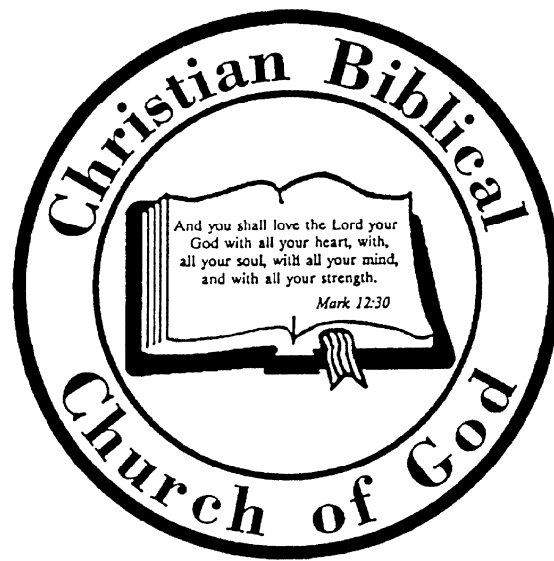


# Forgiveness



## Transcript Book

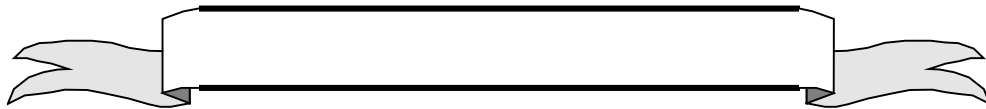
By Fred R. Coulter

© 2017  
Fred R. Coulter  
Christian Biblical Church of God  
P. O. Box 1442  
Hollister, California 95024-1442

*All rights reserved. Except for brief excerpts for review purposes, no part of this publication may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means without the written permission of the copyright owner. This includes electronic and mechanical photocopying or recording, as well as the use of information storage and retrieval systems.*

# DOCUMENT *of* COMPLETION

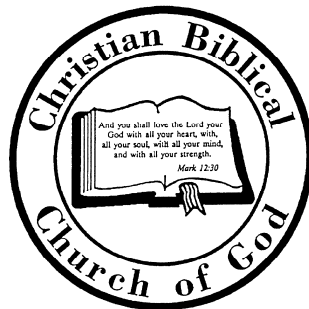
THIS ACKNOWLEDGES THAT I



HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED

## Forgiveness

Series of 10 sermons by Fred R. Coulter



\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forgiveness                              | Date completed _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How We Conduct Our Lives & Forgiveness   | Date completed _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forgive that You May Be Forgiven         | Date completed _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are You God's Policeman?                 | Date completed _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Carry Past Baggage                 | Date completed _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How to Know Your Sins Are Forgiven       | Date completed _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Repentance and Forgiveness               | Date completed _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Love, Mercy and Forgiveness              | Date completed _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forgiveness: A Key to Answered Prayer I  | Date completed _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forgiveness: A Key to Answered Prayer II | Date completed _____ |

# Contents

## Booklet

	PAGE
Forgiveness -----	1 – 13
How We Conduct Our Lives & Forgiveness -----	14 – 26
Forgive That You May Be Forgiven -----	27 – 38
Are You God's Policeman? -----	39 – 49
Don't Carry Past Baggage -----	50 – 68
How to Know Your Sins Are Forgiven -----	69 – 68
Repentance and Forgiveness -----	69 – 78
Love, Mercy and Forgiveness -----	79 – 87
Forgiveness: A Key to Answered Prayer I -----	88 – 96
Forgiveness: A Key to Answered Prayer II -----	97 – 106

## Compact Disc

*[When included]*

Tracks 1 & 2	Forgiveness
Tracks 3 & 4	How We Conduct Our Lives & Forgiveness
Tracks 5 & 6	Forgive That You May Be Forgiven
Tracks 7 & 8	Are You God's Policeman?
Tracks 9 & 10	Don't Carry Past Baggage
Tracks 11 & 12	How to Know Your Sins Are Forgiven
Tracks 13 & 14	Repentance and Forgiveness
Tracks 15 & 16	Love, Mercy and Forgiveness
Tracks 17 & 18	Forgiveness: A Key to Answered Prayer I
Tracks 19 & 20	Forgiveness: A Key to Answered Prayer II



# Forgiveness

## Foreword

This series on Forgiveness is a compilation of ten messages by Fred R. Coulter that will help you to gain a better understanding of this very important topic.

People coming from many different backgrounds both socially and religiously, can offend others without realizing it. Also, they have to work at loving each other, as Christ commanded those of his to love one another as He has loved His disciples.

People have to focus on God the Father and Jesus Christ because no organization can save them, no church can save them, and no minister can save them. In seeking God in truth they can co-exist with and encourage others who also are seeking God in truth. And this kind of love can forgive others.

The second message: *How We Conduct Our Lives and Forgiveness*: God can judge righteously because God can know an individual's heart. Almost always when men think that they really know what is in the heart of an individual, they are wrong.

People who wish to be at peace with God, have to earnestly accept the truth that if they do not forgive from the heart their brother's sins against them, that God will not forgive them either.

If people have vicious and cruel enemies they can say away from them, but the responsibility to forgive is still there. They can pray that God keeps the hostile individuals away, but they have to ask God to intervene and change their heart and mind.

The third message: *Forgive That You May be Forgiven*: Sin is not an exterior thing. It comes from within. Sin comes from human nature. Sin comes from the heart.

Under the old covenant the animal sacrifices to the temple of God in Jerusalem did forgive an individual's sins against God, but the forgiveness was only to justifying the flesh at the level of temple worship.

However, with the new covenant, we are now dealing with the forgiveness of sins in heaven above before the throne of God. This requires a greater sacrifice because it's a greater forgiveness! Only the sacrifice of Christ can suffice.

One cannot do greater than coming to God with a repentant heart and a contrite spirit. God will not accept one if one has hatred in their heart for their brother. Repentance is not to be taken lightly—it has to be from the heart. Relationship with brethren are not to be taken lightly.

The fourth message: *Are You God's Policeman?* The group of people that is God's church are those who have dedicated their lives to doing God's will. In God's church, there is no room for judgement without mercy, without knowledge, and facts. No room for condemnation based upon opinion, or talking about other people and busy bodying into other people's business.

Brethren need to understand the difference between standing for the truth and how they treat someone they see sinning. It is not given to brethren to be policemen, to be searching into brethren's lives for sin. Such individuals start out being the policemen of God but eventually end up being the Vicar of Christ, and by missing the whole point, they end up trying to tell God what to do.

The fifth message: *Don't Carry Past Baggage:* There are two situations that are very difficult for people to come to God or to remain with God. These two situations are covered as follows.

The first situation is when people, in seeking to obey God, wind up going through many religions in the world. When God brings them to a group of people that are brethren in Christ, they are overly suspicious and fault finding. They find it difficult to truly believe and learn because of that they repeatedly have experienced before.

The second situation is being in a Church of God and having it disintegrate in front of one, or from underneath you, or around you, and you don't know what on earth is happening and why it is happening. People losing trust tend to leave off being diligent concerning the Word of God, and this leads to less trust. It can be a self-perpetuating cycle that leads to the destruction of one's faith.

God allows testing of a Church of God, and this testing has repeatedly happened throughout the history of God's Church in order to purify it of people who do not love Him.

The sixth message: *How to Know Your Sins Are Forgiven:* Satan has set up the world to cause it to sin. Satan has also set people up to believe and to feel that God does not want to forgive people of their sins. Satan wishes to hold mankind in the bondage of fear and in the bondage of sin.

Satan works it out so that the development of sin takes place subtly so that when it has caused total corruption people will not recognize the corruption. People have to repent of sinning. God does not save one in your sins! God saves one from their sins. People have to recognize and repent of corruption in their lives.

It should be noted that living in sin means to be totally out in the world, no thought of God, no consciousness of sin, and no understanding of true right or wrong according to the Bible.

The seventh message: *Repentance and Forgiveness:* God is going to take something, the human heart that is inherently evil, and produce a righteous heart.



There are times that God forgives sin and these times are not related to salvation. There are times that God forgives sin, and because of baptism and the person being under grace, this forgiveness is related to salvation.

God is the One Who leads one to repentance. If people, after seeing that everything that they have done in their lives has not worked out, if they then turn to obeying the laws of God that is what real repentance is.

The eighth message: *Love, Mercy and Forgiveness*: All mankind must come to the point of knowing that they themselves are sinners if they are going to receive forgiveness from God. They may think that they are perfect in the letter of the law, but spiritual perfection is another whole dimension.

People cannot worship God anyway they want to and then receive forgiveness from God for them doing what they thought was right. To receive God's mercy and help people have to do what the Word of God says is to be done.

The ninth message: *Forgiveness: A key to Answered Prayer I*: God commands that if people come to Him asking forgiveness that they first must forgive others who have sinned against them. There is forgiveness with God for those who forgive others.

If a person does not forgive, they're going to end up with a horrible, terrible and self-righteous attitude that will sour their spirit. When Christ died upon the cross He asked for forgiveness for those who had sinned against Him. All forgiveness must come through Christ.

The tenth message: *Forgiveness: A key to Answered Prayer II*: God takes care of His enemies by either destroying them or by making them His friend—depending on whether they repent.

For those who repent: always remember the lessons on how you conducted your past life before you were called. But do not dwell on your past life to the point of discouragement or depression or anxiety or helplessness, because of the weakness of human nature.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ applied personally will rescue that person from the power of sin—from Satan the devil. God's people have the help of the Holy Spirit in all situations they go through.

A special thanks goes to Bonnie Orswell, Laila Patterson and Nancy Spaller for producing the transcripts.



# Forgiveness

Fred R. Coulter

I have tried to cover the subjects that will help us prepare for the Passover and bring us up so that when we do partake of the Passover we're going to have a greater Passover than we've ever had before.

There's an aspect of the Passover which is very important for us, which bears upon what we are doing, and bears upon what God is wanting from every one of us in relationship to the times in which we are living, in relationship to the difficulties and problems we have been experiencing—unfortunately, or fortunately, however you want to look at it, is this:

## Forgiveness as a Group:

Many people are coming from so many different backgrounds, and even different Churches of God, and people coming from churches just straight out of the world now. We had two people come down in Opp, Alabama, that they've gone from the Baptist Church to the Mormon Church to the Methodist Church gradually, step-by step-by-step. How did they come in contact with us? Well, one of the brethren said, when they were asked 'What do you believe?' They said, 'Well, here's a beliefs booklet.' That's exactly what they needed! Exactly what they wanted!

