



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#154)
Forgiveness – and associated blessings.

FORGIVENESS IS ASSOCIATED WITH MANY BLESSINGS!

Blessed is the one whose transgressions are **forgiven**, whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them...
Psalm 32:1-2 (NIV)

⇒ But prerequisites and warnings may also be mentioned.

EXAMPLE: WE CAN'T HAVE DECEIT.

... in whose spirit is **no deceit**.
Psalm 32:2b (NIV)

Not sure what "deceit" is? In this context, it refers to this:

... when they **don't try to hide their sins**.
Psalm 32:2b (ERV)

If you are unwilling to confess your sins, you cannot be forgiven!

THE WARNING: We can't have this blessing (or forgiveness) as long as we try to hide our sins.

⇒ David tried it... it didn't work.

When I kept silent,
my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity.

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord."
And you **forgave** the guilt of my sin.
Psalm 32:3-5 (NIV)

⇒ The New Testament also warns us against pretending we haven't sinned.

If we say, "We have no sin," we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to **forgive** us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say, "We have not sinned," we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.
1 John 1:8-10 (CSB)

WE WILL LOOK AT SOME OF THE BLESSINGS... AND THEIR CONTEXT:

The context often mentions:

- **CHANGES WHICH OCCUR** in a person, which make forgiveness possible.
 - ✓ Some of these changes are accomplished by **God** – such as the implanting of God's moral laws into our hearts and minds.
 - ✓ Some of these changes are done by **us** – such as repenting of our sins and trusting in God.
- **IMPLIED WARNINGS** to those who think they can be forgiven without those changes.
 - ✓ People who are forgiven by God have **changed** their focus. *They can't live their old ways!*

After all, Scripture says...

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new** creation. The old has passed away; behold, the **new** has come.
2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

① OUR SINS ARE NO LONGER HELD AGAINST US.

There are promises in this regard for both individuals and nations.

Ⓐ ⇒ THIS BLESSING APPLIED TO INDIVIDUALS.

"Blessed are those whose transgressions are **forgiven**, whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the one **whose sin the Lord will never count against them.**"
Romans 4:7-8 (NIV)

- Paul quotes the Old Testament verses we already looked at; but in the context of what he is saying, he doesn't need to include the comment about no deceit.

- This blessing is connected to the New Covenant and the heart/mind changes that are a part of it.

THE PROPHETS FORETOLD:

"For I will **forgive** their wickedness and **will remember their sins no more.**"
Jeremiah 31:34b (NIV)

JESUS ACCOMPLISHED:

"For I will **forgive** their wickedness and **will remember their sins no more.**"
Hebrews 8:12 (NIV)

THE CONTEXT TELLS US ABOUT THE CHANGES THAT MAKE THIS FORGIVENESS POSSIBLE.

★ HERE IS THE FULL PASSAGE ★

⇒ Here is the complete passage from the book of Hebrews. (The Jeremiah passage is almost identical.)

WHEN GOD'S VALUES BECOME OUR VALUES:

- We now belong to God and have direct fellowship with him.
- We *want* to do his will, because the desire to do so is embedded within us! (No need for constant reminders.)
- We are forgiven!

"I will put my **laws in their minds** and write them **on their hearts**.
I will be **their God**, and they will be **my people**.
No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because **they will all know me**, from the least of them to the greatest.
For I will **forgive** their wickedness and **will remember their sins no more.**"
Hebrews 8:10b-12 (NIV)

Though this prophecy was originally given to *Israel*, the New Testament shows us that the New Covenant now applies to anyone who is willing to accept the Good News!

ⓑ ⇒ FORGIVENESS ON A NATIONAL LEVEL (A WARNING).

- Though most (not all) examples of *national* forgiveness involved Israel, Old and New Testaments both make reference to forgiveness of other nations that repent... as well as the consequences of *not* repenting (which is the response that most nations choose).
The men of Nineveh ... **repented** at Jonah's preaching ...
Matthew 12:41a (CSB)
- Yes, God *does* forgive nations** that repent... as Israel proved.

The difference between Israel and the other nations is that God has promised to *restore* Israel (after being punished), because of promises he made to their *ancestors*. This was not promised to other nations.

