

Bible Basics Conference 2010: Results of Christ's Death

Part 8

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[00:00:00] I'm very thankful that as I stand here before you this afternoon, that the topic that we now have before us is one of forgiveness. And I'm quite sure that as we've seen other brothers seek to explain some long and difficult words to us, that each one of us, even down to some of the young ones there at the back, would know what we're talking about when we see this word forgiveness. It's a wonderful word, it's a wonderful concept, that all our sins have been forgiven. That by the death of our Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross, who has preached unto those men and women in the very early days of Acts, the forgiveness of sins, that and resurrection, was the central planks of the message that was preached by the apostles. The forgiveness of sins. Perhaps we take it for granted, I hope we don't, that [00:01:07] all our sins have been forgiven. We don't go to bed at night tossing and turning because of some wrong thing that we've done. Our consciences don't weigh us down, we're not miserable people, we're not worried, we're not anxious about what eternity might bring forth, because our Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, went into death, he paid the penalty of our sins, and we're forgiven. If we roll back in our minds something of our lives, some of the things that we've done wrong, that we're ashamed of, and we think of what put our Lord Jesus Christ on that cross, and yet we [00:02:03] can think, we can rejoice over the fact that our sins are forgiven. How wonderful that is. How great and glorious it is that we can think of one who is able and willing to forgive us our sins. We can go back into the Old Testament, and we can see there that the nature of God himself was revealed to us. The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. The character of God who delights to forgive. When I was going over my slides here and looked back and see that these verses were said to Moses on Mount Sinai, when the law was given, the law that would condemn [00:03:04] them, the law that would show them how sinful they were, and yet God is here speaking. The fact that he is merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. Another verse, in the days of Nehemiah, but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness. In the days of Daniel, to the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness. How wonderful that is, that God is a God who's ready to forgive, who's anxious to forgive those terrible wicked things that we've done against him. We've already had alluded to us some of the spiritual realities, those facts, those truths that are so very clear and very plain to us. God's holiness, how can a [00:04:11] just and holy God forgive us our sins? The man in the street, the man in the street who perhaps we don't realize, appreciate, that people are bothered about their sins. They

have got a conscience. These things, perhaps too occasionally, do bother people. But God's holiness, that man would, is very quick to point a finger, but when anything's done wrong, that's terrible. They should be punished, they should be sent to jail. God is holy and cannot look upon sin. Sin must be judged. When we've done things wrong, then it must be judged, it must be paid for. Sin is a real problem. It certainly is [00:05:13] something that God has acted against. We see Satan accusing, going round, accusing the believers before God, speaking of the sin, the sins that were committed and are being committed by men and women all over this world, increasingly so. How can God rectify the situation? Well, we know that in the cross of Christ, we see that most important event in the history of this world, that on the cross, the matters were dealt with. We've been thrilled this morning to see the greatness, the extremity [00:06:07] of the work of Christ on Calvary's cross. You would wonder how we're going to spend eternity thinking of what the Lord Jesus has done. But we can see already, can't we, that we're only scratching the surface. Where there's lots of things we don't fully understand, we certainly don't fully appreciate. But on the cross, God maintained his holiness because sin was condemned on the cross. His justice was satisfied. Consciences have been purged and Satan has been defeated.

We always like to think of the story, that well-known story of David and Goliath. Goliath, that great mighty foe, the children of Israel in terror at this great giant of a man who defied [00:07:07] the living God. But there was David, young boy, going down into the valley of Elah and he slew the giant. Our Lord Jesus Christ defeated Satan at Calvary's cross. Well might we say, hallelujah, what a saviour. But what is the ground, the basis of our forgiveness? When the Lord Jesus Christ died on Calvary's cross, as we know, God poured out his righteous wrath upon sin. He poured out his anger and his wrath on his beloved son. He condemned sin and God could not pass over a single sin, but he could put it away. So if we think and perhaps afterwards meditate [00:08:12] on some of these wonderful verses that we've considered together. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Blood had to be shed. The life is in the blood. For us to receive forgiveness of sins, the Lord Jesus is the only perfect one. The only one who could pay the penalty of your sins and mine. He had to shed his blood so that we could receive forgiveness of sins. Ephesians 1.7, in him we have redemption through his blood. The forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God's grace. What a wonderful verse that is. We've been reminded of this verse [00:09:07] before. Their sins and their lawless acts I will remember no more. This is a holy God in righteousness speaking. As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. He thought of the goat the day of atonement being sent into the wilderness. And then in Psalm 32, blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him, and whose spirit is no deceit. He doesn't, God does not only cease to hold us guilty, but he shows his face towards us.

