

Biblical Forgiveness

The Nature of God's Forgiveness

Introduction

- We have seen that Paul writes in Colossians 3:13 and Ephesians 4:32 that God's forgiveness is the model for how we forgive our fellow man.
- In our last lesson, we looked at the mechanics of HOW God can forgive man.
 - Because of God's holiness, something must be done about our sin debt.
 - Christ's sacrifice is the redemption or propitiation that satisfies our sin debt.
 - God forgives the sinner that confesses, repents, and trusts in Him for salvation.
- In this lesson, we examine what God's forgiveness consists of, primarily in dealing with salvation.

God's Goodness in Forgiveness

- Love – John 3:16
 - "...that perfection of the divine nature by which He is eternally moved to communicate Himself. It is, however, not a mere emotional impulse, but a rational and voluntary affection." – Thiessen
 - God is motivated to forgive us because He is kindly affectioned toward us, willing to forgive instead of executing judgment.
- Grace - Ephesians 2:7-9
 - "...the goodness of God manifested toward the ill-deserving." – Thiessen
 - We have no merit to deserve forgiveness. It is absolutely God that extends it to us in our unworthiness.
- Mercy - Psalm 86:5
 - "...His goodness manifested towards those who are in misery of distress." – Thiessen
 - God, though repulsed from our sin by His holiness, has compassion towards us in our unholy state and moves on our behalf.
- Patience/Persistence - I Peter 3:20, Psalm 86:15, Romans 2:4, Exodus 34:6
 - "Bearing injuries or provocation for a long time; patient; not easily provoked." – Webster's 1828
 - God grants us time to find forgiveness by staying His judgment against us.

God's Purpose in Forgiveness

- For His Glory – Psalm 25:11
 - Ultimately everything God does is for His glory.
- Reconciliation – Colossians 1:20-21

- “To conciliate anew; to call back into union and friendship the affections which have been alienated; to restore to friendship or favor after estrangement; as, to *reconcile* men or parties that have been at variance.” – Webster’s 1828
- God earnestly desires that sinful men be restored to fellowship with Him.

Elements of God’s Forgiveness

- Removal of Sin – Isaiah 1:18
 - Our sin debt is not ignored; it is completely removed from our account by the redemption of Christ.
- Removal of Guilt – Romans 8:33-34
 - Since our sin debt is paid for by Christ, we are no longer liable for it.
- Removal of Condemnation – Romans 8:1
 - Since we are no longer seen as guilty before God, we no longer face sin’s penalty.
- Justification – Romans 3:24
 - We are made “just-as-if” we had never sinned.
 - “...that act whereby He declares righteous him who believed on Christ.” - Thiessen
 - “...justification is a declarative act. It is not something wrought in man, but something declared of man.” – Thiessen
- Peace/Reconciliation – Romans 5:1
 - As we have been both declared righteous and have Christ’s righteousness imputed to us, there is no sin that bars our relationship with God.
 - God brings us into His family – John 1:12, Galatians 4:5
- Entire – Isaiah 43:25
 - God does not forgive part of our sins: He forgives them all!
 - We would still be guilty if any sin remained.
- Enduring - Psalm 136
 - God’s forgiveness is eternal, unending, and unabating.