God fully & forever forgives me through faith in Christ...*

- ...So I fully embrace God’s forgiveness for me...
- ...And I ask both God and others for forgiveness when I sin against them....

All sin is first and foremost against God. Rush to God and thank Him that the power of the blood of Christ has cleansed us. Do it quickly. Confess and ask God for forgiveness, **always** (1 John 1:9). Even though God has forgiven that sin, when we confess, we acknowledge that we also see this as sin, like God does (the meaning of “*confess*”).

Go, ask forgiveness of the person we sinned against, unless to go may in some way injure them or others. **As** *Christ* has forgiven us, releasing us from our debt, **so** we ask forgiveness of those we sin against. Don’t ignore it, brush it off, or minimize our sin. Own all ours yet **only** our part in the event. That’s what we are responsible for.

Forgive from our Heart Those who Sinned Against us

Some Christians have tolerated living in *guilt* and *shame* and *condemnation* for so long that they embrace these familiar “friends” instead of truth. The enemy’s helpers are like rats gorging on the garbage of our false *guilt* and *shame*, condemnation and judgment.

Jesus already paid for all those sins against you on the cross when He dealt with the penalty for sin. We carry God’s **authority** to be “garbage collectors,” removing all the trash from our spiritual house, closing any entryway into our lives and refurbishing. You are the gatekeeper of your own heart. Send your garbage to the spiritual dumpster, the cross of Christ, the great sin incinerator. Then refurbish the house with what’s of Christ.

This means I **fully forgive** from my heart all who sin **against me**, releasing the supernatural power of forgiveness. How we forgive others also reveals how deeply we understand and embrace our **own** forgiveness from the Lord. If we have **fully** grasped God’s forgiveness for us for failing and falling, now we can forgive just about everyone else. If we have **not** embraced God’s forgiveness for ourselves, we are likely to pass along to others the same self-judgment, shame and futility we feel.

So, *how did the Lord forgive us?* Earlier I asked us to think on this.

...**forgiving** each other **just as** in Christ God **forgave you** (Ephesians 4:32, **emphasis**).

“*Just as*” means in the same manner or in the same way as Christ forgave us. The instant we recognized our separation from God and chose sweet surrender to Him (however that happened uniquely in your life), through faith in Christ we received His full and final forgiveness.

If any of this is remotely new, I would strongly encourage you to pick up the devotional I wrote to lay a healthy spiritual foundation in our lives, *Times of Refreshing* available on Amazon.Com. I have extended sections on all three aspects of forgiveness. This belongs to the **ABC's of value and worth**, the basics of our Christian life.

*How we forgive others is often a fairly accurate window into how forgiven we feel by Jesus (Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:13). **How forgiven do you feel by your Father in heaven?***

Forgive From Your Heart As Jesus Did		
	Jesus	You
1	Debt Owed Jesus	Debt Owed: Acknowledge & feel the weight of the debt they owe you.
2	Bear Debt to Pay in-Full	Bear Debt: Take all their debt for this act completely on you. Grieve the loss.
3	Leave at Cross	Leave at Cross: Quickly take these toxins and leave at the cross.
4	Remember No More	Remember No More: Don't take this sinful event into future interactions.