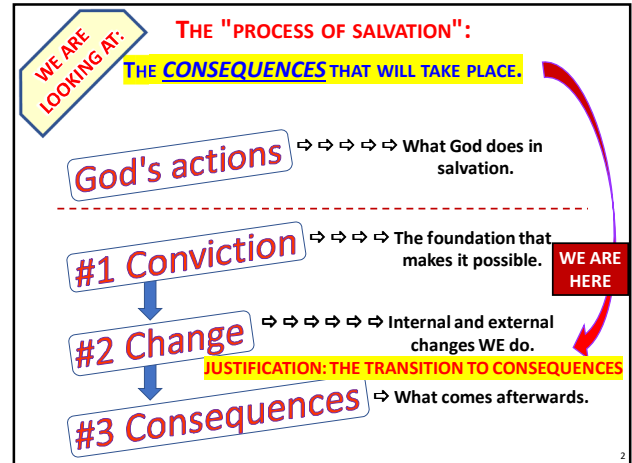




GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#147)
Justification and forgiveness (introduction).



JUSTIFICATION IS THE RESULT OF TRUSTING JESUS.
(JUSTIFICATION = "DECLARED RIGHTEOUS.")

#2 Change ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ Internal and external changes WE do.

Changes have taken place!
I BELIEVE what God has promised in the Good News!
I have REPENTED and TRUST Jesus!
I AM NOW JUSTIFIED, BECAUSE OF WHAT JESUS DID FOR ME!
The consequences of salvation have begun!

#3 Consequences ⇒ What comes afterwards.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS is a part of JUSTIFICATION.
You cannot have the one without the other!

... through this man [Jesus] forgiveness of sins is being proclaimed to you. Everyone who believes is justified through him from everything that you could not be justified from through the law of Moses.
Acts 13:38b-39 (CSB)

⇒ It's the result of repentance and faith (heart-changes that occur in us).

BELIEVING (= trust) ... through this man [Jesus] forgiveness of sins is being proclaimed to you. Everyone who believes is justified through him ...
Acts 13:38b-39a (CSB) [MORE]

[It's the result of repentance and faith (continued).]

TURNING FROM AND TO (two aspects of repentance)
... to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins ...
Acts 26:18a (CSB)

BELIEVING (trust)
"All the prophets testify about [Jesus] that through his name everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins."
Acts 10:43 (CSB)

REPENTANCE (the heart change) **AND BAPTISM** (an external response to the change)
"Repent and be baptized ... for the forgiveness of your sins ..."
Acts 2:38b (CSB)

REPENTANCE / TURNING (This was addressed to the Jewish nation.)
Therefore repent and turn back so that your sins may be wiped out ...
Acts 3:19 (NET)

⇒ It is through Jesus that forgiveness is available.

"All the prophets testify about [Jesus] that through his name everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins."
Acts 10:43 (CSB)

It's available only through Jesus. We must trust him and what he has accomplished.

... through this man [Jesus] forgiveness of sins is being proclaimed to you.
Acts 13:38b (CSB)

⇒ Forgiveness is NOT something we do. We don't "accomplish" it; we receive it.

... that they may receive forgiveness of sins ...
Acts 26:18b (CSB)

"... everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins."
Acts 10:43b (CSB)

★ We must trust Christ and what HE accomplished in our behalf. ★

It is important to understand the nature of forgiveness.

THE WORLD

- *Has rejected God's Word*, which teaches us the nature of forgiveness.
- *Has distorted forgiveness*, turning it into the *opposite* of justice.
- *Has twisted and perverted the whole concept of justice, mercy and forgiveness*, to the point that the innocent often get punished, and the guilty go free. Punishments, when imposed, are frequently inappropriate for the crime/sin committed, and inconsistently applied.

The world's "forgiveness" tends to mean that justice is ignored.

Debt must be paid, not ignored. "Cancelling" it does not cause it to go away. If those who owe the debt don't pay, someone who is innocent must.

THE OLD TESTAMENT LAW

- **The Law teaches us** a lot about forgiveness, justice and mercy. The sacrifices for sin help us to understand what Jesus did on the cross.
- **Sin, when committed, must be paid for.** In the Law, we learn about different types of payment for different types of sin.
- **Sin against God** (which includes *all* sin) must be paid for by DEATH. Blood must be shed. (For forgiveness to occur, *another's* death will be necessary – but it has to be an innocent, sinless victim.)