You **forgave** the guilt of your people— yes, you **covered all their sins**.
Psalm 85:2 (NLT)

Yet he was merciful and **forgave** their sins and **did not destroy them all**.
Many times **he held back his anger** and did not unleash his fury!
Psalm 78:38 (NLT)

- There are also warnings – situations when judgment *must* occur:
 - Sin may have *inescapable* consequences.
They found you to be a **forgiving** God, but also one **who punished their sinful deeds**.
Psalm 99:8 (NET)
 - The time may come when *destruction* is the only option.

MENTIONED BEFORE IT HAPPENED:

Why should I **forgive** you? Your children have abandoned me and sworn by those who are not gods.
Jeremiah 5:7a (CSB)

AFTER IT HAPPENED:

We have sinned and rebelled; you [God] have not **forgiven**.
Lamentations 3:42 (CSB)

Seeing that our nation has openly rejected the God of the Bible, this issue is one to seriously consider.

② NO FURTHER SACRIFICES ARE NEEDED!

- The penalty was *paid in full* by Jesus. No further payments are needed!
- This is another aspect of the New Covenant, and one of the consequences of forgiveness.

"This is the new covenant I will make with my people on that day, says the LORD: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds."
Then he says, "I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds."
And when sins have been **forgiven**, there is **no need to offer any more sacrifices**.
Hebrews 10:16-18 (NLT)

③ KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION!

It's not just *factual* knowledge (which the demons also have), but *knowledge applied to life*.

- On the "fact" level, John the baptizer introduced Jesus (the source of salvation). He taught the need for repentance from sin and trust in Jesus.
And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people **the knowledge of salvation** through the **forgiveness** of their sins, ...
Luke 1:76-77 (NIV)
- Once the people had these facts, they needed to *live* by them... or the facts would be of no value.

④ BEING CLEANSED FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS!

- We have already seen the warnings (vs. 8 and 10). Here, our focus is on v. 9.
If we say, "We have no sin," we are *deceiving ourselves*, and *the truth is not in us*.
If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to **forgive** us our sins and to **cleanse us from all unrighteousness**.
If we say, "We have not sinned," *we make him a liar*, and *his word is not in us*.
1 John 1:8-10 (CSB)
- The rest of 1 John shows us what "clean and righteous" people are like. (They don't want to be "dirty and unrighteous"!)
Those who have this hope in Christ will pursue a morally pure life.
All who have this hope in him **purify themselves, just as he is pure**.
1 John 3:3 (NIV)

5 RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT!

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
Acts 2:38 (ESV)

This passage mentions many aspects of the "process of salvation."

- ① They had just heard the Good News.
- ② Changes would have to take place – internally (repentance) and externally (baptism – for all to see).
- ③ The results would include forgiveness (a part of justification, which deals with the guilt), and receiving the Holy Spirit (who teaches us how to live).

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6 BECOMING ONE WHO HAS BEEN SET APART FOR GOD!

I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.
Acts 26:17b-18 (NIV)

- Before forgiveness and sanctification can occur, there must be repentance (a "turning" from one way of life to another) and faith (trust in God).
- Forgiveness comes with a special calling! It is associated with a "sanctified" life. This has to do with holiness and holy living, as people who have been "set apart" for God.

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7 WE BECOME A RECIPIENT OF GOD'S LOVE!

O Lord, you are so good, so ready to forgive, so full of unfailing love for all who ask for your help.
Psalm 86:5 (NLT)

- This love goes far beyond the kindness that God shows to the unsaved (Matthew 5:45b; Romans 2:4).
- It is a love that God's own people experience, and the unsaved know nothing about.

The context describes one who is devoted to God. Those who ask for his help are expressing trust – a reliance on him, and not on other gods. Such people want to learn his ways (v. 11).

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8 WE BECOME ONE WHO LOVES OTHERS!

"I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love."
Luke 7:47 (NLT)

Read the entire passage – Luke 7:36-48. It shows us that the amount of love we have is an indicator of how much we have been forgiven.

- People who acknowledge the greatness of their sin (and who repent and are forgiven) will be filled with love.
- The self-righteous – those who think their sin isn't that serious – will have very little love.

HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT "LOVE" IS?

- Scripture will show us what love is.
- Our actions will show us how much of this love we have.

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In this passage, Jesus goes straight to the point:

The amount of love we have

⇒ demonstrates ⇒

the amount of forgiveness we have.