How wonderful that is. But as we think of that ground, that solid basis, ground of our forgiveness, [00:10:11] then we can think of the extent of forgiveness. How far does God's forgiveness go? But we see that in the death of Christ, there's provision made for the full forgiveness of all our sins. We can think of our past sins, everything that we've done wrong. Our future sins, those things that we will do wrong in our lives, what we might consider to be awful, terrible things that we have done or possibly will do. We might think of small sins, but of course small sins add up. How many small sins have we committed? How many? But as Isaiah tells us, the Lord hath laid on him [00:11:06] the iniquity of us all. How wonderful that is. The Lord laid on him, the Lord Jesus, the iniquity of us all. The extent of divine forgiveness. Because Christ died on the cross, we know that God can faithfully and justly forgive. There's no doubt. There's no cause for us to worry. Christ is our advocate in heaven. We can confess our sins. We can receive full forgiveness, forgiveness for everything. We can be perfectly cleansed

and our communion can be restored. So we know that because of what Christ has done on the cross, that our sins, all of them, [00:12:01] have been forgiven. But we come to the question that as we put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, as we know that we are eternally saved, that we will spend eternity in heaven with our Lord Jesus, that we go through our lives and we still do those things that are wrong. We still sin. We still make mistakes. And we have this wonderful verse. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We have this verse, don't we? And perhaps of anything that we can think about here in this session this afternoon, do we follow this verse? Do we make use of what is provided for us?

[00:13:04] Because we sin. We still do those things that are wrong. But we have this instruction, don't we? What should we do when we sin? We all know. Do we confess our sins to God? Do we confess them? Do we say that we're sorry?

Do we keep short accounts? When we've done something wrong, do we confess them immediately? Do we say that we're sorry? Do we clear that broken communion with our Father in heaven? We've had mentioned to us the Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, how they were ashamed, how they went and hid. We know that when we've done things wrong, that we feel bad about it. Our consciences do point them out. But we need to confess them sooner rather than later. We need to [00:14:01] do that in our daily lives. We need to get used to keeping those short accounts. Because he cleanses from every unrighteousness, not just every sin. Everything that isn't perfectly done according to his mind and will. So the extent of God's forgiveness for everything that we've ever done wrong. And then we can think of the style of God's forgiveness. Is there anything more lovely than this? We can think that when we have an occasion to forgive someone, we perhaps might think of a child. A child has done something wrong. They realize it and come and ask for forgiveness. They perhaps might really have annoyed us. We're angry. [00:15:03] But they say, a little voice might say, please forgive me. And we grudgingly accept their plea. We're grumpy about it. We might be gradual. We might not be in a state to forgive them perhaps, not just for many hours, but for many days, for many weeks. Do you still hold something against somebody that lasted might happen many years ago? It's not right, is it? But we have here the way in which God forgives. Just think of these examples in Luke 15 and there are many others. The lost sheep. Laying that lost sheep on his shoulders, rejoicing. Rejoicing.

The lost sheep was found. We think, take the parable perhaps maybe a little bit too far, but [00:16:06] the shepherd might have been out all night. Might have been cold and wet and angry. But no, God forgives and he's rejoicing in the fact that that lost sheep has been found. We see the example of the woman. She seeks diligently until she finds it. She keeps looking throughout the house until she finds it. She's not going to give up. And then the wonderful story of the prodigal son. The father saw him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. How wonderful that is. The father, the picture of God looking down, searching and seeking in this chapter, looking, waiting, seeing the prodigal return. He's not grumpy. He doesn't do it gradually. [00:17:07] As soon as he saw him, he ran, fell on his neck, gave him the best robe. How great that is. There was a story of a Christian man who was traveling by train one day and as he got onto that train, he saw a youngish boy in front of him. And as he sat there, he gradually began to realize that this young boy, young man perhaps really, was agitated. He was bothered. He was fidgety, couldn't sit still. His face was pale. He looked in a pretty awful state. He felt compelled to go up to him, asked him what was the problem. And the young man explained that sometime earlier that he'd left home, ran away from home, done something wrong [00:18:01] and he'd scarpered. And like the prodigal son, it had taken him a while to come to his

