



Bondage of Sin

Freedom through Forgiveness

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Introduction

As man we are in bondage to the sin we commit each day. And if it is not bad enough that we are weak; we have the great tempter, the evil one, satan luring us, drawing us deeper into this bondage and further from the one who Loves us, the Light of the World, Jesus Christ. With each sin this heavy load we carry becomes even more overwhelming and makes it harder for us to make the right choices. It also becomes impossible to help others or to go out spreading the gospel and ministering to those in need, because we are personally consumed with our unworthiness.

God knew this would happen and the Loving God He is has given us the answer to this problem that has plagued mankind since the very beginning. He sent His Son Jesus Christ to break the chains from satan's power and to pay the ultimate price for the penalties of the sins we commit; He was crucified on the Cross for our Salvation and Forgiveness through Him. Before we can comprehend what forgiveness truly is, we must first understand what it means to be a sinner.

We are sinners, of that there is no doubt, for to sins is to transgress the law of God, of which we are all guilty to some degree. We know that the first sin was that of Eve who was tempted by the serpent or satan to violate God's Commands. Since that moment it has been an ongoing struggle with man's actions being determined by his relationship with Jesus. The stronger the relationship (true) the greater the ability to stand against the temptations of satan, yet most do not strive for such a spiritual level with Jesus. Either they do not desire the strength to stand against the temptations to sin and they are not willing to give their whole heart to Jesus, for if He does not have your whole heart He will not have the influence over you to help you overcome what is evil.

What is a Sin?

The word sin means "any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God" (1 John 3:4; Rom 4:15), in the inward state and habit of the soul, as well as in the outward conduct of the life, whether by omission or commission (Rom 6:12-17; 7:5-24). It is "not a mere violation of the law of our constitution, nor of the system of things, but an offence against a personal lawgiver and moral governor who vindicates his law with penalties. The soul that sins is always conscious that his sin is (1) intrinsically vile and polluting, and (2) that it justly deserves punishment, and calls down the righteous wrath of God. Hence sin carries with it two inalienable characters, (1) ill-desert, guilt (reatus); and (2) pollution (macula)."

Before we go any further, we must recognize that there are many kinds of sins and we are all break them in one form or another; and yes there are different kinds of sins and some hold a high punishment or penalty than others. Those who chose to commit detestable sin will try to convince you that all sins are alike and carry the same punishment. I have talked with a man who is actively gay and who chose to make this stance biblically. He quoted Lev 19:19 and said that we all break this law, so breaking the others means nothing more. (First he does not truly understand the contents of the scripture he quoted, which talks about wearing clothing of woven from two different materials. It is referring to the vestments worn by priest and that they should not be made from materials such as wool and linen.) This happens all too often and unfortunately will cause many to go astray. We can also see this in Ezek 16:51-52 **“Samaria did not commit half the sins you did. You have done more detestable things than they, and have made your sisters seem righteous by all these things you have done. Bear your disgrace, for you have furnished some justification for your sisters. Because your sins were more vile than theirs, they appear more righteous than you. So then, be ashamed and bear your disgrace, for you have made your sisters appear righteous.”**



Sin of Concealing the Truth (If a person sins because he does not speak up when he hears a public charge to testify regarding something he has seen or learned about, he will be held responsible. Lev 5:1) If a man is put in a position of testifying and for fear of offending one that either has been his friend or may be his enemy, he refuses to give evidence, or gives it but in part, he shall bear his iniquity. And that is a heavy burden, which, if a course of action is not taken to get it removed, will sink a man to the lowest hell. 