Not only do you find the problem of difficulties within the Churches of God, but you find the same identical problems within the churches of the world. There are a lot of people sitting there in those churches that God can also call, too. One of the things that were really moving was that you can tell when God opens their mind. There's a certain point when God opens the mind of an individual, and they know it, and you know it. That is a miracle that God does.

One of the things that we need to realize is that we are dealing with all of the problems of all the Churches of God being thrown in with what we have to do to help them. That compounds it and makes it even more difficult. But one of the things that has been problematic in the past is that everything has been shoved to the ministry to solve. When that comes about, and they bring up things to me or to others, we say, 'Okay, here are the Scriptural tools, you have to solve your problems by going to Christ.' And that's what's so important. ***You have to go to Jesus Christ and let Him work your problems out!***

If you need some help and counsel, we'd be glad to do that, but the Christian Biblical Church of God is not a hierarchical church. It is not a

mother/father church to solve all your problems. It's not a babysitter church. We'll do handholding when handholding needs to be done. We will pray for each other, we will encourage each other; we will help and strengthen each other. But God expects us all, in the maturity of growing up in to Christ, to use the spiritual tools that we need to come to that maturity.

Luke 4:16: "And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and according to His custom, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day and stood up to read. And there was given Him *the* book of the prophet Isaiah; and when He had unrolled the scroll, He found the place where it was written, '*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; for this reason, He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal those who are brokenhearted...*'" (vs 16-18).

One of the hardest hearts to heal are those that have been broken two or three times. There is a great resistance and a great mistrust of anything and anyone, and this becomes a greater problem. That's why it's so very important, brethren, that in whatever help you can give to anyone, you help them stand on their own two feet. You help them look to the Scriptures to understand what they need to do out of it. ***You point them toward God the Father and Jesus Christ.***

- no organization can save
- no church can save
- no minister can save
- ***only Christ can save***

We all need to keep that in perspective. "...to proclaim pardon to *the* captives..." (v 18). There are those who are:

- captivated by churches
- captivated by ideas
- captivated by demons and Satan the devil

They need to be brought out from underneath this when God calls them, and at that point of their minds being opened, and there's something there to help them with.

"...and recovery of sight to *the* blind..." (v 18). I would have to say that is the greatest thing that we're able to do here in being able to point out the Scriptures. Christ is 'the Way, the Truth, and the Life,' and *only He* can open the mind, which then is recovering the sight of the blind. Too many people have come to the point that they have put down the spiritual shutters. I know one man who was asked—he being an evangelist—'How can you put up with all this political nonsense and corruption that's going

on?’ He said, ‘Very simple, I just have steel blinders and I pull them right down over my eyes. I see nothing and hear nothing.’ And obviously, then, he ended up *doing nothing*. Well, Christ is removing that.

“...to send forth in deliverance those who have been crushed, to proclaim *the* acceptable year of *the* Lord” (vs 18-19). If we’re going to do any of the ministry of Christ, that is all part of it. Where does it begin?

- It begins by knowledge and understanding of what is right and wrong!
- It begins by learning from the experiences that we have gone through, to help them understand what they are going through!
- It begins with one of the most important things we need to realize, which is this:

It’s like a man I was talking to said, ‘If I leave this church, will I lose my salvation?’ And I asked him:

- Can the church save you? *No!*
- Did the church call you? *No!*
- Did the church give you the Holy Spirit? *No!*
- Who did? *Jesus Christ!*
- If you leave a physical organization, have you left Christ? *No!*

‘What I want you to do, I want you to take your time and *prove everything*. I don’t want you to just up and leave, and then find out that you weren’t prepared. So, you prove everything. You need to understand that *God alone* can help, and *God alone* can heal. You need to realize that God is not going to take salvation from you.’

Salvation in these things begins with the *knowledge of forgiveness*; and forgiveness is so important. How many people are going around with a guilty conscience, worried about this, worried about that, worried about the other thing? Guilty conscience! Why do you have a guilty conscience? Are you afraid God won’t forgive? God doesn’t want you to have a guilty conscience. That’s important to really understand and realize.

- What has a guilty conscience ever solved?
- Have you ever changed anything because you felt guilty for however long you felt guilty?
- Did that change anything?
- Did it make it right?
- Did it correct it?
- *No!*

You have to do exactly as Jesus did. Luke 23 is very profound because:

- it has to do with the Passover

- It has to do with the attitude of Christ
- it has to do with the attitude of those who were doing things that they knew better, that they should not do them, but did them
- it also has to do with one of the most important things:

Remember that Jesus said He was preaching ‘the acceptable year of the Lord,’ which He is telling you, ‘***you are accepted of Me.***’ What is the greatest acceptance that a person can receive when they know they have done wrong? ***Forgiveness!***

I don’t know whether these people repented, but right after they had crucified Jesus and stuck up the stake, there He was hanging on it; and Jesus could look down on them parting His garment and so forth.

Luke 23:34: “Then Jesus said, ‘Father, **forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.**’....” That, brethren, is one of the most profound statements of Jesus Christ in the entirety of the New Testament. We need to view this from many different points of view. This tells us that regardless of the physical things, which happens to us or what people do to us, we should be ready to forgive them. That needs to be upon repentance; this is not forgiveness in advance. In other words, *standing in the grace of God is not forgiveness in advance!* But ***it is forgiveness when you come to repentance!*** That’s important to understand.

But here there was no repentance at all. There was not even any knowledge that they were doing wrong. As a matter of fact, they probably thought they were doing the right thing at that particular point. They were so wrapped up in what they were doing in looking at the loot of the man they had crucified, that they parted His garment and were casting lots upon it. And yet, Jesus said, “...‘Father, **forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.**’....”

I think this is also important for us to understand in our relationship with each other, because we have this unique phenomena, too. People knowing each other in one church together at one time, then split off and separate, and one group goes to one church, and another group goes to another church. Then out of that, they split out of that, and maybe go to another one, then another one. And finally, they get in contact with us. And that has happened when I was down in Opp, AL, people met each other for the first time in thirty years and didn’t know where the other one was.

It’s very important at that juncture not to remember the things that are in the past. Not to hold the same feelings and grudges and things that were held in the past. Not to use the same judgment that

was in the past. These are the things which divided and separated brethren and turned them one against the other. That's why it's so important to ***all be turned to Christ!*** And we still see this as a difficulty with some people coming to fellowship with the Christian Biblical Church of God. God has called us to leave all the baggage of the past behind, regardless of what the past is, and regardless of what the baggage is.

We're also going to see, as we get into this, that there are certain things that only God can forgive. There are certain things that we must forgive. But the things that only God can forgive, ***He alone can forgive.*** Let's see what Jesus did in His ministry. Let's see how He handled it; one of the very reasons that He came.

Mark 2:1: "And after *some* days, He again entered into Capernaum, and it was reported that He was in *the* house. And immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer any room, not even at the door..." (vs 1-2). So, we have a near riot going on here. Sometimes people just get carried away and just crush each other. That's about what it was like here. There was no room to receive them.

"...and He preached the Word to them. Then they came to Him, bringing a paraplegic borne by four *men*. And since they were not able to come near to Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was..." (vs 2-4). In other words, they just had roof tile laid up there, so they came in and they were uncovering the roof. That would be interesting to see—wouldn't it? You talk about zeal!

"...and after breaking *it* open they let down the stretcher on which the paraplegic was lying" (v 4). Here you are, right in the middle, and here he's coming right down, four men each having a rope, letting it down right in front of Jesus.

Verse 5: "Now, when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paraplegic, 'Child, **your sins have been forgiven you.**'" It was probably the man sick of palsy saying, 'I've got to be healed by Him.' *We can't get in there.* 'I don't care how you get there, you get there!' *Well the only way we can get there is get up on the roof.* 'Take me up! Get some rope! Let me down!' ***It was his faith!***

Verse 6: "But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts." Here's where the lack of forgiveness and lack of understanding comes in, which still brings friction to the people of God today.

All of those who fellowship with us today, I'm asking: please, leave all the points of friction behind. Repent of them! Make up with your brother. Don't have the attitude of the scribes and Pharisees,

because it's going to cause you problems sooner or later down the road. Besides, why would you really want this kind of attitude?

Verse 7: "Why does this *man* speak such blasphemies? Who has the power to forgive sins, except one, *and that is God?*"

It was a true statement! Part of the thing where the trouble lies is that *you think* you're right, and you generally have something to look to, to prove you're right. But does that mean you're spiritually right? That's a whole different question!

Verse 8: "And Jesus immediately knew in His spirit what they were reasoning within themselves, *and* said to them, 'Why are you reasoning these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paraplegic, "*Your sins have been forgiven you*"? or to say, "*Arise, and take up your stretcher and walk*"? But in order that you may understand that the Son of man has authority on the earth to forgive sins,' He said to the paraplegic, 'I say to you, arise and pick up your stretcher, and go to your house.' And immediately he arose and, after picking up his stretcher, went out in the presence of them all..." (vs 8-12). I wonder how he felt? *That must have been something!*

I think the day is going to come when those things will happen again; they've got to. I think they will when we all come to the point of really yielding to God and having the love of God that God wants us to have, and also when God decides to give out miracles. That's God's prerogative to do. We can't earn it in any way by doing—by keeping—any *works of law*:

- by keeping the Sabbath better
- by keeping the Holy Days better
- by tithing better
- by praying longer

We're not going to force God to do something. But if we love God and serve God and desire *His way*, then when it's God's time for miracles to pour forth, they will. But can you imagine the notoriety today that would happen in those events? Could you imagine what would happen with this? Immediately He would have how many television crews right at your door? Going where? *All around the world instantly, just like that!* Could we handle that? *I don't know! I don't think so!* So, I think God is merciful in keeping it the way that He has.

"...so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, 'We have never seen the like!'" (vs 12). And then He went forth on the other side, and so forth.

Verse 15: "And it came to pass that, when

He sat down to eat in his house, many tax collectors and sinners sat down with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him. But when the scribes and the Pharisees saw Him eating with tax collectors and sinners, *they* said to His disciples, “Why *is it* that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?” (vs 15-16).

