

## Perspective – Forgiven?

Giving What Is Asked



“If you ask for this dollar I’ll give it to you. “

We Respond: “Ok, would you please give me the dollar?”

“Sure, here ya go!”



We Say: “Thanks!”

“Now ask me for the dollar again.”

We Respond: “Well, Ok, would you please give me the dollar?”

Answer: “I already gave it to you.” “Ask me for the dollar again.”

Our Response: “Hummm...Ok, would you please give me the dollar?”

Answer: “I already gave it to you.” “Beg me for the dollar.”

We Say: “Ok, I’ll play along. I’m begging you, please give me the dollar!”

Answer: “I already gave it to you.”

So, what’s the point?

Perspective.

Think about our perspective concerning our sins. When we accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord, did we ask Him to forgive us for our sins? And did He? .....My hope is we all say "Yes" .....

Since the start of our relationship with God, how many times have we asked Him to forgive us for our sins? Some might say, "Several times a day!" Never, to my knowledge, has anyone ever said, "Once".

So, when Jesus forgave us of our sins when we accepted Him as Lord, what sins did He forgive? Just our past sins?

If that were true then it would mean that we could lose our salvation when we commit any new sins, and that is contrary to scripture. The scriptures tell us that when we accept Christ we are adopted into God's family. They tell us that no one can undo what God does where our salvation is concerned.

"For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him." (Romans 8:15-17)

A part of the idea that we might lose our salvation is the acute fear this idea generates. If that was possible then we indeed would be led to fear again. Instead we are adopted, which is an action of permanence. Adoption is a relationship that never goes away. We can only act like it didn't happen.

"and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." (John 10:28-29) The concepts speak of permanence not a temporary salvation. (1 John 5:18) Also see: (1 John 5:13; 1 John 1:7-9)

The scriptures also tell us that Jesus died once for all sins. "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;" (1 Peter 3:18)

We are even told that Jesus became Sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God. "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

[Also see: 1 Corinthians 1:8-9; Philippians 1:6; Jude 1: 24-25; Ephesians 2:8-10; Ephesians 4:30; 1 Peter 1:3-5; Romans 8:31-39]

Even in the Old Testament we are given the promise that our sins will be removed as far as the East is from the West. (Psalms 103:12) Later on we'll also look at why "Sin" and "sins" are both in this book.

God did not forgive our sins without knowing every detail about what was to come. He knew every sin that we would ever commit from that moment until the day that we are no longer on this earth.

Consider the perspective of God we would have to accept in order to think that an all-knowing God would give us His Life, while knowing ahead of time that we will lose His Perfect and Holy Life that was given to us. Is that a loving God? Is our God one who plays with people for His own pleasure? No. Absolutely not! To me this is a perspective from the deceptions of Satan.

Yes, God is all knowing and thus knew everything about us and our future. Still He accepted each one of us as His child, and sent His Spirit to dwell within us. The Spirit of God was sent to permanently Unite the Life of the risen Messiah with each person's inner-being that we might be "born again". Being born, also is not something that can be reversed. It is an eternal event.

He did that, we did not. He did this solely based upon the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus died so that we might live in newness of Life; that we might live within the Life of Christ; Jesus' Life. Other than asking God to forgive us, and to give us Jesus Who is Life there is nothing we can, or ever will be able to do in order to do to be saved. Also there is nothing we can ever do to cause us to lose our salvation.

"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21)

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."  
(Galatians 2:20)

#### Why Think Differently?

Before the death and resurrection of Jesus, God had set up a system where people's sins could be set aside. Then if they committed sins again those new sins could be held against them by God, because they were guilty of disobeying God again. Generally speaking, people didn't do very well with that process. Why? Because people committed so many sins. They didn't follow the intent of God's provisions, and people repeatedly turned their back on God and rejected Him.

Of course, God knew the Old Testament's formal sacrificial system wasn't a final solution when He put it into place, but He gave people the chance to be faithful to Him anyway. Despite their sinful ways, if they were faithful in carrying out the sacrificial process of worship as intended, and asked for forgiveness, He was faithful to not count their sins against them because of His forgiveness, by His grace. The sacrifice was a process, but it was their faith in God to fulfill His promise that satisfied the Lord.

Also, He knew that people, blinded by sin, would never understand their need for forgiveness, or understand His grace if they did not first understand their need for forgiveness. So, God gave us His Law. That's why God gave the Hebrew people the Ten Commandments, and other laws found in the Old Testament.

"because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20) Also read Romans 7:7-9 for a longer explanation by Paul.

A relationship with God has always been, and will always be based on faith. To read about this, please read Hebrews chapter 11. There it is clearly stated that Old Testament leaders, though they had God's law and were subject to it, gained their approval by God through faith, thus not by perfect obedience to the law.

At the end of the chapter some of the last statements by the writer sum this up. "And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better..." (Hebrews 11:39-40a) What was that something better?

The Birth, Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus, God's Son, which radically changed the focus of people's faith concerning their relationship with God. When by faith any of us asked for forgiveness through Jesus, God forgave each of us of all our sins forever.

Anything less than this and we who are alive in Christ would be in a similar type of relationship with God as people were in the Old Testament. Instead God provided Jesus as the eternally perfect sacrifice for all who will believe. May God be praised!

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So, if God really forgave us of all our sins then why do we keep asking Him to forgive us? Where does the Bible tell us that after we have accepted Christ as Savior and Lord that we should ask Him to forgive us of our sins over and over again?

1 John 1:9 tells us to confess our sin, not to ask for forgiveness again and again. Now that may sound weird. It might go against how we've been influenced to think by the teaching and practice of those around us.

