

New Covenant Principles: Lesson 1: Forgiven

Fundamental to the Gospel is the truth that mankind's sins are forgiven. Adam's disobedience in eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil resulted in his separation from God, a fact called death. The consequence of Adam's disobedience was that evil entered into the world and man's nature became sinful. The righteousness of God cannot have contact with sin, resulting in the separation of God and man. The justice of God required that sin be punished by eternal separation of man from God after man's mortal life ceased. Furthermore, sin brought harmful consequences to man during his mortal life by allowing Satan to enforce the curse that came upon the earth because of sin. However, God deeply loves the man whom He created in His own image, so before He created man, God already had a plan as to how to fix man's problem. He designed a way through Blood Covenant to restore the right relationship between Himself and man.

Fixing man's separation required the punishment for sin to be fully met. Because man is sinful, it is impossible for him to pay his own punishment, so sinful man is destined for hell (a real place of eternal torment, totally separated from God and everyone else forever). God's solution was to use a blood covenant to enable a sinless man (Jesus) to take the punishment on behalf of all men and thereby satisfy the demands of divine justice. Jesus went to the cross to bear the consequences of the curse and to pay the punishment for eternal separation from God. Subsequent lessons will look at this in greater depth, suffice to say: Jesus fully paid, in truth He over-paid, the price required by divine justice. When the price for sin was paid, God was able to forgive all sin because divine justice was satisfied.

Now let's look at some scriptures that explain this fundamental truth of the forgiveness of sins.

Write out the following scriptures and answer the questions:

Genesis 2:17 _____

_____.

What was the consequence of Adam eating the fruit? _____
_____.

Romans 5:12 _____

_____.

What did Adam's disobedience mean for him and all mankind? _____
_____.

God, in his infinite love, made the way for man's sin to be punished such that we did not need to remain separated from God for eternity.

Write out the following verses and answer the subsequent question:

Matthew 20:28 _____

Galatians 1:4 _____

Titus 2:14 _____

Isaiah 53:12 _____

Summarize what these verses say God did for man: _____

These scriptures clearly show that God dealt with man's problem of sin and death by punishing Jesus. So if divine justice is satisfied, then what has happened to sin? _____

Write down the answers you find in the following scriptures:

Psalms 103:12 _____

Hebrews 8:12 _____

Hebrews 10:17 _____

Now to address a very important concept about forgiveness:

When did God forgive your sins? _____

At that point in time, how many sins had you committed? _____

OK, since all your sins were future when Jesus died, as of right now, how do you think God sees your future sins?

If God has already forgiven them all, how should you see them? _____

Since it is an eternal truth that Jesus took the punishment for sin, it would be unjust of God to punish any man for his sin if that man has accepted Jesus' punishment on his behalf – that would be double jeopardy. Every human has an internal knowledge that sin must be punished and that there is a consequence for breaking God's law. This knowledge (our conscience) produces guilt and condemnation inside every man. Our conscience came from Adam eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A conscience was not part of God's design for

man. God desire is for us to enjoy a clean conscience and He made that possible through Jesus. Let’s look at this in the following scriptures:

Hebrews 10:2 – “...worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins”. The context says that the Old Covenant could not purge the conscience, which is why God needed the New Covenant – it has purged us, resulting in no more conscience (awareness) of sins – giving us freedom from guilt and condemnation.

Hebrews 10:10 – God’s will is that “we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus, once for all”. Sanctified means ‘made holy’, which includes having a clean conscience.

Hebrews 10:22 – “having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,”. This reflects the reality of the new and living way (**Heb 10:20**) that we have in the New Covenant. The Greek word for ‘evil’ is ‘ponayros’ which means ‘having a focus on evil, bad, lewdness and wickedness’. Since our conscience has been sprinkled (cleaned), then we should no longer have a focus on evil, rather we should see ourselves as righteous, pure, holy and clean. That’s one reason Paul instructs us (**Phil 4:8**) to think on the good, pure and honest things. Knowing you are forgiven and receiving that forgiveness results in a change to your thinking about yourself and your guilt.

So, you need to embrace the eternal truth that your sins are truly forgiven – renew your mind to knowing this truth. You need to accept that God doesn’t hold any sins against you and that in reality he doesn’t even know about them anymore!!! If you fail to accept this truth, guilt and condemnation can destroy your life. Unfortunately, a lot of “Christian” teaching uses guilt and condemnation to control peoples’ lives, under the guise of making you feel right with God. Teachings that require you to confess your sins whenever you fail; to be remorseful over your sins; to pay penance for your sins; to repent for failing to live up to God’s standard; to feel unrighteous because of your faults; and so on, go directly against the truths that are categorically stated in the scriptures we just covered. Reject those wrong teachings and embrace the truth that **all** your sins are forgiven (past, present and future) and you will start living free from guilt and condemnation. Embracing this truth means forgiving yourself and simply receiving God’s help to live as his child, i.e. sin free. In order to experience that “*sin no longer has dominion over you*” (**Rom 6:14**), you have to live in the reality that all your sins are forgiven. Why? Because knowing you are forgiven is a pre-requisite to drawing close to God. You cannot be intimate with someone when you are afraid they are going to “tell you off” for your mistakes and failures.

Since God has forgiven you, go ahead and accept that forgiveness, forgive yourself and stop focusing on sin – rather focus on being forgiven. When you mess up say “Father I messed up again. I receive your forgiveness and I forgive myself. I am your righteousness and I receive the abundance of your grace that delivers me from messing up”. The following scriptures underline the truth that your sins are forgiven. Write them out:

Colossians 2:13 _____

Ephesians 4:32 _____

1 John 2:12 _____

Having forgiven all our sins, God tells us the benefits we will enjoy when we receive his forgiveness. Read the following scriptures and write down the benefits you see:

Psalm 103:3-5 _____

Isa 54:10 _____

Romans 4:7 _____

Ephesians 1:7-9 _____

2 Pet 1:5-9 _____

The final truth covered here is found in Jesus teaching to his disciples about the role of the Holy Spirit. In **John 16:8** He explains that when the Holy Spirit comes He will do 3 things: *reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment*. Then in the next 3 verses he expands on these 3 tasks:

Verse 9 says the Holy Spirit will reprove the world “*of this sin, that they believe not on me*”. This is a key statement because it tells us that the only sin God holds non-Christian’s accountable for is “have you believed on Jesus or not”, meaning have you accepted His free offer of forgiveness. You see, sin is not what sends people to hell. How can it if Jesus paid the price for the forgiveness of all sin when he died on the cross? So, everyone’s sins are already forgiven by God – a truth established by Jesus death. Therefore, God the Father cannot send people to hell because of sin; that would be denying the work that Jesus did (and God the Father will never do that). The truth is that because man has a free will, it requires each man to willingly choose to accept God’s forgiveness before God can apply that forgiveness to their life. It requires each person to choose to believe on Jesus and receive God’s forgiveness in order for them to be delivered from going to hell. Hence the Holy Spirit’s work in the non-Christian is to convince him to accept God’s forgiveness of his sins.

Verse 10 says the Holy Spirit’s job is to convince the Christian that he is righteous. This is the subject of the next lesson.

Verse 11 says the third job of the Holy Spirit is to show all men that Satan has already been judged (done at the resurrection) and rendered impotent in the earth. Christians have been restored to the role God gave to Adam – to rule and reign over the earth (subject for a future lesson). **What an awesome life we are supposed to live.**