When we don't have this love, it's NOT because God doesn't offer forgiveness to us... but because we don't consider our sin to be that sinful. Our attitude is the barrier that holds back forgiveness.

- The woman's intense love showed that she had been forgiven much.
- The religious leader's lack of love showed that he had not been forgiven of very much, if anything. (The same with many of the others who were present.)

WE'RE A LOT MORE SPIRITUAL THAN THAT WOMAN IS!

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THIS LAST BLESSING IS UNIQUE!

We are actively involved in it!

The other blessings are things that happen to us. This blessing is something we do. But we do it because of the changes that have taken place in our hearts/minds.

- ⇒ We can pursue love for God and neighbor!
- ⇒ We can grow in our salvation and our hatred for sin!
- ⇒ We can continue to pursue a "renewed mind" (Romans 12:2), which will influence our views about our sins (i.e., how serious they are).

One of the wonders of having a renewed mind: As the fog is lifted from our eyes, we will increasingly recognize the sinfulness of our sin – and it will increase our love for the one who forgave us!

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TWO ISSUES to consider in this passage:

① **WHY COULD JESUS TELL THE WOMAN THAT SHE WAS FORGIVEN?**

Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are **forgiven**."
 "Your **faith** has saved you; go in peace."
 Luke 7:48, 50b (NLT)

- It wasn't Jesus' proclamation that caused her to be forgiven! Rather, it was her *faith*. She trusted God.
- The woman's love *demonstrated* that she had been forgiven. It was visible evidence, that people could see.
- Since there was *visible evidence* that she had been forgiven, Jesus, *as a human*, could tell her she was forgiven – just like he instructed his disciples to do, in Matthew 16:19b; 18:18; and John 20:22b-23 (which we examined last time).

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If our love indicates that we have been forgiven, we need to ask:

② **HOW DO WE KNOW WE HAVE THE RIGHT TYPE OF LOVE?**

This is NOT "emotional love." Rather, it is "commitment love." The love in this passage is directed toward God (and/or Jesus). Elsewhere in Scripture, we learn that it is directed toward both **God and neighbor**.

When it involves people ("neighbor"), it exists *regardless of their response* (even if they respond in *hate*).

How do we know what "love for God" is?

- Scripture shows us what love for God is.

How do we know what "love for neighbor" is?

- Scripture shows us what love for neighbor is.

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Since this is such a serious matter, God does not leave us to guess... or to invent our own definitions.

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HOW CAN WE GROW IN LOVE FOR GOD?

- It's *not* by all the religious activities we do!
- People who love God will want to *obey* him and pursue *moral purity*. (After all, the changed heart and mind that are a part of the New Covenant puts that desire within us!)

Jesus replied, "Anyone who **loves** me will **obey my teaching**. ...
 Anyone who does not **love** me will not **obey my teaching**."
 John 14:23a, 24a (NIV)

- Though we struggle with our old way of life, God has given us power to have this type of love. We just need to *trust* him for this power!

For this is what **love** for God is: to **keep his commands**.
 And his commands are not a burden, because everyone who has been born of God conquers the world.
 This is the victory that has conquered the world: our **faith**.
 1 John 5:3-4 (CSB)

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HOW CAN WE GROW IN LOVE FOR NEIGHBOR?

- Many Scripture passages show us – in commands, illustrations and examples. Two good summaries are: 1 Corinthians 13 and Romans 12:9-21.
- We will struggle with our old tendencies (just as we do with love for God). But we have the *power* to have this love – if we pay attention to Scripture and trust God to accomplish through us what he has said he will do.

I also pray that you will understand **the incredible greatness of God's power** for us who believe him.
 Ephesians 1:19 (NLT)

For **God is working in you**, giving you the **desire** and the **power** to do what pleases him.
 Philippians 2:13 (NLT)

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We live in a day in which many "church-goers" consider themselves "forgiven" – yet they feel no need to abandon their lives of sin.

Yet God has given us something that is *so much better* than the fakeness that many people cling to!

⇒ Your mission ⇐

Rejoice in the blessings of forgiveness...

Pursue the life of the forgiven person...

The life that overflows with love...

The type of love revealed in the Bible...

GOD'S LOVE!

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Credits

SCRIPTURE

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