So even though this idea is in alignment with scripture some of us probably will struggle to accept it. Why? Because we have been conditioned to think of ourselves as sinners who must continually ask for the forgiveness of our sins. What's being proposed here may go against our learned perspective of how our relationship with God works.

What's the alternative? When we become aware that we are doing, or have done something wrong then immediately confess that sin and repent of it, thanking God for His forgiveness through Jesus. Then we can align our thoughts and behavior with the truth of God by being obedient to His will. That's the alternative.

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Now, how do each of us want to think about ourselves? As an "ugly old sinner that happened to be saved, praise God", or a "Saint who sometimes sins" agreeing with God when we sin, and confessing our sins while praising God for His forgiveness?

When Paul wrote to the members of the church in Corinth, a kind of sin-city of the day, he was writing to a group of people that were making some serious mistakes. Generally, they seemed to be struggling with sins of many types.

How did Paul address them? As sinners who were lucky to be saved? No. He started out with these words:

“I Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our Brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 1:1-3)

He clearly announced the good news that they were sanctified; set apart as God’s Holy children. Paul understood God’s truth that they were saints because of what Jesus did, which made it possible for them to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord. In other words, they were saints who sometimes sinned.

How do we each see ourselves? What is our perspective concerning ourselves? Are we in essence a saint who sometimes sins with confession and thankfulness, or in essence a sinner who is saved but must continue to ask for forgiveness? Which of the two perspectives are held by each of us?

Perhaps we say, “I’m a saint who sins and so I have to ask God for forgiveness.” Our method of combining opposing perspectives seems to work, but the resulting logic does not align with scripture as noted above.

What we choose to believe does not make a difference in what really is, God’s eternal Truth. This is not a case of the glass being half full and half empty. It truly is one or the other. Jesus either forgave us of all our sins or He didn’t. If He did then there is no need to ask Him for forgiveness repeatedly. It makes about as much sense as asking for the dollar after it’s already been given to us.

So What?

So, we see our perspective does make a difference in what we believe. If we choose to see ourselves as this struggling sinner who must go to God, and ask for forgiveness over and over, then where is our focus? Our focus is going to be on our struggle to not sin, and our efforts to be obedient to God. In essence, our focus will be on ourselves.

That is a very different perspective than what the scripture portrays. At least within my mind. There we find the person who accepts Christ to be a person reconciled to God, set free from their sins, and from being owned by the power of Sin. Free to know and receive God’s best, and free to be obedient.

As Paul said, they were all saints. Not because of what they had done, but because of what Jesus completed, and created through His Death and Resurrection. It is the same for us. Praise God for what He has done within us. We too are saints!

We are children of God who can constantly share every thought with God our Father who loves us more than we can fully know. In front of the world, we can call God "Abba, Father" because we have been adopted into the family of God. (Romans 8:15-16) We rejoice because we are free from our sins, and we are free from the power of Sin. There is no need for us to live as though we are not free indeed. (Romans 6:11-23)

Confess any sins; immediately. What John is saying in 1 John is to confess every sin we know about; get it out of the way so it can't interfere with us listening to God. Repent of it; admit our mistake, and turn 180 degrees in the other direction toward the will of God, rather than the ways of Sin.

Remember, God has already forgiven us of our sins, set us free from the power of Sin, and cleansed us of its eternal impacts. Not only this, but God gives us freedom from the remaining influence Satan would otherwise have upon us. We find that freedom through obedience to God. Thank God for His forgiveness through Christ and rejoice that we are indeed free and forgiven!

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Is it "wrong" to ask God for forgiveness? No. God focuses on the intent of our heart more than the correctness of every detail of our understanding. There are good reasons for people to argue that Jesus taught us to ask for forgiveness every day.

The Lord's prayer is one reason people may have where we read, "...forgive us our sins..."(or debts). We need to remember, however, that Jesus was speaking to a large group of Hebrew people who still lived under God's law. When Jesus was raised from the dead the process of being forgiven, and characteristics of that process changed forever.

The main point is for us to trust in God to forgive our sins through Jesus' Death, Burial, and Resurrection. We're not making up a new "Christian" rule here. It's less about being right or wrong and more a matter of our perspective, and being able to experience true freedom in Jesus!

While repeatedly asking for forgiveness seems redundant to me, that does not mean that God will not hear us and be pleased with our intended faithfulness. If that is one's practice, however, please consider asking for that forgiveness with the knowledge and acknowledgement that we are each God's child, redeemed, justified, and reconciled to him, fully cleansed by the blood of Christ; already fully forgiven.

For any person, upon confessing our sins, asking God to save us, and receiving Christ's Life within us, we are no longer the focus of an endless struggle. Thus, the power of Sin is not our focus; rather freedom to obey God is our new Reality. A Reality created by God through Jesus His Son.

Jesus got rid of any barrier between us and Him so we could know Life abundantly, and live it out on this earth as His light shines within this world of darkness. John 10:10, ""The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

Be anxious for nothing is what Jesus said. (Matthew 6:25-33) How can we do that if we're concerned about getting forgiveness from God continually?

Running from the truth while being concerned our sins might be found out is not freedom. Trying to hide things from God is not freedom. Our focus on ourselves is what causes followers of Christ to be judgmental towards one another. Do you see this clearly?

Instead, run freely into the arms of God and tell him about every mistake without concern of rebuke. He loves each of us, will always love us, and nothing can separate us from Him now or forever. This is the kind of freedom that can set the Body of Christ truly free to confess our sins, and find a loving family of Christ followers who will love us regardless. Then we can help one another to overcome our tendency to commit sins, without being judgmental. Then we will more fully be living out our unity, our personal oneness with Jesus and all of those who have accepted, and received Him as Lord and Savior.