

JESUS PRAYS FOR US

LESSON 3: "FATHER, FORGIVE THEM" LUKE 23:34

I. The Context: The seven statements Christ made from the cross.

Mark 15:25 It was the third hour and they crucified Him (9 am)

1. Luke 23:34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.
2. Luke 23:43 Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." (11 am)
3. John 19:26-27 "When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home." (11 am)
4. Matt. 27:46 "About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"—which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (2 pm)
5. John 19:28 "Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." (2:30 pm)
6. John 19:30 "When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.: (2:30 pm)
7. Luke 23:46 "Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last." (3pm)

Mark 15:33 Darkness over the land until ninth hour (3 pm)

II. What is Biblical Forgiveness?

- A. In the Old Testament, God's forgiveness of sin was rooted in the system of sacrificial offerings. "The priest shall make atonement for them and it shall be forgiven them" (Lev. 4:30). The "forgiveness," however, was temporal. The sacrifices served as an annual "covering" not an everlasting propitiation. The sacrifices had to be repeated over and over again. (Romans 3:25)
- B. In the New Testament, external forgiveness is one of many transformations accomplished by God in the life of a repentant sinner, who is saved in response to simple faith in Christ. (Romans 5:17: The abundance of grace, the gift of righteousness, the "stamp" of justification and so on.)
- C. Some New Testament aspects of forgiveness:

1. It's a covering – See 1 John 2:1-2.
2. It's a blotting out – a taking away, having nailed our sins to the cross – See Col. 2:13-14

“Forgiveness”: The granting of a favor, the kindness to pardon or rescue. It comes from the root for the word “grace.”

3. It's a cleansing – See 1 John 1:9

“Forgiveness”: to put away, to send away, to lay aside.

Micah 7:19 “You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.”

Psalm 103:12 – “As far as the East is from the West, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.”

Isaiah 44:22 – “I have blotted out as a thick cloud they transgressions....”

Isaiah 55:7 – “...for He will abundantly pardon.”

Hebrews 8:12 – “...their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

III. What are we forgiven from?

- A. Take a look at Psalm 32:

Background: Both Psalm 51 and 32 were written after David's adultery with Bathsheba. Psalm 51 was probably written first during the anguish of guilt. Psalm 32 was probably written after the anguish once his forgiveness was secured.

Look at the downward spiral in verses 1-2:

1. Transgression (Hebrew “phah-shaa” meaning to rebel or revolt)
2. Sin (Hebrew “chah-tah” meaning to miss the mark, or go wrong)
3. Iniquity (Hebrew “ah-wah” meaning guilt)
4. Deceit (Hebrew “re-mee-ah” meaning treachery or deception)

First we rebel or revolt against God's revealed will. Then we ignore the path of righteousness marked out for us. Then we wrestle with guilt, and finally self-deception sets in. (Look at Genesis 6:5; Psalm 53:3, Isaiah 64:6, Romans 3:23 and 1 John 1:8)

IV. What are we forgiven for?

- A. Consider the situation outlined in John 8:3-11. Specifically, what sins have you been (or need to be) forgiven?

...go and sin no more” Jesus told the woman. Hebrews 12:1 “...let us lay aside every weight and sin that doth so easily beset us and let us run the race...”

- B. After salvation, the believer continues to sin and forgiveness involves not our eternal destination, but our daily fellowship with the Lord. Our “standing” with God was established once and for all at the cross (Romans 8:1) but our daily behavior needs chastisement and/or discipline. That kind of forgiveness is triggered by confession and a change of heart. (1 John 1:9).
- C. Forgiven for a purpose!! The power of a transformed life!! “I know who I was, but look who I am becoming!” Compare Peter in Luke 22:54-62 and in Acts 2:14, 4:1-12, 5:29.

Discussion Questions:

1. In light of when Jesus said it, how powerful is His statement “Father, forgive them?” Who was he referring to?
2. Would you have liked to live under the Old Testament system of sacrifices? Why or why not?
3. Which aspect of forgiveness resonates best with you? (covering, blotting out, cleansing)
4. What were you forgiven for?