Generational Sins (Those of you who are left will waste away in the lands of their enemies because of their sins; also because of their fathers' sins they will waste away. Lev 26:39) Generational sins have always been a subject of great controversy though we see many times throughout the old testament where God would take His wrath out on generations three and for deep (**Ex 20:4-6 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments.**) Here we see the example of an ongoing sin that is passed down to generation, to worship gods or idols other than our Heavenly Father. I believe this goes hand in hand with the fact that ignorance is not an excuse, if we choose to follow in the ways of our fathers, who worship false gods, they we will face the same fate. The good news is that the generation sins can be broken through repentance of your sins and the sins of your fathers. Also evidence in the Bible does not support that all sins fall under this umbrella, just those sins that are detestable and linked with worshipping idols. (Lev 26:40) 



Unintentional Sins (If a member of the community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD's commands, he is guilty. Lev 4:27-28) Though all men may not know the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God (Jer 5:4), if they sin through

ignorance they are still considered guilty. Just as the laws of man today, ignorance is not an excuse. We have God's word, or at least easy access, so therefore we are responsible for it. There are many people that fail to take the time to read God's Word. They feel that they will hear in church all they need to know, so for them it is a waste of time. They also fail to realize that some churches, through ignorance or arrogance, lead men to sin. I will pose this simple question and allow you to answer it yourself. There are churches that teach their members that it is alright to bow down and worship; even pray, to an idol or statue that is not of God or Jesus, in fact they encourage this. Does this break the second commandment and can it also be considered a generational sin? 



Detestable Sins (The LORD said through his servants the prophets: "**Manasseh king of Judah has committed these detestable sins. 2 Kings 21:10-11**) Detestable, a word that can make most cringe, is the word that God utilizes to describe many sins that men commit. So what are things to which God labels detestable?

Worshipping (Having) Idols - We see many examples of this in Ezekiel, for example "**And he said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing-the utterly detestable things the house of Israel is doing here, things that will drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see things that are even more detestable.** (Ezek 8:6) As we also read further we can see that just having these idols and placing them in a position of any significance goes against what God desires. (**Each of you, get rid of the vile images you have set your eyes on, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.** Ezek 20:7) We can also see how devastating having or worshipping an idol can be in Deut 29:18 "**Make sure there is no man or woman, clan or tribe among you today whose heart turns away from the LORD our God to go and worship the gods of those nations; make sure there is no root among you that produces such bitter poison.**"

Adultery – To commit adultery of any kind is viewed as detestable in the eyes of our Lord. **In you one man commits a detestable offense with his neighbor's wife, another shamefully defiles his daughter-in-law, and another violates his sister, his own father's daughter.** Ezek 22:11

Oppressing the Poor - When something like this happens, people label it as wrong, but I think few fail to realize that to God this is a detestable act with a heavy penalty. (Ezek 18:11)

Stealing – We all know that stealing is wrong and to do so breaks the 8th commandment, but to imagine it as detestable brings a new light to how wrong it truly is. (Ezek 18:11)

Murder (Living Sacrifices) - **For they have committed adultery and blood is on their hands. They committed adultery with their idols; they even sacrificed their children, whom they bore to me, as food for them.** (Ezek 23:37-38) **In you men accept bribes to shed blood; you take usury and excessive interest and make unjust gain from your neighbors by extortion.** (Ezek 22:12) This is not to be confused with killing, such as in war or self protection.

Breaking Faith – Judah has broken faith. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the LORD loves, by marrying the daughter of a foreign god. (Mal 2:11-12) This can also be considered of those who cause people to loose their faith. We see this many times today with spiritual leaders either leading the flock in the wrong directions or doing acts (sins) which turn people away from Jesus. **"For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction-because he is the messenger of the LORD Almighty. But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi," says the LORD Almighty.** (Mal 2:7-8) Those causing people to break faith are in great danger, for Jesus has said it is better for them to have a mill stone tied to them and to be thrown in the river.

Love of Money – Many never relate the love of money to that of a sins, much less a detestable one, however, Jesus addressed this one Himself. **The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight.** (Luke 16:14-15)

Corrupt Believers – Those who claim they are of Jesus, but are truly not, are detested by Jesus and a threat to those who believe, **(To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. 16 They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good. Titus 1:15-16)** and this is more widespread today than most will acknowledge. There are far too many leaders of the church who are corrupted by the desires of the world or who have their own agenda for how they believe the church should be run. These people are dangerous and must be avoided. We also have those who claim they believe yet come among a fellowship of believers and create problems, doubt, and confusion which can ultimately lead to destruction. Also, if you read many of the studies today, you will find that it is estimated that only 5% of the people who attend church are true believers.

