

Forgiveness and Honesty

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Introduction: The answer to our basic needs in life is found in the gospel of Christ.

- A. So much of the pain of man is found in the adult game of “hide and seek.”
 - 1. The Lord knows who we really are but most men run from that reality. **(Isa 57:19-21; 48:22)**
 - 2. When we learn to bury our past we create a series of future events that will bring us much pain. You may bury it but there will be a resurrection!
- B. Learning to trust God is a first step to healing and building a life where you can be honest.
 - 1. How many of you think that if others knew of your past and your current struggles that you would be despised?
 - 2. How many in fact hate others and look down on them because of their weaknesses? Does the presence of another bother you? **(Lk 15:2; 18:11)**
 - 3. How many are wearing masks of righteousness but inside are full of doubt and guilt?
 - 4. There is good news! Jesus came to free you from these chains!

I. We must make the painful decision to open our hearts to our God

- A. How many have substituted religious activity and knowledge for the real forgiveness of God?
 - 1. Opening your heart to see what God sees is like standing naked before and audience. Without forgiveness we want to hide our sin and shame.
 - 2. The opening of the heart in the scriptures is described as a “cut.”
 - 3. Some were “cut” and obeyed while others were “cut” and attacked! **(Acts 2:36-37; 7:54-55)**
 - 4. The essence of all teaching is to help a person see their heart and then make a decision. This is not easy. We need to constantly pray for wisdom. **(Col 4:6)**
- B. Jesus often received harsh responses when he opened the heart.
 - 1. Why did the Pharisees hate him? **(Mt 15:8-9, 12-13; Lk 4:28-29)**
 - 2. Jesus knew men’s thoughts and tried to get them to see themselves! **(Lk 5:22; 6:8; 11:17)**
 - 3. When you really come to trust God you do this? Why? **(Heb 4:12-13)**

II. When we understand the nature of forgiveness we can find peace

- A. We must see the enormous gift of forgiveness.
 - 1. We need to see ourselves before a righteous God. **(Isa 6:5; Mt 5:3-4)**
 - 2. Do you know what it really means to be lost? **(Jn 8:21, 24)**
- B. The contrast of two individuals. **(Lk 7:36-39)**
 - 1. Simon, the Pharisee, saw his personal righteousness and knowledge and considered his efforts to place him well before God.
 - 2. He viewed others sins as a means of comparison and would exalt himself in this as well as even put Jesus down.

3. Simon and others like him looked to the outward and would use peer pressure to control and run off the imperfect. They could not understand Jesus and his work of changing the heart. **(Mk 2:15-17; Jn 9:40-41)**
4. Now consider this humble woman. **(Lk 7:40-50)**
- B. Do you know that you have been forgiven? **(2 Pt 1:9)**
 1. The power of real forgiveness is so great that it will result in a heart of praise! **(Rev 1:5-6)**
 2. This becomes the basis for our talking to others! **(Psa 51:10-15)**
 3. Are you wearing a mask in guilt and fear? There is an alternative.

III. Upon what basis can I find this forgiveness?

1. It is either conditional (there is something we must do) or unconditional (All men will be saved).
2. God has chosen that men will be saved conditionally. The condition of our salvation is faith. **(Rom 3:26-27, 29-31; Eph 2:8-9)**
3. This “law of faith” is contrasted with “the deeds of the law”. These are two contrary approaches to God.
 - a. Those who seek to be justified by law must constantly ask: “How much is enough?” The truth is they can never “do enough.”
 - b. There is a bondage to those who seek to be right with God by law alone. **(Rom 7:14, 23-8:1)**
 - c. One of the reasons God gave the Old Law was to prepare men for a Savior.
4. God accounts our faith for righteousness. **(Rom 4:3-8)**
 - a. This is forgiveness! What God sees is our faith and upon that basis “faith is accounted for righteousness.”
 - b. In faith, we “call upon the name of the Lord.” **(Acts 2:21; 22:16)**

IV. What does your tongue say about your forgiveness?

- A. Do you treat sin lightly? **(Rom 6:1, 15-18)**
 1. In school there were those who proclaimed “grace” but cursed with their tongue. Some use grace as a carnal weapon.
 2. To know God’s forgives is to hate sin! **(1 Thess 4:3-8, Titus 1:16)**
- B. How do you view yourself? **(1 Tim 1:15-17)**
 1. If you are guilt-filled and bitter, it will be seen in your life.
 2. Some of the harshest critics are filled with anger and doubt.
- C. How do you deal with sin in others?
 1. Some view that they are strong because they see sin in others.
 2. Others think they are strong by ignoring or condoning sin in others. **(Jude 22-23)**
 3. Helping our son deal with the guilt of sin.

Conclusion: Will you begin by being honest with God and let Him forgive you?

- A. As I get older, I can look back and see the paths many have taken.
- B. This foundation can be built and we can stand on it! **(Jude 24-25)**