

SUBJECT: FIVE BIG WORDS – WORD #4: FORGIVENESS

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 1:7. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.

INTRODUCTION

In this verse, there are five words that are foundational, central and key to the Bible and to the Christian faith.

The five words are *(in the order they are being taught)*:

1. Sin
2. Blood (His Blood)
3. Redemption
4. Forgiveness
5. Grace

We have already seen in the study of our first word, “sin,” that if it had not been for sin, there would have been no need for redemption; His blood; forgiveness or grace. Also, in our previous studies, we have seen that the price for our redemption was the blood of Jesus Christ. It is through His blood that we receive the forgiveness of sins. This study will focus on the fourth big word, FORGIVENESS.

FORGIVENESS DEFINED

- To send off (forth); to send away; to release (from a debt owed)
- Has to do with sins committed or offenses committed against someone
- It signifies the remission of the punishment due for sinful conduct

FORGIVENESS, A BIG WORD

- Its thread runs all throughout the Bible
- The reward and consequences of having been forgiven is peace and joy
- The neglect of having ones’ sins forgiven, by God, is perilous and eternally devastating
- Everyone (without exception) has sinned against God, and all have offended others. Therefore, all stand in need of forgiveness
- It is something that all of us have experienced
- We have had to ask others to forgive us ... we have all had to say, “I’m sorry.”
- We have had to forgive others. We have had them to say to us, “Please forgive me.”
- We teach our children to apologize and to forgive others.
- Common to all true Christians ... we have asked God to forgive us of our sins.
- The Lord’s Prayer teaches us to say, “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.”

TWO TYPES OF FORGIVENESS

The Bible reveals two distinct classes of forgiveness: Divine and Human.

Human forgiveness

Where we do not hold a wrong done to us, by another person, against them. This human forgiveness is spoken of in Ephesians 4:32, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Divine forgiveness

Forgiveness given by God toward man.

(This is the type of forgiveness that is primarily in view in Ephesians 1:5.)

- Where God separates sin from a person; and does not hold the sin against them.
- Forgiveness speaks of the deliverance of the sinner from the penalty divinely and righteously imposed.
- God's forgiveness is based upon the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ
- Because God has never done any wrong to anyone, He never stands in need of having to be forgiven.

Divine forgiveness = To send off (forth); to send away; to release (from a debt owed). The separating of the sin from the sinner.

Psalm 86:5, "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee."

Forgiveness of sins is conditional. It is contingent upon the penalty for sin being paid for by someone, and upon repentance and confession by the offender.

A PENALTY MUST BE PAID IN ORDER FOR DIVINE FORGIVENESS TO BE OPERATIVE

- **God only forgives on the basis of sacrificial blood.**
- **Because God is holy and just; sin must be paid for ... someone must die and blood must be shed**
- **God cannot pretend sin does not exist. God cannot ignore sin or overlook it.**

Romans 6:23a, "For the wages of sin is death." (Someone/something must die.) In the Old Testament it was lambs, goats, bulls, birds that dies. Their death made atonement for the sinful and pointed towards Jesus Christ coming as the Lamb of God to take away, once and for all, the sins of the world.

Leviticus 4:35, "And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat of the lamb is taken away from the sacrifice of the peace offerings; and the priest shall burn them upon the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD: and the priest shall make an atonement of his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him."

In the New Testament, Jesus shed "His blood" to pay the price for sin and to redeem those who place faith in His work on the cross. This would result in regeneration and relationship and/or fellowship with God restored.

Matthew 26:28, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Hebrews 9:22, "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

The initial forgiveness of God towards man is granted upon a person's faith being placed in Jesus Christ. It is at this time that one is converted and his sins are forgiven.

But, because the sin nature still remains within the Believer, there still remains within the person the propensity to sin. The same remedy for the initial washing away of sin, is the same remedy for continual cleansing; based upon repentance and confession of sin.

1 John 1:7 – 9, "But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

THE PERIL OF NOT HAVING YOUR SINS FORGIVEN

To not have your sins forgiven is to die "a sinner." And, that is the worst thing in the world that you can do. Because, God's holiness and justice demands that sin be paid for by someone, it is either that you place your faith in Jesus Christ, as your savior, or personally you will have to bear the wrath and judgment of God, the penalty for sin, an everlasting fire (hell).

***"And from Jesus Christ,
Who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead,
And the prince of the kings of the earth.
Unto him that loved us,
And washed us from our sins in his own blood."
(Revelation 1:5)***

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