Obsession - He lends at usury and takes excessive interest. (Ezek 18:13)

Other detestable acts/people:

Cross Dressing - A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the LORD your God detests anyone who does this. (Deut 22:5)

Offering unclean money - You must not bring the earnings of a female prostitute or of a male prostitute into the house of the LORD your God to pay any vow, because the LORD your God detests them both. (Deut 23:18)

Dishonesty (Cheating) - For the LORD your God detests anyone who does these things, anyone who deals dishonestly. (Deut 25:16)

Perverse Hearts - The LORD detests men of perverse heart but he delights in those whose ways are blameless. (Prov 11:20)

Lying - The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful. (Prov 12:22)

Pride – We all know that it was pride which created satan (or the evil of satan) and it is pride which bring us to do evil things. The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished. (Prov 16:5)

The Wicked - The LORD detests the thoughts of the wicked, but those of the pure are pleasing to him. (Prov 15:26)

Those who will - Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent — the LORD detests them both. (Prov 17:15)

These are some of the things considered detested by God and must not be taken lightly. God tells us, **“When they placed their threshold next to my threshold and their doorposts beside my doorposts, with only a wall between me and them, they defiled my holy name by their detestable practices. So I destroyed them in my anger. Now let them put away from me their prostitution and the lifeless idols of their kings, and I will live among them forever.”** (Ezek 43:8-9) 



Willful sins (Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Ps 19:30) His petition: "Keep me from ever being guilty of a willful presumptuous sin." We ought to pray that we may be kept from sins of infirmity, but especially from presumptuous sins, which most offend God and wound conscience, which wither our comforts and shock our hopes. However, let none have such dominion over me, let me not be at the command of any such sin, nor be enslaved by it. 



Secret Sins (Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Ps 19:12) We often take things we have done or sins and bury them deep where no one will ever find them, but we fool ourselves if we believe we can keep anything from Jesus. We must acknowledge each of our sins to Him and repent. 



Unpardonable Sin (But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin Mark 3:29). We would like to think that every sin can find forgiveness, and through Jesus Christ there is Hope of Forgiveness of all sins. The actual translation of the Greek has this read as “But is in danger of eternal damnation”. I believe that if we have in fact committed blasphemy against the Holy Spirit then change our hearts, Jesus will forgive. Christians differ as to what actually constitutes the unpardonable sin. Three positions

dominate this debate. Each agrees that it involves blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, but the debate centers around what actually constitutes blasphemy. One position holds that blasphemy against the Spirit is attributing the works of God the Holy Spirit to Satan; specifically, those works done through Jesus Christ. This method believes the unpardonable sin could only have been committed while Christ walked the earth. The second position holds that, once a person is sufficiently enlightened by the Holy Spirit to have a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and instead rejects Christ as being demonic, then that person has committed the unpardonable sin. The third position claims that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is an ongoing rejection of Christ's offer of salvation.

Many people fear that they themselves have committed the unpardonable sin. Such a fear is proof that they have not committed it -- fear or remorse is an indication that the Spirit is still at work in their being. One who commits the unpardonable sin has heard and understood the Spirit's testimony to the extent that they are fully cognizant of their choice to commit blasphemy. They are incapable of repentance. This is what the writer of Hebrews was referring to when he wrote, "It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened ... who have shared in the Holy Spirit ... if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance" (Hebrews 6:4, 6). For example, by the verse in question, if someone is to worship satan and denounce Christ, then later finds Jesus and are reborn in Him, have they committed blasphemy; no, for when they were of satan they would not have taken the works of the Holy Spirit and attributed them to satan. If they latter became a Christian and then claimed that the works of the Holy Spirit were indeed that of the evil one; they would be guilty of blasphemy. **But if a wicked man turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he will save his life.** (Ezek 18:27) 



Sins of the Tongue (The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit. Prov 15:4) The tongue is, beyond a shadow of any doubt, the most powerful weapon know to mankind. Just a few simple words can destroy a person or even a country; this is why we must be ever so careful of what we say and how we say it. James tells us **“The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.”** (James 3:6) We must be responsible and use our words to praise Jesus and to further the kingdom of God, not to discredit or turn people from Jesus; for as Christian people watch our every move and more so listen to our words to see if what we say reflects what we profess. **With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.** (James 3:9-10) Just as we would not place a loaded gun in the hand of a child, we should not allow them to grow without learning God’s Word and the teachings of Jesus, so they may know how to live their lives and treat others.