THE NEW TESTAMENT

- **The New Testament reaffirms these things** – even the blood/death requirements for sin against God.

...and without the **shedding of blood** there is no forgiveness.
Hebrews 9:22b (CSB)

(Jesus fulfilled this requirement.)

So also Jesus suffered and died ... to make his people holy by means of his own blood.
Hebrews 13:12 (NLT)

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT ERAS (BEING UNDER TWO DIFFERENT COVENANTS).

- **Under the Old Covenant**, sins were *temporarily* forgiven (overlooked) by the sacrifice – the blood – of an animal.
- **Under the New Covenant**, they are *permanently* forgiven (guilt removed), by the sacrifice – the blood – of Jesus Christ.

... through this man [Jesus] **forgiveness** of sins is being proclaimed to you.
Acts 13:38b (CSB)

This can only happen because of our union with Christ.

God made you alive **with Christ**. He **forgave** us all our sins, having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to **the cross**.
Col 2:13b-14 (NIV)

>> Our debt was cancelled, but only because it became his debt. <<

THE ISSUE OF ANIMAL SACRIFICES FOR SINS AGAINST GOD.

- **This was a temporary measure**, before Jesus made the final (and complete) payment.
- **Animals could be sacrificed; but not humans**: The reason is because people were created in *God's* image. Morally, and in various other ways, God created humans to reflect his nature in creation. Animals weren't made with this capability.
- **Justice and injustice involve moral issues**. These are characteristics related to human conduct, as God's image-bearers. Animal conduct does not involve moral issues.
- **Animals do not "volunteer" to be sacrificed**. Such a consciousness is a moral issue, and is not a part of animal nature.
- **Such sacrifices became necessary only because of human sin**. Sacrifices do not "thrill" God (Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:6-8). But it was the only way that God could delay the judgment that people earned. (*All creation suffers because of our sin* – Romans 8:19-22.)

ISSUE #1

★ FORGIVENESS DOES NOT CANCEL JUSTICE. ★

The opposite of "justice" is NOT "forgiveness," but "injustice." AND GOD FORBIDS THIS!

Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.
Leviticus 19:15 (NIV)

- **When God forgives sin, this does not mean injustice!**

God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.
Romans 3:25-26 (NIV)

MORE ABOUT THIS VERSE

- **What this verse means...**

God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.

Jesus paid for our sins with his own blood. This payment is applied to *all* who are willing to trust him.

He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—

The reason God didn't put to death everyone *before* Jesus' sacrifice was because God *included* them in what Jesus would do. (Their sins weren't ignored. Their payment was just delayed).

he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

This proves: Ⓐ God's judgments are just, and Ⓑ he is able to justify (declare righteous) all who trust Jesus for salvation. [Trust God, in the Old Testament era.]

Romans 3:25-26 (NIV)

ISSUE #2 ★ **SOMEONE HAS TO PAY.** ★
AND justice needs maintained.

- ✓ Whether in this world's affairs, or in matters related to God.
- ✓ Even if another person *volunteers* to bear the consequences (the one who was wronged, or someone else).

PAYMENT WILL EITHER BE AN EXPRESSION OF JUSTICE, OR INJUSTICE.*

- If the *guilty* pays, or if someone *volunteers* to pay in behalf of the guilty party ⇒ **JUSTICE.**
- If innocent people are *forced* to pay in behalf of the guilty ⇒ **INJUSTICE.**

JESUS VOLUNTARILY OFFERED TO PAY THE PENALTY FOR OUR SINS. THIS MEANS THERE IS JUSTICE IN HIS FORGIVENESS!

* (In complex matters, it may be difficult to define issues of justice vs. injustice.)

