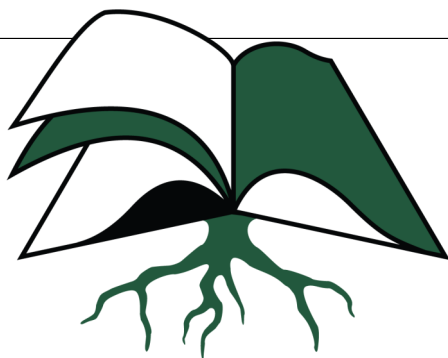


Pennsylvania Bible Teaching Fellowship

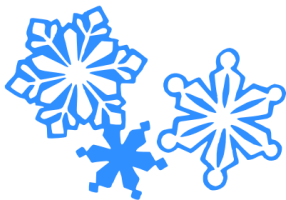
Winter Newsletter



This quarterly newsletter is written to enhearten, encourage and inspire so that the Word of God may continue to grow and increase both in quantity and quality in the hearts of God's beloved.

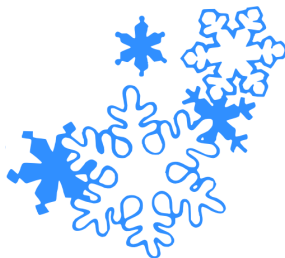
*...receive with meekness the implanted Word,
which is able to save [deliver] your souls.*

James 1:21b WT



WINTER

2020



FORGIVE THE WAY THAT
GOD FORGIVES

By Shawn Weir

LORD, if you kept an account of iniquities,
Lord, who could stand?
But with you there is forgiveness,
so that you may be revered.

Psalm 130:3 – 4 CSB

Praise God that He is a forgiving God – for this, He deserves our reverence. This psalmist is honest: if God kept a running account of our sins, our failings, and our trespasses, who could stand? The very fact that He is God and we are not, obliges our reverence to Him. But with Him there is forgiveness! How much more then should we fear, honor, and be filled with awe that we can stand before a God so gracious as our God?

There is a crucial point to appreciating the justice of God's gracious forgiveness. We should not for a moment think that the generous pardon so freely offered by God to sinful men in any way diminishes from the righteous demands of His holiness. His wrath against sin is the inevitability of His holiness. **(Romans 1:18)** His righteous response to sin in all of its dimensions is a result of His nature and characteristics of holiness. This brings our hearts to ask two fundamental questions: *How* could God forgive us and still fulfill the righteous demands of His holiness? And perhaps more importantly, *why* would He care to fulfill those demands and extend such gracious forgiveness to sinful men?



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1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

How? Because He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Why? Because He loved us.

This concept of the “propitiation for our sins” is the real key to appreciating His love and to understanding how God could extend such generous forgiveness to you and me. The word “propitiation” means an atoning sacrifice or a means of appeasing. Why was an atoning sacrifice needed? The high price of God’s Son needed to be paid because our sin was so very offensive to God. What needed to be appeased? God’s just wrath against sin. How satisfying was the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to fulfill the righteous demands of God’s holiness?

2 Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

The sin offering of the life of Jesus Christ on the cross has so entirely settled the debt of our sin that we’ve now been made the righteousness of God in him. Its effectiveness is so all-encompassing that you and I have passed from being in condemnation for our sin to free forgiveness from all sins in His perfect justice. How did God forgive you? Not because of your merit, work, or accomplishments, but because **Jesus paid it all.**



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God looks at the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and He is satisfied. The point is not that “God doesn’t count sin” but that He counts them all as paid in full by the offering of His Son on the cross. This is how such gracious forgiveness was extended to sinners like you and me. He did not (and He could not) look at us and based upon our own goodness say, “there’s something worth forgiving here.” No, God forgave us for the sake of another. He forgave us for the sake of another man, for the sake of Jesus Christ. (**Ephesians 4:32**) He looks at the work of Jesus Christ, and for Christ’s sake, He has forgiven you.