We would all cringe at the thought of a mouth full of gravel. But a stone in the mouth can actually be desirable; at least that is the example set by the cranes that inhabit the Taurus mountains in southern Turkey. These cranes tend to cackle a lot, especially while flying. All that noise gets the attention of eagles; who swoop down and seize them for a meal. The experienced cranes avoid this threat by picking up stones large enough to fill their mouths. This prevents them from cackling

and thus becoming lunch for the eagles. The writer of Proverbs said, **He who guards his mouth preserves his life, but he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction** (Prov 13:3). **A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calls for blows** (Prov 18:6). How many of our troubles could be prevented if we would learn to control our tongues! How much of the heartache we cause others could be avoided if we would guard our speech! ~~~~~



Sins of Anger (Wrath) ("**In your anger do not sin**": **Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Eph 4:26-28**) When we are angry we are not totally in control, if at all, and we open ourselves up and invite satan in to do is will. This can make any reaction one that is not of Jesus but of evil. When we get angry, and will all do, we must refrain from any action and walk away, this will take away any opportunity for the evil one to use us for his will. This does not make it a sin to get angry, in fact we have seen examples of when God and Jesus have gotten angry. Were the problem lies is how we respond or react when we are angry. ~~~~~



Seven Deadly Sins You may have heard the phrase, "The Seven Deadly Sins". These Sins (of groups) are those transgressions which are fatal to spiritual growth. You probably commit some of them every day without thinking about the rich tradition of eternal damnation in which you're participating. So what are the Seven Deadly Sins? ~~~~~



Pride – Sins against the virtue of Humility. This is the first of the seven deadly sins and can be described by saying it is pride which caused Lucifer to fall from the grace of God. We see in Isaiah 14:12 where the king of Babylon is compare to Lucifer in his belief that he could be in a position equal too or higher than God. This does not mean it is wrong to show pride, I am proud to be a Christian and to have any opportunity to server my Lord and Savior, however, it is wrong to be prideful, to show great pride and haughtiness. **Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be lowly in spirit and among the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud.** (Prov 16:18-19)



Envy – Sins against the virtue of Love. We see this in 1 Cor 13:4, "**Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud**". Envy is defined as: painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another joined with a desire to possess the same advantage. Jesus addressed the issue of envy in Mark 7:20-23 when he said, "**For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man unclean.**" We are also encouraged by Paul to rid ourselves **of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.** (1 Peter 2:1-3)



Anger - Sins against the virtue of Kindness. We have already talked some about anger and how important it is to not sin in anger. In itself anger is an original susceptibility of our nature, just as love is, and is not necessarily sinful. We have seen many times were God was angered and even Jesus displayed anger when the temple had been turned into a marketplace, and we know that He was sinless. It may, however, become sinful when causeless, or excessive, or protracted. Jesus said; **But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.** (Matt 5:22)



Gluttony - Sins against the virtues of Faith and Temperance. The word gluttony means to overindulge and is mostly referenced with food, but it also has reference to being excessive in other ways. When Jesus was called a "gluttonous man" (**The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.** Matt 11:19), His critics were accusing Him of being loose and excessive by associating with tax collectors and sinners.



Sloth - Sins against the virtue of Zeal. Sloth is spiritual apathy or inactivity and is something which left unnoticed can destroy a Christian. We all know that for any relationship to grow, it must be worked on daily; God showed us this when he said; **“Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord”**. (Rom 12:11-12) When we become complaisant in our faith, we fail to grow and loose sight of what is most important. It then becomes easier and easier to be of the world and not of Jesus.