senses. At long last, he'd written a letter home to his mother and he asked for her forgiveness. He asked if he could come home. And he'd said in the letter to his mother that he would pass on the train that day. And if the mother could forgive him, he asked her to put out a white towel, small sheet on the tree at the bottom of the garden where the rail line passed. And as he was on that train, he was getting nearer and nearer to home. He was getting agitated. Was he forgiven? And he said to the Christian man, I can't look. I just can't look. Will you look for me? And as the train passed by [00:19:05] the bottom of the garden and the Christian man looked out, he looked for that tree. He could see it easily because the tree was covered with white sheets. Absolutely covered from top to bottom. He exclaimed to the young man and the young man could see that tree. The style of God's forgiveness. He forgives us fully and freely, rejoicing. He runs, so to speak, towards us. There is much rejoicing in heaven as that lost one comes home. And as we see and look back even into history, we can see that as the disciples went and they proclaim this glorious message that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission. The notes tell us that's another word that's used for forgiveness of sins. There's [00:20:06] nothing in the history of mankind that is able to forgive our sins. But here was preached what man had waited for. There was a way back to God from the dark paths of sin. Sins could be forgiven because what our Lord Jesus Christ has done on Calvary's cross. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. What a wonderful thing that is. But as we look practically, we come again to this verse in John chapter 20. Again, quite a remarkable verse. It is at a time when the Lord Jesus appears the first time to the disciples after his resurrection in that upper room. [00:21:03] And what does he do and say? He says, peace be unto you. As my father has sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins you remit, they are remitted unto them. And whosoever sins you retain, they are retained. Well, what does this, these verses here mean for us? It was the Lord Jesus speaking to his disciples. And as we look on the matter, we can see there that those disciples there in that upper room with Jesus in the midst of them is a picture of the assembly. You'll notice that the words, if you read back, we're not speaking just of the apostles, but we're speaking [00:22:02] of the disciples. And the Lord Jesus was giving them authority for the exercise of reception or discipline within their own limits. We're not speaking here of eternal forgiveness. Only God can forgive sins. We're speaking here of administratively or in discipline that the disciples, and that means you and I, that we have authority from God to retain or remit sins.

Now that is quite striking that we have that authority here upon this earth. You'll notice that the Lord Jesus, as he appeared to those disciples, he, as soon as he was brought back to life, that he was giving to his disciples. He was breathing on them the Holy Ghost. He was, [00:23:05] it was before the day of Pentecost, before the baptism of the Spirit. He was imparting to them that resurrection life that he had won and that resurrection life so that they could have the means whereby that they could be sent into the world and they could be entrusted with this administrative powers. You might think, well, where do we find examples of this in scriptures? We have the example of Ananias and Sapphira. A little time later on, how they told a lie, how they said that they'd sold all their goods and given all their money to the disciples, and yet they'd kept part of it back to themselves. You see Peter there acting and in a most severe [00:24:01] way that they both of them fell down and they were dead and had to be carried out. You see later on in the book of Acts, Simon the sorcerer in Samaria, how that he saw the disciples and experienced the gift of the Holy Spirit and he wanted that ability. He had masqueraded as a Christian before that gift was given, but he had had some sort of miraculous powers, but now he found that when the gift was given that he hadn't any and he wanted that gift. And Peter had to retain his sins upon him. We know the example of the Corinthian man having his father's wife and Paul writes to the disciples, to the people in the Corinthian assembly and said, you've got to do something

about this. This isn't right. You must put him out. You must take action [00:25:06] yourselves. He didn't expect to take him an apostle to take action. The disciples were called upon to take action. We know the story of the forgiving king, the parable there of the king who forgave that man so much and the man immediately went out and went to one of his people that owed him money and demanded that he paid it back and that man himself there was put by the king into that place because of his unforgiving attitude. Peter was given the keys of the kingdom and we've hinted at just a moment ago that the assembly, the disciples is called upon to receive into fellowship to remit sins and to put out of fellowship those who've committed those things that are wrong [00:26:01] and therefore retaining sins. So in conclusion then we have this verse which tells us that all the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name and we need to rejoice in that. We need to remember that. We need to thank the Lord for what he's done for us that our sins are all forgiven. The Lord Jesus told them that the Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations beginning at Jerusalem. The message has gone throughout the world. There are believers throughout this world who rejoice in the fact that their sins are forgiven that there is a man the Lord Jesus Christ who was good enough to pay [00:27:02] the price of sin who was willing enough to come from heaven itself and die on Calvary's cross to suffer in your stead and mine to pay the penalty of our sins and when we meet together in particular on the Lord's day the first day of the week when we pass the cup one for another we can remember the blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins that our Lord Jesus Christ died. How true it is that as we think about some of the aspects of what the Lord Jesus has done for us in suffering and dying on Calvary's tree that we can sing all that thrills my soul is Jesus that he is more than life to me. I remember that chorus which I haven't sang for a while now we've been redeemed by the blood of the lamb been redeemed saved and sanctified I know I am [00:28:08] all my sins are taken away praise the Lord praise the Lord.