Again, judging people by their outward circumstances, judging them from your ‘religious’ behavior to their lack of behavior, whatever it may be, notice what this does. That’s why there has been so very little forgiveness within the Churches of God, because of this attitude prevailing and still prevailing among us. We’ll talk about those who have greater sins and so forth; that some sins, even though God may forgive, disqualifies people from doing certain things. And that is also part of the forgiveness, that they no longer continue in certain activities.

Verse 17: “And after hearing *this*, Jesus said to them, ‘Those who are strong do not need a physician...’” In other words, if you think you’re perfectly spiritually fit and healthy and whole, you don’t need anyone to help you. That’s what He’s saying.

“...but those who are sick. I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners **to repentance**” (vs 17). There is the whole key. ***There is no forgiveness without repentance!*** There must be repentance! That’s what He was doing there with the publicans and sinners. He—by His example, love, understanding and healing—was calling them to repentance.

Let’s see that there are *some sins that only God can forgive*. We can pray that God would forgive them, but God is the only One Who can. Let’s understand that you can go through the book of Jeremiah, and you can see that the sins of the people at that time were so grave that God instructed Jeremiah, ‘Don’t pray for this people. Don’t lift up your voice for them. Don’t ask Me to do anything for them. I will not forgive them.’ So, there are certain things that ***only God has the prerogative to forgive!***

Exodus 32:30: “And it came to pass on the next day, Moses said to the people, ‘You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the LORD. Perhaps I shall make an atonement for your sin.’” What atonement could Moses make for their sin? *He couldn’t*—could he? But he’s saying, ‘Maybe I can do something.’ This is a desperate situation.

Verse 31: “And Moses returned to the LORD, and said, ‘Oh, these people have sinned a great sin, and have made themselves gods of gold!

And now if You would only forgive their sin!...” (vs 31-32). It doesn’t complete the sentence there. We don’t know what else is said, and Moses deliberately left it out when he wrote it.

“...And if not, I pray You, blot me out of Your book [of Life] which You have written.” (v 32). Moses could not even be a substitute sacrifice for all of those people’s sins. He couldn’t say, ‘Lord, blot me out.’ *No!* Notice what the Lord answered him:

Verse 33: “And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.’” In other words, there are certain prerogatives, which are for God alone to do.

Now, we may be ready in our own minds to forgive people of sin, who have sinned against us, but, on the other hand, *it’s only God’s prerogative to forgive certain sins*. For example: How many remember Billy Graham? He said, ‘My friend Bill Clinton, I forgive for whatever he’s done.’

- Did Bill Clinton sin against Billy Graham?  
*No!*
- How could he forgive him for anything?
- Is Billy Graham God?
- What did Clinton do?
- *I don’t know, but I forgive him!*
- Can you have that kind of blanket forgiveness?
  - ✓ That’s ludicrous!
  - ✓ That’s completely against the operation of the will of God!
  - ✓ *No!* Never happen!

God says, ‘Certain things are Mine, and Mine alone.’ We have certain things with each other that we need to take care of, which is ours alone. We’ll see that a little bit later.

Verse 34: “And now go, lead the people to *the place* of which I have spoken to you. Behold, My angel shall go before you. And in the day of My visitation I will visit their sin upon them.’ And the LORD plagued the people because they made the calf, which Aaron made” (vs 34-35). Let’s just keep that in mind. There are certain things that *God alone* can do.

Let’s see that when there is repentance, when there is *forgiveness* requested, then there’re things that need to be done. *Forgiveness* implies not just absolution of something that has been done, which is true, but it means that there must be some action, which must be taken by the one to whom the forgiveness has been granted. Remember what Jesus told the man who was healed when he came and he worshiped Him and found it was He who healed him. He said, ‘**Go and sin no more, lest a worst**

**thing come upon you'** (John 5). So we have that, too. This fits right in with the days of Unleavened Bread.

Isa. 1:1-15 is the whole corrupted nation, the whole corrupted religious system. Isaiah 1:16 "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean..." You have to take some action. There has to be some purifying. Purifying comes how?

Ephesians 5:26: "So that He might sanctify it, having cleansed *it with the washing of the water by the Word*." Also, washing has to do with repentance and baptism.

Isaiah 1:16: "...put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes..." So, not only in the repentance is there forgiveness given, but in the repentance there must be a putting away of the evil. Whatever difficulties there may be, they have to be put away. Don't necessarily wait for the other person to put theirs away first, because they may be waiting for you to put yours away first. You're in a game of 'spiritual chicken'—right? Who's going to be first? Let your heart be tender so that when you find out whatever it is, that you repent, and you're not in a game counting thing; who's first?

"...put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do good..." (vs 16-17). There's a whole re-education process that must take place. Isn't that what we've been going through? Isn't that what we've been doing in learning the Word of God? *A whole re-education process!*

"...seek judgment, reprove the oppressor. Judge the orphan; plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together'... [you can reason with God in a right way] ...says the LORD. 'Though your sins are as scarlet...' (vs 17-18). Don't carry that *guilt complex*. Put it all under the blood of Christ.

Yet, "...they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land" (vs 18-19).

Let's understand that even though this was extended to the people back there in the time of the Old Covenant that their sins were *only forgiven to the temple*. We're going to see that ***our sins and our forgiveness is much greater!*** This is important for us to understand, brethren. Whatever forgiveness there is, *we also have to forgive from the heart!* It has to be genuine. And when there is repentance, for those repenting that also has to be genuine. ***You can't fool God!*** We may be able to fool each other, but we can't fool God.

Hebrews 9:13: "For if the blood of goats and bulls, and *the* ashes of a heifer sprinkled *on* those

who are defiled, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh." That's all it did. It forgave them in the flesh, in the letter, because they didn't have the Spirit of God, it was a conscience cleansing thing, temporarily at that point. "...sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh."

Verse 14: "To a far greater degree, the blood of Christ..."

- 'This is My body which is broken for you'
- 'This is the blood of the new covenant which is shed for the remission of many'

Now the blood of Jesus Christ, "...Who through *the* eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, shall purify your conscience from dead works to serve *the* living God?" (v 14).

So, we have this greater sacrifice, which comes from Christ. Let's see what happens. Let's see how God deals with our sins and our iniquities. And this is important for us to understand. One of the most self-condemning, guilt perpetuating type of attitudes is this: 'Oh, I don't think God can forgive me!' We have many examples in the Old Testament, which we've covered many times, like Manasseh and Ahab who sinned great sins, yet, they repented and God forgave them. Have any of you sinned as any of those kings have done? *No!* Then what makes you think that God can't forgive your sins?

And that's very important for a hierarchical 'religious' controlling church to do; to control by fear; to not allow you to believe that God will completely forgive your sins, because that keeps the reins of control and intimidation and fear perpetually in their hands. That's why the Catholics have purgatory, where you go to the priest and confess your sins. You have to do the 'hail Marys' and 'our fathers,' and all of this sort of thing. Then you have to go to so many Masses; then you have to have prayers for the dead: 'You need to be careful that you don't go into hell. Maybe you'll go into purgatory. Maybe God will forgive you this a little bit.'

Well, God doesn't forgive a little bit. *He forgives it all or none!* This is something for us to realize. We live in a society that is riddled with this kind of fear. With that, do you have freedom in Christ? *No!* You're still enslaved to the idea of guilt and fear.

Hebrews 10:12: "But He, after offering one sacrifice for sins forever..."—which was the body of Christ (v 10).

He once for all "...sat down at *the* right hand of God. Since that time, He is waiting until His enemies are placed *as* a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has obtained eternal perfection *for* those who are sanctified" (vs 12-14).

When you're sanctified you are under grace. That means that being under grace, *upon repentance*, **you will receive forgiveness!** But if you are under grace and you are sinning, and you do not repent, then God is going to let the difficulties continue till you do.

Verse 14: "For by one offering He has obtained eternal perfection *for* those who are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after He had previously said, 'This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after **those days**'..." (vs 14-16)—the resurrection of Christ.

This is the covenant that He is going to make, "...says *the* Lord..." (v 16).

- If the Lord says it, **will it happen?**
- If the Lord says it, **is it true?**
- If the Lord says it, **do we also have our part to do it?**
- *Yes!*

We just read that, '...I will put My laws into their hearts...' (Isa. 1). That's why you have the burning desire to know the Word of God, because God wants to put it in you.

"...and I will inscribe them in their minds" (v 16). Just literally inscribe it. This is the *learning to do well* part. You've already had your sins forgiven. You cease the evil. Now you're learning to do the 'well' part.

Verse 17: "And their sins and lawlessness I will not remember ever again." This is not to give us a cavalier attitude toward repentance, 'Oh well, God will forgive this, and I'm under grace, and He'll forget it. So therefore, God is already under obligation; He's committed Himself to do this, therefore, I'll just do whatever I want, and when I'm ready I'll repent.' What's going to happen with that kind of attitude? *Never, never happen!* The repentance has got to be from the heart. If it's from the heart "...Their sins and lawlessness I will not remember ever again."

Now brethren, let's also understand this, and this is true: When you have a guilt complex, and you're guilty of things that you have done in the past, and you've repented over, and repented over, and you've cried, and you've boo-hooed, and you've worn out boxes of Kleenex, just throw them out, and the garbage man has a hard time picking them all up, or, handkerchiefs, or whatever. You go along, and you get up off your knees, and you're, 'Oh, I wonder if God forgave me?' **You just perpetuate this guilt!**

Then what you're doing, *you're not believing what God says* here. What you need to do, if you have that kind of guilt complex, ask God to

help you to really believe what He says, and to lift this guilt complex that you have, because *He will!* God can do that! God *will* do that! That's the true freedom, which comes in Christ.

Verse 18: "Now, where remission of these *is*, *it is* no longer *necessary to offer* sacrifices for sin." You can't have a greater offering for sin than this kind of offering. I mean, this is some covenant! You think on that! That is some covenant, that God will forgive and forget, remember no more. You have to ask God to give you the forgetfulness of it, too.

Verse 19: "Therefore, brethren, having confidence to enter into the *true* Holiest by the blood of Jesus..." Giving us direct access into God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Verse 20: By a new and living way, which He consecrated for us through the veil (that is, His flesh), and *having* a great High Priest over the house of God, let us approach *God* with a true heart" (vs 20-22). Notice the qualifications. **A true heart!**

- not a double-minded heart
- not a half-heart
- not a lying heart
- not a cheating heart
- *but a true heart*

"...with full conviction of faith..." (v 22).