HOW was our sin against GOD paid for?
Our forgiveness required:

THE GREAT EXCHANGE

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
 2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV)

HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS TO US
 OUR SINFULNESS TO HIM

Summary:

- **You have a debt.** It needs paid. If God were to ignore it, it would be a *denial* of his holy and righteous nature. He would *cease* to be a *righteous* judge.
- **How this applies to you:** Forgiveness does *NOT* cause your debt to "evaporate" into nothing. Even if YOU don't have to pay, **SOMEONE STILL HAS TO PAY.** It will either be *you*, or *someone else*.
- **Jesus has volunteered to pay** the penalty for those who are willing to abandon their rebellion against God, and learn to follow him. (He could do this *ONLY* because he himself was sinless.)
- **We still have an obligation** to *repent* of our sin and *trust* Jesus. He does not give us a "free ticket to sin as much as we please," but requires us to *reject* a life of sin, and to pursue righteousness.

ISSUE #3 ★ **THERE IS AN OBLIGATION CONNECTED TO FORGIVENESS.** ★
 It's *not* a "free ticket" for ongoing sin/offense/debt.

- **Repentance is a prerequisite of forgiveness.** Without it, forgiveness doesn't occur. (Repentance is *more* than remorse; for it includes a willingness to change.)
- **Justification, being part of the "process of salvation," results in a changed heart.**
 - ✓ This change is part of the New Covenant that God *guarantees* will occur in *all* who are saved.
 - ✓ This change in *heart* will result in changes in *conduct*.

I will put my laws on their hearts and write them on their minds, ...
 Hebrews 10:16b (CSB)

MORE ANOTHER TIME.

- **OBLIGATION verses** (involving either people/God or people/people).

"Repent and be baptized ... for the forgiveness of your sins ..."
 Acts 2:38b (CSB)

John came ... proclaiming a **baptism of repentance** for the **forgiveness** of sins.
 Mark 1:4 (CSB)

If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he **repents, forgive** him.
 Luke 17:3 (NET)

Therefore **repent and turn back** so that your sins may be **wiped out** ...
 Acts 3:19 (NET)

If we **confess our sins**, he is faithful and righteous to **forgive** us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
 1 John 1:9 (CSB)

For if you **forgive others** their offenses, your heavenly Father will **forgive** you as well. But if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive your offenses.
 Matthew 6:14-15 (CSB)

... **repentance for forgiveness** of sins will be proclaimed in [Jesus'] name ...
 Luke 24:47a (NET)

NOT THIS!

I CAN SIN ALL I WANT, BECAUSE JESUS WILL FORGIVE ME!

ARE WE IN NEED OF BEING FORGIVEN? We must *reject* our sinful ways and pursue righteous ways.

YOU ARE IGNORING WHAT JESUS SAYS ABOUT REPENTANCE AND THE CHANGED HEART THAT COMES WITH SALVATION!

DO WE NEED TO DO THE FORGIVING? We may need to *confront* the offending person. (A person can't repent unless he's confronted with his sin!)

If your brother sins, **rebuke him**, and if he **repents, forgive** him.
 Luke 17:3 (NET)

ISSUE #4 ★ **FORGIVENESS does not erase all the consequences of sin.** ★

- **There may be irreparable damage.**
 - ✓ Dead people do not come alive again.
 - ✓ Damaged/destroyed possessions do not turn back into new.
 - ✓ An injured party may experience long-term suffering or loss.
- **The one who sinned may have consequences or obligations.**
 - ✓ Repentance may require you to do some things.
 - ✓ (example) The saved tax collector (Luke 19:1+) still repaid those he cheated. Forgiveness didn't excuse him from his obligation.
 - ✓ In some issues, a person forgiven by the one who was wronged may still face *civil* consequences.
 - ✓ We have an obligation to treat others the way we want treated (illustration in a parable: Matthew 18:21-35).

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ISSUE #5 ★ **God's FORGIVENESS of us is to influence our actions toward other people.** ★

This is a consequence of justification.
Jesus' people are *changed* people. One of the consequences of this change is *a willingness to forgive others*.

Bear with each other and **forgive** one another if any of you has a grievance against someone.
Forgive as the Lord forgave you.
Colossians 3:13 (NIV)

And **forgive** us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
Matthew 6:12 (CSB)

[God willing, we will look further at this, NEXT TIME.]

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Next time – our goal:
✓ Look further at OUR FORGIVENESS of others.

Today: **YOUR MISSION** is...

Think about the nature of forgiveness.

It will help you:

- ⇒ To better appreciate **what Jesus did** for us.
- >AND<
- ⇒ To begin to understand the nature of the forgiveness **we are to have** toward other people.

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Credits

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