Let’s further consider this concept of God forgiving for the sake of another with some records in the Old Testament regarding King Jehoram. Jehoram’s father was the great King Jehoshaphat and he did some wonderful things for the One True God. In **2 Chronicles 17**, we read, “The LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he walked in the ways of David.” Now let’s begin to read about the first acts of his son Jehoram, who began to reign after him:

2 Chronicles 21:1 - 4

1 Now Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And Jehoram his son reigned in his stead.

2 And he had brethren the sons of Jehoshaphat, Azariah, and Jehiel, and Zechariah, and Azariah, and Michael, and Shephatiah: all these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel.



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3 And their father gave them great gifts of silver, and of gold, and of precious things, with fenced cities in Judah: but the kingdom gave he to Jehoram; because he was the firstborn.

4 Now when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself, and slew all his brethren with the sword, and divers also of the princes of Israel.

Jehoshaphat had seven sons to whom he gave gifts and cities, but when Jehoram took the throne he cruelly killed all of his brothers and also other princes in Israel. Obviously, that wasn't very righteous of him. Let's further consider the merit of Jehoram in **2 Kings**:

2 Kings 8:16b – 19a

16b ..Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign.

17 Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.

18 And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.

19a Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah...

What a terrible king Jehoram was!



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It says, “he walked in the way of the kings of Israel,” yet Jehoram was a king of Judah. Being likened to the kings of Israel was no compliment to him. The southern kingdom of Judah had some godly kings, but the northern kingdom of Israel had nothing but evil, God-rejecting kings. Ahab was one of these very idolatrous kings of Israel and Jehoram married his daughter. Her name was Athaliah and she turned out to be a dreadful woman. Perhaps you’ve heard of her mother, Jezebel. Yikes!

2nd Chronicles further details that king Jehoram made all Judah to sin according to the religion of the Canaanites and put high places to false gods on every hill in Judah. Lastly, it said here in **verse 18** that “he did evil in the sight of the LORD.” In the sight of God in His holiness, this man was doing evil, yet it remarkably says, “the LORD would not destroy Judah.” The implication is that Jehoram’s evil was great enough to justify such judgment to destroy the kingdom of Judah, and King Jehoram along with it. Yet, why wouldn’t God destroy Jehoram and Judah along with him?

2 Kings 8:19 Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give him always a light, and to his children.

For the sake of another, God wouldn’t destroy Judah. For the sake of His servant David and the promise He made to him, despite all of Jehoram’s grievous sin, God showed marvelous mercy.



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Our eternal salvation is based on the same principle: we aren't rescued from God's judgment because we suddenly started being good enough, or because God changed His mind about the judgment our sin deserved. We are rescued because of God's faithfulness to the covenant with the Son of David – Jesus Christ himself. We are forgiven from our disobedience for the sake of another...

1st Peter 3:18a Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God

1st Peter 2:21b, 22 – 24a ...Christ also suffered for us... Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness

Isaiah 53:11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

For his sake, our sins were carried. Based on his merit, the judgment we deserved was withheld. It is the same principle at work for us that we saw with Jehoram and Judah for David's sake. However, a key difference is that despite the mercies "for David's sake," eventually Judah would go into captivity because of their sinfulness.



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In contrast, our Savior paid the full price of man's redemption on the cross. So, God does not reward us according to our disobedience, but according to the obedience of His Son. God has declared us to be righteous and has forgiven us, for Christ's sake. God then instructs us to forgive the way that He forgives. Again, it is for the sake of another that we have been forgiven by God – in like manner, this is how God expects us to forgive.

Ephesians 4:31 – 32

31 Let all bitterness, -and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Every one of us has been hurt by someone at some point in this life. There's a reason why anger, bitterness, wrath, and evil speaking are mentioned in the verse prior and set in contrast to forgiving. We are not immune to the natural emotions that arise when offenses are done to us by others.

If forgiveness isn't a deliberate action, then we will harbor unforgiveness. In fact, "forgiving one another" is even a participle in this verse because it is an active thing we will need to keep doing. We also don't want to lose appreciation for the truth that God is continually forgiving us. In fact, the next verse tells us to "imitate God as dear children."