- No wavering!
- No questioning!
- No doubting!
- No guilt!

"...our hearts having been purified from a wicked conscience, and our bodies having been washed with pure water.... [the water of baptism] ... Let us hold fast without wavering *to* the hope *that* we profess, for He Who promised *is* faithful" (vs 22-23). This kind of thing should encourage us to do something to each other, and for each other.

Verse 24: "...and let us be concerned about one another, and *be* stirring up *one another*... [or to encourage, to exhort] ...unto love and good works." What does this do? *This helps you want to fellowship with the brethren!* This helps you want to pray, to study, to do all the things, because now you are inspired from an inner motivation, by the Spirit of God from within. That's how all these things are accomplished.

Verse 25: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, even as some *are* accustomed to do..."

(go to the next track)

**Forgiveness for the Individual:**



Acts 3:19: “Therefore, **repent and be converted...**” Part of the converting is getting rid of the guilt complex. Not only having the laws and commandments of God written in your heart and mind, but having the carnality and the human ways put out. God’s way is much like the human body. The body that you have today is not the one you had a year ago. I believe it is every seven years every cell in your whole body has been changed, and you’re not the same person.

How did that happen? *By growth!* You have to eat, you have to sleep, all the processes that go on. So, there is also, *through the process of conversion*, this change. That’s why we have the Sabbath every week. Just like we need to eat food regularly, we need *spiritual food* regularly so that we can be changed. So, our spiritual cells are renewed day-by-day. Then as we go down in time we are not the same person that we were last year or the year before, or 10 years ago, 15 years ago, 20 years ago, *spiritually speaking*; that is not just referring just to the physical change that takes place. **We must be renewed!**

“...in order that your sins may be blotted out...” (v 19). That’s what God wants, the sins blotted out. **He came to forgive sins!**

Let’s see how this whole process now works together. That’s another reason why we have the Passover every year, so that we can:

- be renewed in the baptism through foot-washing.
- we can be renewed in our commitment to Christ through the broken body.
- we can be renewed in our understanding of the forgiveness of the sins through the shed blood of Jesus Christ

so that we attain this state right here:

Psalms 32:1: “Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.... [yours have been] ...Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity...” (vs 1-2). What does God impute to us because we believe? *He imputes righteousness!*

“...and in whose spirit there is no guile” (v 2). And that means, the removal of all the subterfuge of human nature, plus the removal of a guilty conscience. “...in whose spirit there is no guile.” So, when you have this guilt feeling, and you just can’t seem to get rid of it, though you repent of it, *God has already forgiven it!* God has already removed it, as far as He’s concerned. *You need to let it go!* You need to take it to God and say, ‘God, here, take it. It’s more than I can bear.’ **Christ already bore it for you!**

Verse 3: “When I kept silent, my bones wore away through my groaning all the day long.” Sometimes through sickness and sometimes through problems we are drawn close to God because we begin to see how weak we are.

Verse 4: “For by day and by night Your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden....” (vs 4-5). That’s what we need to do.

I know whenever there’s a time of sickness and difficulty, that’s the time when you confess to God. That’s the time when you ask God for help and strength. That is a great benefit that comes when there is sickness and difficulty and pain.

“...I said, ‘I will confess my transgression to the LORD,’ and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah” (v 5). We have *Selah* just one verse after the other, meaning: *stop, think and meditate* on what was just said that was profound.

Notice this promise, v 6: “For this *reason* let every godly one pray to You in a time when You may be found... [now it is a time when God may be found] ...surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come near him. You are my hiding place...” (vs 6-7).

Notice the complete change of attitude once everything is shifted to God, v 7: “You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall encircle me with songs of deliverance. Selah.” Again: Stop! Think! Meditate on this! This is profound.

Then God speaks back, v 8: “*You said*, ‘I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you, My eye shall be upon you.’” And that’s how we want God to be with us and deal with us.

Verse 9: “‘Be not like the horse, or like the mule, which have no understanding—which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you.’ The wicked has many sorrows, but His steadfast love surrounds him who trusts in the LORD” (vs 9-10). How? *When he repents!*

Verse 11: “Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.” This is what that kind of repentance is to do for us.

Sometimes you get really, really low. Psalms 51 is the repentance of David after his long sordid encounter with Bathsheba. In this kind of deep repentance you understand where sin comes from, *from deep within you!* And again, it’s just like as we drew the analogy that every cell of the physical body

changed, so then *everything spiritually must change, grow, be rejuvenated and be reinvigorated!* In doing this you discover things that you never discovered before.

Why is that? *That is because you did not have the spiritual strength to begin to grasp it until a particular point!* God will lay upon us no more than we're able to bear. Just think of what it would be if, when God first called us, He laid out the whole sum total of the whole character of carnality that each one of us had. It would be overwhelming! God reveals it bit-by-bit-by-bit. That's all a part of the growing and overcoming that God gives to us.

Psalm 51:1. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness..." There's no going to God and dickering with Him as to 'How good I am; therefore, God, You do this for me.' None at all!

"...according to the greatness of Your compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin" (vs 1-2). Why? *Because no human can cleanse himself from his own sins!* It has to be from God.

Here's the cleansing part that we can do. We have to acknowledge this, v 3: "For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me"—because he didn't repent. His sin was right there. You go back and read that whole account. That was really quite premeditated in what he did. He just thought for a while, 'Well, I'll just put God on hold and I'll work this out my way.' What happens when you do that? *It never works out*—does it? *No!* So, that whole sin was "...ever before me."

Now he's also talking about the punishment that he received, though his sins were forgiven. And what was that punishment that David received the rest of his life? God said, 'Because you have done this before the world, you have done this before the enemies, My enemies, and cause them to blaspheme, therefore, I am doing this before the world, and your household will be divided from this day hence. And the child that is born will die.' That He could never remove.

Verse 4: "Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight, that You might be justified when You speak and be in the right when You judge. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (vs 4-5). He wasn't born of an adulterous affair by any means. But this just merely means that *the law of sin and death* is given by inheritance to every human being.

Verse 6: "Behold, You desire Truth in the inward parts..." That's the whole goal of all of it,

brethren; the whole goal of the Passover; the whole goal of Unleavened Bread. How are we to keep Unleavened Bread? *In sincerity and Truth!* Where? *In the hidden parts! The inward parts!*

"...and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop... [a strong cleansing agent] ...and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness that the bones which You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities" (vs 6-9). If we want forgiveness from God, this is how we need to come to God.

When that is done, notice again, the same process: cease to do evil, learn to do well. Here we have the process here, v 10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God..." That's learning to do well—isn't it? 'I will put My laws into their hearts and in their minds I will write them.' Same thing right here.

Verse 10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." It is true, when you go along and have sins hanging, or problems hanging, what happens? How's your attitude? *Yuck!* You've experienced that—haven't you? *I've experienced it!* How do you feel? *Miserable!* God has got to renew it. God has got to straighten it out. He will!

Verse 11: "Cast me not away from Your presence..." How far away was David from God in this instance? *A long way away!*

"...and take not Your Holy Spirit from me" (v 11)—which meant that he was really concerned that he was ready to lose salvation because of it.

- How great a sin was that? *A great sin!*
- Did God forgive it? *Yes, He did!*
- Why? *Because God led David to repentance, and David received and accepted that repentance, and repented with his whole heart!*

Verse 12: "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and let Your free spirit uphold me." Then all the things will be right, is the sum of the rest of Psalms 51.

In Dan. 9 we find a different kind of prayer. In Psalms 51 we have a personal, individual prayer for one's own faults and mistakes. But in Dan. 9 we have a representative prayer, similar to the one that Moses gave, but in this case the one that Daniel gave. He prays not for himself, but he prays for all of God's people. The prayer is really quite long and quite moving. He confesses and admits all the sins.

One thing that is interesting, which I wrote in *The Christian Passover* book, and I put in this

whole prayer of Daniel, because it's so powerful and so moving, that this prayer was given in the first year of the reign of Darius. That very year the first group of Jews going back to Jerusalem took place. Six years later the temple was finished. So, this was a very moving and profound prayer.

We get the sum and the feeling of it. This kind of repentance and prayer is when one is praying for all of the sinful ones that have sinned. Brethren, this ought to be our prayer for all the Church of God. God is not done with it, yet, and God is going to bring back those that He wants. So, let's see if we can apply this:

Daniel 9:16: "O LORD, I pray You, according to all Your righteousness..." Notice, again, how this is just like the Psalms. Not according to his, or how great he was.

"...let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your Holy mountain. Because of our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people have become a reproach to all those who are around us. And now, therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and cause Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary that is desolate for the LORD'S sake. O my God, incline Your ear and hear. Open Your eyes and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name. For we do not present our supplications before You on account of our righteousnesses, but because of Your great mercies" (vs 16-18).

That's how we need to approach God in repenting—individually and collectively—then there will be *forgiveness*. Then there will be, as Jesus said, 'Lord, *forgive them*, for they know not what they do.'

Verse 19: "O LORD, hear; O LORD, forgive; O LORD, hearken and do. Do not delay, for Your own sake, O my God; for Your city and Your people are called by Your name."

Let's see how that applies in the New Testament. We can take all of these and we apply them collectively and individually. Let's come to the Epistle of 1-John; very important in relationship to the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread. The Passover represents *the forgiveness*. Unleavened Bread represents *the learning to do well*, ceasing to do evil. That's why you have the Passover first and then you have the Days of Unleavened Bread. Isn't it interesting, you don't have the Days of Unleavened Bread and then the Passover? What would happen if you had that sequence? *You would work out your salvation so that you would be good enough to take the Passover!*

No, it's the other way around. The way that you are worthy of the Passover is *you acknowledge you are a sinner*, and you need God, and you need God's Spirit; that's where you begin. Then you learn to do well and cease to do evil, because then it's *God in you* motivating the works, and not your own.

This is something we really need to learn and understand and realize. This is how you get rid of that guilt complex, that you don't carry it around as a burden; that you don't carry it around one for the other.

1-John 1:7: "However, if we walk in the Light..." And the Light is the Truth of God. And Christ is the Light Who gives us the way to go.

If we walk in the Light "...as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin" (v 7). How many times does it tell us He forgives our sins, *all of them*? We'll see how far, how thorough, how complete.