Lust - Sins against the virtue of Self Control. It is the origin of sin and has its place in the heart, not of necessity, but because it is the center of all moral forces and impulses and of spiritual activity. Lust can be sexual, **“Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion”**. (Rom 1:26-27) Lust can be about things or objects, **“Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful”**. (Mark 4:18-19)



Greed - Sins against the virtue of Generosity. We have already seen how greed or the love of money is detested by God. If we are to be followers of Jesus we must not exhibit greed in any form whether it is money, positions, or even what we receive so graciously from Jesus. Jesus told us to Love each other as He has loved us, thus sharing His love with everyone. He also **said "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."** (Luke 12:15)

Penalties for our Sins

To reply to this question with a concrete answer can be as difficult as answering how the universe was created, however, God does give us some ideas of the weight our sins can hold. First let's look at one misconception which is to think because we have done so many good things they will override the sin we commit, in fact it has been described that one bad deed can wipe out a thousand good ones, yet many argue this point and claim it to be false. Yet God tells us, **"But if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin and does the same detestable things the wicked man does, will he live? None of the righteous things he has done will be remembered. Because of the unfaithfulness he is guilty of and because of the sins he has committed, he will die. 'Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' Hear, O house of Israel: Is my way unjust? Is it not your ways that are unjust? If a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin, he will die for it; because of the sin he has committed he will die. But if a wicked man turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he will save his life. Because he considers all the offenses he has committed and turns away from them, he will surely live; he will not die.** (Ezek 18:24-28)

Basically, the bottom line is that the penalty for our sins is death or an eternal life without Jesus in hell. This may seem harsh, but it is the reality for the choice we make. Does this mean because you have ever sinned you are now condemned to hell? No, it does not, because many factors are involved. Just as we read in the scriptures above, a man who has sinned, then found Jesus and turns from this sinful life to one of righteousness in Jesus, will live. But the man who is of Jesus and knows it is wrong, yet freely continues to sin will find his eternal home in hell. But even for this man there is hope through repentance and also through intercessory prayer from others. **If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that. All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.** (1 John 5:16-17) How does this position respecting God's hearing our prayers affect the question of intercession for the salvation of others, and especially of an erring brother? If any prayer can be made with confidence of success, surely it is this. It is an unselfish prayer; a prayer of love. It is also a prayer in harmony with God's will; a prayer for the extension of his kingdom. St. John points out that this reasonable expectation has limits. The prayer of one human being can never cancel another's free-will. If God's will does not override man's will, neither can a fellow-man's prayer. When a human will has been firmly and persistently set in opposition to the Divine will, our intercession will be of no avail. And this seems to be the meaning of "sin unto death; "willful and obstinate rejection of God's grace and persistence in failing to repent their sin. However, for a believer to fall to temptation without the intent of

rejecting Jesus, they may find His Grace through the intercession of others via prayer. Their brothers and sisters in Christ may also care about them enough that they go to them and point out the deviation from the path Christ has set for them.

By now you may be feeling the punishment for your sins are too high. How could a sin committed in minutes possibly bring such an eternal punishment? First think of this:

1. That the length of punishment is out of all proportion with the time of sin. But the duration of sin is no criterion of the duration of punishment: a fire burns in a few minutes but records are thereby lost for ever; a murder committed in a minute entails cutting the victim off from life for ever; one act of rebellion entails perpetual banishment from the king.

2. That the sinner's eternal punishment would be Satan's eternal triumph. But Satan has had his triumph in bringing sin and death into the world; his sharing the sinner's eternal punishment will be the reverse of a triumph; the abiding punishment of the lost will be a standing witness of God's holy hatred of sin, and a preservative against any future rebellion.

3. That eternal vengeance is inconsistent with God's gospel revelation of Himself as love. But the New Testament abounds in statements of judicial vengeance being exercised by God (Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30; 1 Thess 4:6; 2 Thess 1:8).

Now take a few minutes and think about the price that Jesus paid for your sins, how He carried each of our sins with Him to the cross; how His punishment for our sins was death. Why should ours be any less if we choose to denounce Christ and not be of Him?