FORGIVE THE WAY THAT GOD FORGIVES

There is an acknowledgment of unworthiness in Christian forgiveness because we were all sinners saved by grace. All that we enjoy with God is based on the worthiness of another. This forgiveness was unearned by us, but well-earned by our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is one of the greatest hypocrisies imaginable when Christians refuse to forgive. In fact, the reason why the price paid for you and me was so high (the cost of redemption was God's only Son bleeding and dying on the cross) was because that the offense of man's sin against God was so great. The more we grow in acknowledging how unworthy we were of the great grace extended to our lives, the more ready we will be to forgive the same way we've been so graciously forgiven.

We forgive one another the same way that God "for Christ's sake" has forgiven us. This is the key that will set you free from the torments of unforgiveness and the poisons of bitterness in your soul. God does not expect you to look at the offender to try to find some reasons to forgive them. He expects you to look at the work of Jesus Christ; this gives you every reason to forgive. We aren't looking for something in them to find worthiness to forgive. We've found it already in Jesus Christ. It's not for their sake, it's not for your sake, it's not for "Pete's sake" (whoever that may be), it's for Christ's sake. It's time to forgive them the way that God forgave you.

If you are ever struggling with forgiveness, these three words will set you free: "**for Christ's sake.**"



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Colossians 3:12 - 13

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

As Christ forgave us, we are to forgive others. We must first see ourselves as the miserable beggar who he loved and gave himself for. Only then, once we have experienced the relief from the heavy load of all our own sin, will we come to appreciate that the same free offer is unto all. "For Christ's sake" we then can forgive the way that God forgives, because we've already seen Him forgive the last one that we would have expected to be forgiven: ourselves.

A frequent objection I often hear against forgiveness is, "Does that mean what they did is now ok? Does that mean that the wrong that they did just doesn't matter?" Did the offering of Jesus Christ for our sin mean that our ungodliness was "ok?" Does his sacrifice mean that our trespasses no longer mattered? No, they are just as offensive to God's holiness as they've always been, but what it does mean is that the work of the Lord Jesus Christ is great enough to pay for all sin. It means the merit of Christ's accomplishment was enough to "save a wretch like me." It magnifies the glories of God's grace because He forgave it all "for Christ's sake."



**FORGIVE THE WAY THAT
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As a closing thought, the events on the day of Pentecost establish a glorious precedent for just how extensive the offering of forgiveness is in the message of the gospel. Pontius Pilate knew Jesus Christ was innocent and so he offered to release him, but the crowd cried out "his blood be on us, and on our children." They then humiliated, tortured, and crucified the sinless Son of God.

Some fifty days later, the same crowds would be gathered in that same city. Peter stood up and preached to them that the one they had crucified was raised dead and God made him both Lord and Christ. This cut straight to their hearts and in an astonishing first step, exhibiting that the gospel graciously offers free forgiveness of sins: the first people invited into the church were the ones who crucified the Lord Jesus Christ! For Christ's sake, God even forgave the ones who crucified His Son.

It's time to forgive the way that God forgives:

- If you are holding on to bitterness in your heart, it's time to lay that heavy burden down.
- If unforgiveness has bound you up within, it's time to be set free.
- If resentment has sickened your soul, it's time to be healed.

It's time to forgive the way that God forgives:

for Christ's sake

UPCOMING EVENTS

<u>Event</u>	<u>When</u>	<u>Details</u>
Area Fellowship	<u>February 23rd</u>	At Messiah Village in the Community Room. A Children's Fellowship will be available.
Youth Day in God's Word	<u>March 28th</u>	At Vibrant Church for children 3 and up. Parents are encouraged to participate.
Area Fellowship	<u>March 29th</u>	At Messiah Village in the Community Room. A Children's Fellowship will be available.
Day in God's Word	<u>April 18th</u>	At Messiah Village in the Chapel. Our topic will be the epistle of 2nd Timothy . A <u>Coffee House</u> will be available with live music later in the evening in the Community Room.
Teen-30s	<u>May 21st - 25th</u>	A time for all teens to thirty-somethings to be together and get into the greatness of God's Word.
Pentecost Picnic	<u>May 31st</u>	At the George Park pavilion in Harrisburg. We will enjoy some Bible, grilling, and sweet fellowship together.

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