Verse 8: "If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins..." (vs 8-9). Who do we confess our *sins* to? *To God!* We're going to see a little bit later on, that we confess our *faults* one to another so that we may be healed. *You confess your sins to God!* Now there is a difference.

Verse 9: "If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us... ['give us a clean heart, O God'] ...from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us" (vs. 9-10).

1-John 2:1: "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And *yet*, if anyone does sin..."—which you're going to, because you have *the law of sin and death* within you.

"...we have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ *the Righteous*." (v 1)—advocating for you. Who is the accuser? *Satan!* He's the one who's trying to put you down. *Christ is advocating for you!*

Verse 2: "And He is the propitiation for our sins..." Propitiation means *the continual source of mercy through grace*. It is there all the time; never runs out. This is part of the fullness of Christ.

"...and not for our sins only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*" (v 2). And we know through the plan of the Holy Days, in God's time it's going to apply to everyone. Now then, it talks right after that about keeping the commandments, and so

forth; that's true. Whenever there is repentance then there is learning to do well.

Now let's see how far God removes these from us. We will see how all of this ties together. Psa. 103 is a wonderful Psalm. If you ever get really discouraged and really down, and you have doubts, you have guilt and you have fear. What you do is get out Psa. 103 and see how you can overcome all of this.

Psalm 103:1: "Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me... [His whole being] ...bless His Holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; Who forgives all your iniquities... [just like in 1-John 1] ...Who heals all your diseases" (vs 1-3). It's important to understand.

How is God going to heal every single disease? *The resurrection!* Won't that be the greatest healing possible? That's better than just a temporary physical thing in this life— isn't it? Isn't it better to be raised to be a spirit being, totally healed of everything physical? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 4: "Who redeems your life from destruction... [He called you to eternal life] ...Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies" God has done that tremendously—hasn't He? *Yes!* In giving the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, did He not do that? *Yes!*

Verse 8. "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in mercy. He will not always chasten, nor will He keep His anger forever. He [the Lord] has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (vs 8-10). That's a tremendous promise! That's a wonderful, wonderful thing to contemplate.

Verse 11: "For as the heavens are high above the earth, so is His mercy toward those who fear Him.... [we know that means the total love to God] ...**As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us**" (vs 11-12).

- if He forgives all your iniquities
- if He forgives all your sins
- if He removes them from you as far as the east is from the west

When have you ever read in a history book that east met west? Other than just a play on words of culture? *Never has!* They're in two opposite directions, never to meet.

Notice that He goes beyond that, v 13: "As a father has compassion upon his children, so the LORD has compassion upon those who fear Him, for He knows our frame; He remembers that we are

dust" (vs 13-14). God isn't going to lay upon you any more than you are able to bear.

Verse 15: "As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes, for the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and its place shall know it no more. But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear Him, and His righteousness is unto children's children, to those who keep His covenant... [that's why we're going to keep the Passover, because that is keeping His covenant] ...and to those who remember His precepts to do them" (vs 15-18).

As I mentioned, being in the grace of God is *not forgiveness in advance*. But what it is, it means that forgiveness is there upon repentance. Here's a good example of it:

Psalm 86:1: "Bow down Your ear, O LORD, answer me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul, for I am Holy; O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You. Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I cry unto You all day long. Rejoice the soul of Your servant, for to You, O LORD, do I lift up my soul, for You, LORD, are good and ready to forgive... [upon repentance] ...and rich in mercy to all those who call upon You" (vs 1-5). You can read the rest of the Psa. because I want to cover something a little bit different here.

We've covered forgiveness for a group, we've covered forgiveness for an individual. Now let's talk about forgiveness *one to another*. Let's come to Matthew 5, and see how important this is.

### **Forgiveness One to Another:**

Matthew 5:23: "For this reason, if you bring your gift to the altar..." Or you come to God in prayer. Since there's no altar, we're coming to God and the gifts that we give are the sacrifices of praise, and repentance, and encouragement for others, and so forth.

"...and there remember that your brother has something against you" (v 23). I would like to hope that through the Feast of Unleavened Bread that, especially in many of the fellowship groups that we have now, where there are brethren coming together that have been over in one place but now have been reunited through different courses together, and different problems, that you, if you have anything against one another, that you make a concerted, loving effort to get together and bury the hatchet by love and understanding. That's most important. So important that God says, if you remember that you have anything,

Verse 24: "Leave your gift there before the altar, and go *your* way..." God is saying, 'Look, I

don't even want to hear your prayer until you get this resolved.' Is that important or what? Have to say so, *yes indeed!*

"...first be reconciled with your brother..." (v 24). Don't we want to be reconciled to God? *Yes!* Then God says be reconciled to your brother. And you have to come to a meeting of minds. Sometimes it may not be possible. But you have to put forth the effort. Maybe putting forth the effort will inspire the other person.

"...and then come and offer your gift" (v 24). So, you do what you can to work it out.

Let's see how this is even on a daily basis. Here's a promise, Matthew 6:14: "For if you forgive men their trespasses..."—*as far as the east is from the west*, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. That's against you. There can be many forms of this. It can be serious. Sometimes it can be where only God can really do the forgiving.

[transcriber's note: the following is about a school shooting in 1998]

I don't know what they're going to do back there in Jonesboro, Arkansas, with all that's going on there. But I tell you what, it's going to be a grave and difficult situation indeed. *God alone can forgive!* The most that any of them can do is be understanding and accepting. If there's any forgiveness for those two lads, *God alone can do it*. No man can forgive what they did, *only God can!* But in order to get along with each other, or if they desire to do so, then there's going to have to be acceptance and understanding, realizing that only God can forgive them. The only thing you can do is pity those poor boys, that they're pawns in such a wicked society, that this type of thing would happen.

Verse 14: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (vs 14-15). That's very important to understand. You need to realize that.

If you're willing to forgive, but they are not willing to reciprocate, you have done your part—have you not? *Yes!* Then you can pray that God will put it in their minds to do their part. And that's what's important. Let's see how this works.

Matt. 18 is where God tells each one of us that we are to work out the differences between us on this basis. The responsibility becomes ours to do, if we are to be responsible, spiritual Christians. In a corporate hierarchical church, they cannot do this because it takes away their work. It takes away their control. It takes away their fear and intimidation.

First of all, we're told, Matthew 18:15: "So then, if your brother sins against you, go and show

him his fault **between you and him alone...**" We're talking about faults. That's important to understand. We confess our sins, and also our faults, before God; no question about that. But when we have difficulties with each other, most of the time it's because of a fault or a perceived fault.

"...If he is willing to hear you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not listen, take with you **one or two others**, so that in *the* mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he fails to listen to them, **tell it to the Church**. But if he also fails to listen to the Church, let him be to you as the heathen and the tax collector" (vs 15-17).

What follows is very important. This is what's so important, v 18: "Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on the earth will have already been bound in heaven..."—in relationship to *resolving these faults*. Had nothing to do with doctrine. Has nothing to do keeping of days. Has nothing to do with any Scriptures whatsoever. Has to do with the fault that you have agreed to solve.

"...and whatever you shall loose on the earth will have already been loosed in heaven" (v 18). You make the decision, wherever it is. 'Yes, I forgive you.' It's taken care of. It's done in heaven.

Verse 19: "Again I say to you, that if two of you on earth shall agree concerning any matter that they wish to request..." In relationship to what? *Solving the faults!* That's what it is: *overcoming the problem!*

"...it shall be done for them by My Father, Who *is* in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name... [to solve a problem] ...there, I am in *the* midst of them" (vs 19-20). We're talking about *the problem-solving* all along. We can say, 'Well, this does apply if two or three gather together on the Sabbath.' We can take that in principle, that is true. But the main thrust of this all the way through is with the problems.

Notice the response here by Peter, which shows that it's true, v 21: "Then Peter came to Him *and* said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?'" We're talking about sin or transgression with a fault.

Verse 22: "Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you until seven times, but until seventy times seven.'" There're going to be certain faults and problems that you're going to carry all your life. Is that not true? I know I have some that are still a problem today that I've had for a long time. Some of those things become a difficulty in my relationship with people. I try and do the best I can so I don't let them be problems. But because I'm human, they can become problems. That's what it's talking about.

Now then, He gives this parable here. He talks about the Kingdom of Heaven is like a certain king took into account of his servants, and so forth. You know the story there. He owed him 10,000 talents. He came to his lord:

Verse 27: “And being moved with compassion, the lord of that servant released him, and forgave him the debt.” Whenever you’re dealing with each other, and there’s a problem to be handled and forgiven, remember, God has forgiven you. so that you’re going to be very tender and forgiving that individual, though the problem may occur again down the road a little later on. *It’s a fault!* How many times? *Seven times seventy!*

However, notice what happened. When the forgiveness was given, that servant went out, found someone who owed him a hundred pence. He took him and just did the same thing to him, ‘Pay me all that you owe.’ He said, ‘Have mercy and patience and I will pay you.’ And he wouldn’t do it. What he did, he threw him in jail till he would pay his debts. Then what happened? *Be sure, your sins will find out!* The lord found out. So he called the first man:

Verse 32: “Then his lord called him *and* said to him, ‘*You* wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt, because you implored me.’” He said, ‘I didn’t have to do it, but I did it.’

Verse 33: “‘Were you not also obligated to have compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had compassion on you?’ And in anger, his lord delivered him up to the tormentors, until he should pay all that he owed to him. Likewise shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each *of* you does not forgive his brother’s offenses from the heart” (vs. 32-35).

Notice how that flows all the way through the chapter about *faults one with another*. Don’t ever again be deceived of what you bind on earth is bound in heaven, having to do with doctrine. If anyone pulls that on you, you know they do not have a single solitary clue as to what’s going on.

Let’s see how we are to confess our faults. We saw how we’re to *confess our sins to God*. Now you confess your *faults one to another*, and in praying one for another. That fits in right there with Matt. 18.

James 5:14 also ties in with healing, which you could also tie it in with overcoming a fault, not that you’re anointed for a fault, but the process here.

James 5:14: “Is anyone sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him after anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick one, and the Lord will raise him up; and if

he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess *your* faults... [not your sins, your faults] ...to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed....” (vs 14-16). Not only of your sickness, but also overcome your faults. Wouldn’t you assume that that is part of what’s being done here? *Yes!*

“...*The* supplication of a righteous man prevails much, being effective” (v 16). And then he tells the whole story of Elijah.