The Good News – Jesus to the Rescue

Through Jesus we all have the chance to have the weight or punishment for our sins waived because they have been **PAID IN FULL**. On judgment day, we will have to answer for what we have done, and as our sins are read off, if we have truly repented for them, the price for that sin will be paid in full (**Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.** Rom 4:7-8). Many feel that as their sins are read off, they will be offset by the good they have done, so if they read off adultery, it will be followed with, paid for by the good works done in the homeless shelters. This is far from the truth, for the only one who can pay for our sins is Jesus, and this is only accomplished through repentance! Man also seems to have this misconception that they can confess their sins to someone such as a priest and they will be forgiven. Repentance only comes through confessing your sin to Jesus, for He will look past the words and into the heart to know if the repentance is genuine. **Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.** (Rev 2:5-6)



Misconceptions about Forgiveness

1. We can sin freely without repenting. There are those who feel that Jesus died on the cross so that they can have a get out of hell free card. That they can sin as much as they want with no need for repentance. They reference Heb 10:11-14 and claim that our sins are automatically forgiven. These people bring great disrespect for what Jesus has done for them. He died for our sin, assuming full punishment for the poor choices we make, because He desires each of us to be with Him in heaven; because through our sins we were destined to eternal damnation. However, He has put limits of this gift of Forgiveness; first, we must come to Him, believe in God's word and follow His teachings (**Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.** Acts 13:38-40) secondly, we must proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead (**That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Rom 10:9-10**); and third, we must repent for our sins (**This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.** Luke 24:46-47).

2. Our sins are forgotten. Once again many people read a scripture and try to pull it out of context to ease their minds of things they have done. They read Heb 10:17, **"Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more"** and claim that their sins will not be remembered. First, as it is so important to do, if you read the full scripture you will see that what is being referred to is that fact that through the death and resurrection of Christ, God has made a new covenant with His people, and part of the agreement of this covenant was that all things done before then would be remembered no more, not that sins forgiven after the new covenant was established would be forgotten. In fact you will not find anywhere in God's Word where the words forgiven and forgotten are used together. If this false statement made by people was true over half the Bible would not have been written (as much is about what people had done wrong then repented and were forgiven) and there would not be a need for judgment day. **It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you.** 1 Thess 4:3-6

3. Minimizing/Denying our Sins. This is often a huge mistake Christians make, they rationalize or minimize the sins they are committing. For example those who put making money with the purpose of being rich first, above all things and even cheat others to get there will claim that this is an acceptable practice of the world and ignore the fact that God looks upon it as detestable. We also see this in the homosexually community where many have been given high positions in the church, with the church's stance that it is acceptable by the world, with no regard

to the fact that Jesus says such sexual immoral acts can bring eternal damnation. **In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.** Jude 6-7



Repentance should not be taken lightly

Jesus set the stage for eternity when he said **"Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Sir, open the door for us. 'But he will answer, 'I don't know you or where you come from.** (Luke 13:23-25) There are but two ways, right and wrong, good and evil; the way to heaven, and the way to hell; in the one of which we are all of us walking: no middle place hereafter, no middle way now: the distinction of the children of men into saints and sinners, godly and ungodly, will swallow up all to eternity. That which allures multitudes into it, and keeps them in it; the gate is wide, and the way broad, and there are many travelers in that way. Hell will have more residents than most believe or want to admit, so truly repent for your sins so that you will not be faced with the price that must be paid for them.



Freedom through Forgiveness

To be forgiven for our sins is to experience God's Grace in an incredible way, for our sins are forgiven through repentance so that 1) the guilt or worry which weighs us down can be lifted so that we can go out and do God's work. If we are weighed down by these burdens we are not worthy nor able to share the Love of Christ and the Gospel with others; 2) through this forgiveness we have a chance to spend eternity with Jesus in heaven, which is His desire for all of us. **Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed**

many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Rom 5:9-17



Repentance Means

1. You have acknowledged what you have done is wrong and made it right. (Matt 27:3)
2. You are asking for strength to stand against the temptation to sin again. (1 Cor 10:13)
3. You have a true sense of your own guilt and sinfulness. (Ps 36)
4. You have an apprehension of God's mercy in Christ. (Luke 1)
5. The true penitent is conscious of guilt (Ps 51:4,9), of pollution (51:5,7,10), and of helplessness (51:11; 109:21,22). But repentance comprehends not only such a sense of sin, but also an apprehension of mercy, without which there can be no true repentance (Ps 51:1; 130:4).
6. Helps us not to cause others to sin, which in itself is a grave sin. (Matt 18:7)