Genesis 50—this is kind of prophetic as to why out of Joseph came the New Testament, rather than out of the preaching of the Gospel at the end, then out of Joseph.

Genesis 50:15: “And when Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, ‘Joseph will perhaps hate us, and will certainly repay us all the evil which we did to him.’ And they sent a message to Joseph, saying, ‘Your father commanded before he died, saying, “Thus shall you say to Joseph, ‘I beseech you now, forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin, for they did evil to you.’” And please now forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father.’ And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. And his brothers also went and fell down before his face. And they said, ‘Behold, we *are* your servants’” (vs 15-18).

Now notice, he could have said ‘Right! I’ll get out my jackboot and my big thumb, and I’m going to make you guys pay for it!’ *Nope!*

Verse 19: “And Joseph said to them, ‘Do not fear, for *am* I in the place of God? But as for you, you thought evil against me, *but* God meant it for good to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save a great many people alive. And now do not fear. I will nourish you and your little ones.’ And he comforted them and spoke to their hearts” (vs 19-21).

That’s the kind of attitude we need to have in the church today, brethren, the same thing. Many things were done with the thought of evil toward the people of God. But there comes a time when all of that has to be put aside. There comes a time when ***the forgiveness and the love of God must reign and have the power***, instead of the fear and the intimidation.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Luke 4:16-19
- 2) Luke 23:34
- 3) Mark 2:1-12, 15-17
- 4) Exodus 32:30-35
- 5) Isaiah 1:16
- 6) Ephesians 5:26
- 7) Isaiah 1:16-19
- 8) Hebrews 9:13-14
- 9) Hebrews 10:12-25
- 10) Acts 3:19
- 11) Psalm 32:1-11
- 12) Psalm 51:1-12
- 13) Daniel 9:16-19
- 14) 1 John 1:7-10
- 15) 1 John 2:1-2
- 16) Psalm 103:1-4, 8-18
- 17) Psalm 86:1-5
- 18) Matthew 5:23-24
- 19) Matthew 6:14-15
- 20) Matthew 18:15-22, 27, 32-35
- 21) James 5:14-16
- 22) Genesis 50:15-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 5
- Isaiah 1:1-15
- Hebrew 10:1-10

Also referenced: Book:

*The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter

FRC:bo

Transcribed: 6-5-14

## How We Conduct Our Lives & Forgiveness

Fred R. Coulter

Luke 7:31: “And the Lord said, ‘To what then shall I compare the men of this generation? And what are they like? They are like little children sitting and calling to one another in the marketplace, and saying, “We have piped to you, but you did not dance; we have mourned to you, but you did not weep.” For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you said, “He has a demon.” The Son of man has come eating and drinking, and you say, “Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners”’” (vs 31-34). So, Christ on the Sabbath would go eat with publicans and sinners. They weren’t even keeping the Sabbath, because He came to call those who were lost.

Verse 35: “‘But wisdom is justified by all her children.’ Now, one of the Pharisees invited Him to eat with him. And after going into the Pharisee’s house, He sat down *at the table*. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that He was sitting in the Pharisee’s house, took an alabaster flask of ointment” (vs 35-37). I think the parallel account shows that this is on the Sabbath.

Verse 38: “And she stood weeping behind Him, *and knelt* at His feet, *and* began to wash His feet with *her* tears and to wipe *them* with the hairs of her head; and she was ardently kissing His feet and anointing *them* with the ointment. But when he saw *this*, the Pharisee who had invited Him spoke within himself, saying, ‘This *Man*, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what the woman *is* who is touching Him because she is a sinner.’” (vs 38-39). So, we’re dealing with all these outward circumstances. What you do is judge the heart, just as they did here.

That’s why God says that we’re to love our enemies, because we were once enemies of God and He loved us, when we were still enemies of God. He called us and forgave us, so we are to love our enemies because who knows whom God may call. None of the Jews ever had any idea that God would dare call Saul who became Paul. If we did the selecting we certainly would have excluded him—wouldn’t we? After all he caused the death of many in the Church.

God does things and judges differently than people think. I’ll guarantee you this: nine times out of ten, when you look at someone and you make a judgment on their heart—based on their appearance—you’re going to be wrong!

For example—and I can say this myself because I was suffering with a great deal of pain: My

face and my countenance and my visage is very serious anyway, just naturally. But, when I’m suffering from pain and grimacing because of it, I look downright fierce! A person could come by me and say, ‘Did you see that look on his face? How could this man have the Spirit of God?’ There are some who have said that of me.

You can never judge the heart by the outward appearance. You can never judge whether a person is close to God by how tall they are, how short they are, how fat they are, how thin they are, how well-dressed they are. James says that ‘if a man comes in ragged clothing, and you put him out there in the back room,’ you’re judging his heart by his exterior appearance. ‘If a man comes in fine clothing and gold falling all down around him, then you take him up and given him the front seat’; and chances are he’s a plant and you never knew it, because you judge by the exterior appearance; you can’t judge by that! This is what was happening here.

This Pharisee was rejecting Jesus as a prophet and the Messiah because He allowed this woman to touch Him.

Verse 40: “Then Jesus answered *and* said to him, ‘Simon, I have something to say to you.’ And he said, ‘Teacher, say *on*.’” Here’s this intelligent Pharisee, and now he’s going to get a chance to show his stuff!

Verse 41, Jesus said: “‘There were two debtors of a certain creditor; one owed five hundred silver coins, and the other fifty. But when they did not have *anything with which* to pay *him*, he forgave *them* both....’” (vs 41-42). Brethren, *forgiveness* is the important thing!

Do you want God to forgive you when you sin and then repent? *Yes!* Then there also needs to be forgiveness for all those sins that people commit, which are not sins unto death. God also said that *‘if you do not forgive—from the heart—your brother their sins, then neither will God forgive you.’* That’s important to really understand!

Matthew 18 has to do with all kinds of relationships. This has to do with

- child-rearing
- husband/wife
- brother to brother
- with people in the world

There’s one way you can love your enemies the very best. If they’re really vicious and cruel, you pray, ‘God, I love them, but keep them far away



from me.' You can do that, but you still have to forgive them. You have to pray for them. You have to ask God to intervene and change their heart and mind.

Matthew 5:43: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'" The whole world is based upon this. All competition is based upon this. When a team loses and they don't have enough of what they call 'spirit' then what they try and do is work up hatred in the minds of the participants of one team against another team. So, you get all of this carnal competition and this is natural in the world. It is:

- *my home*
- *my family*
- *my father*
- *my mother*
- *my children*
- *my relatives*

Everything else is in a different category.

- if I like you, then I'll like you
- if I don't like you, I'll hate you

Verse 44: "But I say to you, love your enemies..." That's the hardest thing in the world to do; but everyone who is a sinner is an enemy of God. Who leads them to repentance? *God does! Why? Because God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on Him should not perish but have everlasting life!*

- Who *knows* when an enemy may change and convert?
- Who knows what's in the mind of a person, except God?

Just to give you an example: I see a lot of it when I do my water-therapy, which is really beneficial to me and gives me great exercise, I generally strike up different conversations with different people. You find out that some of those people are really suffering terrible things!

I talked to a woman and I did the very thing that I said not to do; I looked at her and said to myself *she's stuck on herself*. Anyway, I talked to her and found out that she's got a really bad hip that that's so bad that it becomes disjointed very easily. She's got back problems where the disc is getting thinner and thinner, and she's only 34-years-old.

Did I misjudge her? *Yes!* She's only there trying to get some exercise and therapy so she doesn't deteriorate any further. Why am I there? *For the same reason!* I imagine that she looked at me and said, 'He's stuck on himself; he comes in a turns off the music.'

When I came in yesterday, I went over to turn off the music and she said, 'I enjoy the music, can you leave it on?' Didn't even say 'please.' It's common thing that we do all the time. What we need to do in these things is ask God to help us to have true understanding of that person, because you never know, the person you may think is your enemy, in the time of trouble and difficulty may be the one that's going to help you when you're in trouble.

Another thing concerning Sabbath-keeping: If you are driving to Sabbath services and you have an accident, are you not happy that the highway patrol and ambulance people are there? *Yes, indeed! You sure would be!*

If the whole world were keeping the Sabbath, there would be no need for them to be there, nor would you be traveling. You can walk out the door of your house and walk a couple blocks down to wherever church would be, and that would be it. I imagine then, at that point, it would be very easy to have a whole thing where you just have a very easy potluck, everyone knows ahead of time what to bring, the table is there and you just lay it out and there's no work and you all fellowship. I imagine that we'll have an awful lot of that during the Millennium.

*Our circumstances are entirely different!*

What if your house catches fire on the Sabbath? Are you going to be like the Jew that you can't carry anything out of the house? You have to stand there and let it burn down? *NO!* You call the fire department. Aren't you glad that they are there? *Yes!* Is a fire on the Sabbath, an emergency? *I can't think of a greater one!*

Back to loving your enemy:

"...bless those who curse you..." (v 44). The normal reaction is to be angry and hostile and curse those that curse you, and say, 'If that's the way that it is, you go blankety-blank yourself,' and turn and around and walk away and shake the dust off your shoes as if you've done something righteous. But you haven't! You've sinned against God!

"...do good to those who hate you..." (v 44)—because you may turn their heart.

"...and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (v 44). That's hard to do! Why? *So that their mind might be changed!* How many times have you had difficulty with someone where you really 'kiss and make up'; or you've had a misunderstanding—on both sides—and neither one of you were able to give in until some little circumstance changed and you found out, 'That's not what I had in mind at all.' *Oh, you didn't, well, it sure looked like it when I looked at your face.'*

There is a requirement, v 45: “So that you yourselves may be *the* children of your Father Who *is* in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *on the* good, and sends rain on *the* just and *on the* unjust.” God loves the sinner as well as the righteous. He loves them in a little different way, but He still loves them. Otherwise, God would be killing sinners every time someone sinned. The ‘wages of sin is death’ and BANG! they would be gone and the world would be filled with corpses and God would be righteous and no human would be left alive.

- What has God done?
- *He hasn’t accomplished anything with that—has He? No!*
- Is that God’s plan? *No!*
- Does God want us in that same spirit? *No!*

Especially when you consider that God gave them *the law of sin and death* and they can’t help but do what they do. Who knows, if God would lead them to repentance, maybe they would do better than you. That you never know because God has called the weak, the despised; all of us have problems, and that’s why God called us. We all need to understand that. We all need to realize that as far as human beings go, being sinners that we are, we all are damaged goods to a certain degree. Especially those whom God is sending to the Christian Biblical Church of God have been put through the ‘meat grinder’ once, twice and maybe three times.

That’s why I liken what we do to the ‘dung beetle.’ It takes that which no one wants. An elephant passes through the jungle and they have these huge dung piles; they are mammoth. Within 20 minutes that whole dung pile is gone, because the beetles come and take that which no one else wants. They wrap it up in a ball and lay an egg in it, so it’s going to generate new life.

Likewise with what we’re doing here. God is taking us, the ‘skubalon’ of the world and He’s putting life within us, just like the dung beetle laying an egg in a ball of dung. That ball of dung to a dung beetle is so precious that they fight over it. As soon as he gets it big enough, he turns his head down and puts his feet up backward and rolls that thing off until he finds a little hole, digs a hole if there isn’t one, and buries an egg in it.

It’s kind of like us. So, the next time you get to really feeling hatred toward other people, keep that in mind.

There are two functions that are involved in this question: What if someone murdered one of your relatives? You’re dealing with two things

in that case. It’s hard to forgive him for what he has done, but also there’s the effect of the law. The law is that that person will stand trial for murder. What the law decides on it that still is applied to him though you forgive him.

You can have two emotions there! With God’s Spirit it’s possible to do so. Or you can forgive but not trust. They have to then rebuild the trust. You can forgive a person for thievery, but don’t put them in the middle of the treasury. God says, ‘Let them steal no more, and work with his hands.’

Verse 45: “So that you yourselves may be *the* children of your Father Who *is* in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *on the* good, and sends rain on *the* just and *on the* unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*?” (vs 45-46).

In other words, it’s just like a cloistered ‘good ole boy/girl club’ and you love each other and you care nothing about any other person, nothing about redeeming anybody, bring them back to Christ—what have you done? *You’ve done the same thing as the world!* That’s exactly what you’ve done. That’s very important in all relationships.

Verse 47: “And if you salute your brethren only, what have you done *that is* extraordinary? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*? Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect” (vs 47-48). That’s the whole goal of what this is about.

- Are we not to grow in perfection? *Yes!*
- Grow in grace? *Yes!*
- Grow in knowledge and understanding? *Yes!*
- How are you going to develop the character of God unless you have some trials and difficulties come along?

William Tyndale says, ‘If God sends you on a journey across the sea, He is going to send a tempest on you to test your faith whether you love Him or no; whether you trust Him or no.’ If we have everything good all the time, we would be thankful to God and merciless toward our enemies. Yea, you would be without understanding. Then he says, ‘Joseph saw in the vision the 11 stars worshiping him. But before that took place they sent him off and saw neither sun, moon or star,’ and that for a long period of time:

- to humble him
- to try him, to meek him
- to make him Godly

so that when he did come into his place, he would do it after a Godly manner. That's what God is doing to all of us. We would all love to not have any trials. But we would never learn anything! That's just the way human beings are.

Tyndale said that 'God sends trials to those that he loves and who are His friends. We have been called that we may suffer with Christ.' Not only is that a true statement, but that was also a prophecy of his own death. He said, 'God is no patcher'; He will build on no other man's foundation. God will not share His glory and honor with any man.

The glory and honor that God has here, we just read, that He let's His sun shine the same on the righteous and on the wicked and sends the rain on the just and the unjust, and provides food for the sinner and the righteous alike.

You might even know some people who don't know of God or keep the Sabbath, and they may be fantastic growers of food. Who makes it grow? *God does!* How does it grow? *By the sun, water and soil, and by the seed that God has created!* In that sense, God is no respecter of persons.

This is why it's so important that *we forgive*, brethren! When there is forgiveness, then there also has to be some action to back it up.

Matthew 18:21: "Then Peter came to Him *and* said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?'" If you put Peter's life together, after the seventh time he would bring out the sword!

- How would like to be forgiven just seven times in your life?
- How quickly would you use up those seven times?

I think most of us—if we were good—might last a week. But chances are the majority of us could not last from sunrise to sunset. That is:

- you do not go through the day and evil thought
- you do not say a wrong word
- you do not accuse anybody of anything
- you do everything perfectly
- you have no accidents
- you break no law of God, not even the law of gravity

We'd never make it!

Verse 22: "Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you until seven times, but until seventy times seven'—which is a type of infinite forgiveness! With real forgiveness something happens. When the other person is really convicted that he or she has

done wrong, then they realize what a blessing it was to be forgiven, and they love you the more. That's why God wants it that way! That's why God doesn't want it like it is in the world, because the world will give just a little forgiveness and then out come the guns.

Verse 23: "Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man, a *certain* king, who would take account with his servants. And after he began to reckon, there was brought to him one debtor who owed *him* ten thousand talents" (vs 23-24). That would millions of dollars today; maybe into the hundreds of millions.

Verse 25: "But since he did not have *anything* to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made." Forced into bankruptcy and to be thrown into jail. To be sold means to be made an *indentured servant*. How many years would this man have to be an indentured servant to pay off a debt like that? I mean, how much to do you make as an indentured servant? Thirty cents a day? Fifty cents a day? Let's be generous, \$10/hour or \$80 a day! Figure out how long it would take, with interest, to pay \$300-million. You would have a total lifetime of servitude.

Verse 26: "Because of this, the servant fell down *and* worshiped him, saying, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' And being moved with compassion, the lord of that servant released him, and forgave him the debt. Then that servant went out *and* found one of his fellow servants, who owed him a hundred silver coins... [a couple of bucks] ...and after seizing him, he choked *him*, saying, 'Pay me what you owe.' As a result, his fellow servant fell down at his feet and pleaded with him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' But he would not *listen*; instead, he went and cast him into prison, until he should pay the amount that he owed" (vs 26-30). The great lesson is coming:

Verse 31: "Now, when his fellow servants saw the things *that* had taken place, they were greatly distressed; and they went to their lord *and* related all that had taken place. Then his lord called him *and* said to him, '*You* wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt, because you implored me.... [just by asking he forgave] ...**Were you not also obligated to have compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had compassion on you?**'" (vs 31-33). That is the key!

There's another place in Eph. 4 that says, 'Don't let the sun go down on your wrath.' If you don't forgive, not only does it hurt the person that you do not forgive, *it hurts you even worse*, because you are contrary to the Spirit and the love of God!

What happens with forgiveness when there's a lack of it? It builds up in your mind and you never forget! God gives us a promise. Our sins and iniquities are removed *'as far from us as the east is from the west, and He will remember our sins and transgressions no more forever!'*

One of the things that is very important in husband/wife relationships is *forgiveness!* And it's vitally important with brethren. And part of the difficulty that we have in the Church overall—regardless of where the Church may be—is that brethren have been pitted against brethren and minister against minister because of

- the confusion of Satan the devil
- the lack of understanding of the love of God
- the lack of mercy
- the lack of doing Matt. 18 properly

—which is what this is all about!

- the lack of coming to the person
  - ✓ whether it be in the Church
  - ✓ whether it be husband/wife

If you don't go to the person and you let it build up, it's going to build up into a volcano! If this goes on for years and years, then you're going to find yourself in a position where you think everyone on earth is against you, and it's not them, *it's you!* Their attitude toward you is reflective of your attitude toward them!

You cannot live in a world of hate. Never happen! It will pickle you with bitterness that there will be nothing left of you but hatred. God does not want that. It's one thing to see the error and problem that a person has and understand it and forgive them for it, and remember the lessons by it; like we all have with Herbert Armstrong.

We're thankful that God used him to do what he did. God called us through what he was doing, but God was the One Who was doing it. When did Herbert get himself in trouble? *When he thought he was the one who was doing it, rather than God!* Then God let him have all kinds of errors and problems that I'm sure he repented of.

- Can we learn the lesson of that? *Yes!*
- Can we still love him? *Yes, we do!*
- Can we still appreciate all the good that he did? *Absolutely, not question about it!*

*But:*

- Should we condone all the evil that was also done? *No!*

One other thing I'll just mention along that line: Some people are mad at me because I don't pronounce Herbert Armstrong with every other breath, and because I try and find in the Bible things

that were greater than what Herbert Armstrong learned. Not because I'm trying to set myself up, because I figure that if all there was to the Word of God were the 18 things that Herbert Armstrong restored, then we would know everything that God knows, and Herbert Armstrong knew everything that God knew! *NO!*

There are thousands and thousands of things that God has for us. Not just 18! Am I putting him down by making this comment? *No! I'm just realistically appraising the situation!* I knew Herbert Armstrong well enough that if he were alive—and he and I had excellent relations—that I could sit down with him and talk over these things with him, and I think he would agree with every one because it's found in the Word of God. Not because I would bring them up; I'm incidental to the knowledge of God. I'm only a conveyer of information to you.

When I was on a trip to Opp, Alabama, there was a young teenaged girl whom I gave a ride to services. She said, 'What is it like to be the head man of the Church?' I said, 'I never thought of that.' I have never thought that, brethren, and I don't consider that. If Christ is not the Head then we're in the wrong place. Christ is the Head of every one of us. We are all brethren.

Christ told Mary Magdalene, 'Go tell the apostles that I ascend to My God and *your* God.' God is no respecter of persons. Even if He calls you, that doesn't mean that he has respected you above any other person. That just merely means that you responded to the call of God and He led you to repentance.

Matthew 18:32: "Then his lord called him *and* said to him, 'You wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt, because you implored me. Were you not also obligated to have compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had compassion on you?' And in anger, his lord delivered him up to the tormentors, until he should pay all that he owed to him.... [here's the lesson]: ...Likewise shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother's offenses from the heart" (vs 32-35).

With that kind of repentance and forgiveness, there's not going to be a continuation with it. If there is then there are other means available. If after the second and third admonition, reject him as a heretic and 'turn him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh; that the spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord' (1-Cor. 5)

That doesn't mean that we tolerate evil in our midst by being forgiving of those who sin. If they want to lead a life of sin, iniquity and come like so many do and feign repentance—want to have all the good things of God but never really change—put

on a show so they can continue in their way of doing things. Such as one evangelist who committed all kinds of adultery and fornication for years and years, and every time he'd get caught it would be boo-hoo, 'forgive me.'