Forgiveness Means

2. The worry or guilt of our sin is lifted. (Ps 38:4, Matt 11:29-30, Ps 68:19)
3. The penalty of the sin is PAID IN FULL. (Romans 5:12-21)
4. We can continue to grow in our Faith and are made stronger through these struggles. (2 Cor 10:15)
5. Experiencing the forgiveness of Jesus can help us to forgive others. (Matt 6:14)
6. We can continue to mature in our relationship with Christ. (Rev 3:2-3)
7. We are free to spread the gospel and minister for Him without our burdens hindering it. (Jer 15:19, 1 Thess 3:2)
8. We can learn from our mistakes and share with others so that they do not stumble in the same way. (Job 17:9)

9 We ourselves are willing to forgive others. (Matt 6:14)



Important things to remember about Forgiveness

1. It came at the highest price, the crucifixion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (Eph 5:1-2, Heb 10:10-14)
2. It **ONLY** comes through repentance or in some cases intercessory prayer. (1 John 5:16-17)
3. For all of us today (everyone since the new covenant was established) it does not mean forgotten. (Heb 10:17, 1 Thess 4:3-6)
4. Repentance is from the Heart. (Matt 5:8 & 28, Luke 12:34, Acts 1:24)
5. Never deny, minimize or justify your sins. (Jude 6:7, Tit 1:16, Jas 3:14)
6. The penalties for our sins are too great, so we must turn to Jesus; He will carry our burdens. (1 Thess 3:2)
7. It means on judgment day, when we answer for our sins, the sentences will be commuted because they are already **PAID IN FULL**. (Romans 5:9-17)



Conclusion

Think of life on earth as a maze, filled with many different paths but only one leading to Jesus and Heaven. Now because the world is under the control of Satan or the evil one, each of the paths in this maze are like gauntlets (attacks by the evil one are imminent if not constant), with some paths being easier than others, but the one true path being the hardest of all; for as we as Christians follow the right path and get closer to Jesus, the evil one works harder and harder to pull us off track and cause us to stumble. We especially saw this with Job, but we must be like him, strong and faithful.

And as we make our way through this maze (or life), we are going to make wrong turns, we will see a path that looks easier or more inviting (the darkness) or possible just make a wrong choice or be led astray. But when we make these wrong turns (sin), through repentance Jesus brings light and direction back into our lives (forgiveness) and we get back on track. When we fail to turn to Him, we get further off track, making it harder (and in our own minds impossible) to get back on

the right path. The evil one will also give us a presentation of false direction (he can appear as the angel of light) trying to pull us even deeper. But the Good News is that no matter how far off the right path we stray, Jesus is there, desiring us to come to Him and guides us back to Him. He will provide the Light and the Way; we must have the Faith and the Hope in Him.

As mentioned earlier, life is a gauntlet, filled with attacks, which we must be prepared to deal with through Faith, Hope, Trust, and Prayer (God has instructed us to put on the Full Armor of God in preparation of these attacks). As Christians we often expect that our path should be clear of hurdles; that Jesus will give us smooth sailing, but to believe this is futile, for He never promised us this. In fact He has told us there will be struggles and that we will be faced with attacks from the evil one; however, we are to be prepared and know that He will help us through. So do not take the path which seems easiest, for it is often (if not always) the wrong path. Instead follow the path the Jesus sets before your, knowing it will be difficult, but trusting that He will be with you every step of the way. Know that the constant wrong turns (sins), without repentance, lead to a life of misery, an eternal life without Jesus in hell. But the Good News is we can get back on track (through repentance) and can find encouragement by keeping our sights on what is at the other end of the gauntlet of life, Jesus and an eternity with Him in Heaven.

And never forget why we are on this earth, which is under the control of satan, to reach out and bring the Gospel and the Love of Christ to all people, so that they to can find the same encouragement as you have found, to help them through the maze of life. For we are not here for personal gain, wealth, possessions, or to boast in any way; but to further the Kingdom of Christ in what we do and what we say.

All the Praise and Glory to the Father and the Son

Pastor Scott Jones



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