Then he'd come back and it was just one thing after another. Well, more problems were caused in the Church because he wasn't rejected when he should have been. That's playing respecter of persons. It doesn't matter what a personality is; the greatest personality in the world can end up being the worst sinner. That's also important to understand.

Jesus could read the thoughts; God is a heart-knowing God; when Christ was here in the flesh He could know the hearts of people. So He knew what Simon was thinking:

Luke 7:40: "Then Jesus answered *and* said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' And he said, 'Teacher, say *on*.' 'There were two debtors of a certain creditor; one owed five hundred silver coins, and the other fifty. But when they did not have *anything with which* to pay *him*, he forgave *them* both. Tell *Me* then, which of them will love him most?' And Simon answered... [thinking to himself: *this is an easy question*] ...and said, 'I suppose *the one* whom he forgave the most.' And He said to him, 'You have judged rightly'" (vs 40-43). I imagine you could almost see the phylacteries and rise up on the border of his garments.

Verse 44: "And after turning to the woman, He said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman?... [now He got him] ...I came into your house, and you did not provide *any* water to wash My feet; but she has washed My feet with *her* tears and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head. You did not give Me a kiss; but she, from the *time* I came in, has not ceased to ardently kiss My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil; but she has anointed My feet with ointment. For this cause, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven because she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, he loves little.' And He said to her, 'Your sins have been forgiven.' Then those who were sitting with *Him* began to say within themselves, 'Who is this, Who even forgives sins?' But He said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you. Go in peace'" (vs 44-50).

So, it shows that with true repentance, there has to be true works of humility, because you desire to have these things forgiven. Not only with this kind of repentance, but you desire not to continue in it. That's what's so important concerning forgiveness.

Matthew 5:23: "For this reason, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your

brother has something against you... [that's Matt. 18; you have things you need to do] ...leave your gift there before the altar..." (vs 23-24).

God is saying that He does not want you coming to Him and expecting Him to do anything for you if you have got some big problem with other brethren, or husband and wife, or children. You cannot be in a right frame of mind or really exercising the Spirit of God the way you ought to if you have all of these things going on, and the hatred, strife and bitterness that goes with it. That always follows.

"...and go *your* way; first be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (v 24). Why? *Because you'll have a pure heart!* Can you have a pure heart if you have hatred toward someone? *No!* That's why God says to love your enemies.

In the first part of Matt. 5 are all the beatitudes, and all of these are blessings from God. Some translations translate 'blessed' as *happy*. But that is not a good translation, because happy is a condition of mind that you can be in...

(go to the next track)

...whether you're blessed or not. Blessing is a condition that you are in before God regardless of your outward circumstances.

Matthew 5:3: "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." If you could go back and look at the proud where Satan will say, 'Blessed are the proud that worship me, theirs is the kingdom of this world.' *You have the Kingdom of Heaven coming.*

Verse 4: "Blessed *are* those who mourn..." Can you be happy if you're mourning? *No, but you can be blessed if you're mourning for sin!* (Ezek. 9). God will put a special blessing for those who mourn for all the sins going on in Israel.

"...for they shall be comforted" (v 4). When you're down and out and need help and comfort, doesn't it feel good if someone comes and comforts you? *Yes!*

Verse 5: "Blessed *are* the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" (vs 5-6). That shows more than 18 points, I would suggest—wouldn't you? *To be full of the knowledge of God, because you hunger and thirst after it!* That's why, brethren, whatever we do, we never, never want to get into a position at all whatsoever that we are ever satisfied with what we now know and understand.

- That doesn't mean that we get rid of it!

- That doesn't mean that we neglect it!
- ***That means that we build our future spiritual life upon it!***

That we may be filled!

Verse 7: "Blessed *are* the merciful, for they shall find mercy." That's why God wants us to forgive one another. Do you want mercy? *Oh yes!* Even the movie producers understand that. What happens when the most vicious criminals are caught? *Don't shoot! Don't shoot!*

If you want mercy, *you give mercy!* You think of that the next time something comes up and you need to give mercy to someone, *give it to them!* If they abuse it, then help them to understand.

Verse 8: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart... [that's what all of these things are for so that you are pure in heart] ...for they shall see God. Blessed *are* the peacemakers, for they shall be called *the* sons of God. Blessed *are* those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven" (vs 8-10). We've been persecuted for that. No question about it. Not by the world, but we will be. But we've been persecuted by those who are supposed to be in the Church of God.

Verse 11: "Blessed are you when they shall reproach you, and shall persecute you, and shall falsely say every wicked thing against you, for My sake. Rejoice and be filled with joy, for great *is* your reward in heaven; for in this same manner they persecuted the prophets who *were* before you" (vs 11-12).

- this is the whole attitude that God wants us to have
- this is what we need to grow into

After all the troubles and difficulties that you find in 1-Cor. 1-12, and all the things that they were seeking after, what they were doing in Corinth was trying to turn God's way into a 'religion' and political factions, and different careless attitudes. They were striving one for another to see who was the greatest, who would have the greatest gifts, who could speak in tongues, and so forth.

So, Paul says, 1 Corinthians 12:31: "But earnestly desire the more *edifying* gifts; and yet, I show you a way far surpassing *all these*." The excellent way is this: ***IF you have the gift of God and you love God and you love the brethren, you have the greatest gift of all!*** You don't have to feel as though you have no gift because you don't teach, or that there's nothing you can do because you're a woman, or that you're a child and God has no respect unto you. That's all a bunch of carnal nonsense.

1-Corinthians 13:1: "If I... [Paul is talking

about himself!] ...speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. If I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge..." (vs 1-2). If people had that, they figured, 'My, I'm really blessed,' but you're not if you don't have love!

"...and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, ***I am nothing***" (v 2). Though you have faith to have any miraculous thing done that's necessary, and you don't have the love of God, *you're nothing!*

Verse 3: "And if I give away all my goods, and if I deliver up my body that I may be burned, but do not have love, ***I have gained nothing***." You have gained absolutely not one thing in the world!

Verse 4: "Love is patient *and* is kind... [that also implies *forgiving*] ...love envies not, does not brag about itself... [how great I am] ...is not puffed up. *Love* does not behave disgracefully, does not seek its own things..." (vs 4-5). God is able to provide for you regardless. You have to be prudent and things like this, but you're not seeking just your own; you're seeking others.

"...is not easily provoked, thinks no evil, does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the Truth" (vs 5-6). This is the whole attitude that the beatitudes of Matt. 5 that are intended to bring out; that you have the love of God.

Verse 7: "*Love* bears all things..." Regardless of the circumstances, you still bear it. Did Christ do that when He went to the cross? *No question about it!*

"...believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (v 7). There's always hope even in the worst situations, because ***all things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose!*** Always look at the bright *spiritual* side on it, because there is something that will help you.

Verse 8: ***Love never fails...*** Don't ever forget that, brethren. It is an absolute sure thing!

"...But whether *there be* prophecies... [of men, not of God] ...they shall cease; whether *there be* languages, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away" (v 8).

How many of you remember what you learned in the second grade? Well, that's all been vanished to the knowledge of an adult. So likewise, when you become a spirit being, all that we've learned as human beings will just be a foundation and the knowledge and everything will expand so much that it will be like it vanished away.

Verse 9: "For we know in part... [we only

know in part] ...and we prophesy in part; but when that which is Perfect has come, then that which is in part shall be set aside. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I reasoned as a child; but when I became a man, I set aside the things of a child" (vs 9-11). That's what we need to do spiritually.

Verse 12: "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then *we shall see* face-to-face..." We've got the greatest, most fantastic future ahead of us: to become the spirit sons of God the Father and Jesus Christ, and see Them face-to-face and live forever! Which means that none of the things that we're going through in the flesh—trials and difficulties—are going to count for anything, unless they build the character and love of God.

"...now I know in part, but then I shall know exactly as I have been known. And now, these three remain: faith, hope *and* love; but **the greatest of these is love**" (vs 12-13). That's what all of these things are about.

Back to the original question regarding the Sabbath: I think in love to us, in our circumstances that we have today, God has given us that one allowance—that's it. If we understand that and realize that it's not going to be that way in the Millennium, and also understand we're not living in the Millennium now, things are going to change drastically.

Right now what we need is the love of God and the forgiveness that God wants us to have with each other. That's going to help more than anything else. That's going to help give you the character of God, more than anything else, and the mind of Christ more than anything else. Really keep that in mind.

We've been talking about William Tyndale and how he was used of God, and different ones that God has used, even Herbert Armstrong and we're thankful for what he did that was right. We're sorry for all the things that he did that were wrong, and in the things that God used him to do, that is fine.

But no man, *no man*, **no man** that God uses is to exalt himself over anything! That's what's so important, and that's one of the fruits that you will see with someone that God is using. If God is using someone then he is going to be very willing to accept whatever difficulties or corrections that need to come along, because he does not want to do that which is wrong.

Likewise in things that people bring up to me. That's why if someone brings something up to me and I have done something that is not correct, I

need to know that, I need to change that, and I need to repent of it.

It's like I said before, I consider myself a teacher, and that's what I want to be—a teacher, minister and elder—and that's it! I don't want anyone to praise me or exalt me, because criticism comes from one side of the mouth, and praise come out of the other side of the mouth. You can't let things destroy you by praise, and you can't let things discourage you because of criticism. I just got criticized and lumped into all the 15<sup>th</sup> Passover-keepers! Need I say anything? *No! Nothing! I don't have to say anything!* Let God take care of them. There are certain things, when it's doctrinal, that needs to be said. Certain persons who are put up on pedestals and idols need to be exposed for that.

We can become superstitious about men and idols very easily because people are given to that kind of thing. That's the way human nature is. Part of the problem that we have today is the carnality carried over into the different Churches of God because I think we're finally getting to the point that people are beginning to understand that God doesn't want us to be 'religious.'

The world can view us as 'religious'; they can look in their Webster's' Dictionary and say that it says: 'Religion is the worship or service of God.' So they view us as being 'religious' and belonging to a 'religion.' But let me draw a comparison that is very important: ***We are called into a family relationship with God!*** Christ said that God the Father was His God and our God—equally. If we're called into a family relationship, then we are brothers and sisters in Christ. Christ is going to praise God in the great congregation of brethren, and 'He's not ashamed to call them brethren.'

The point is this: You do not call your family a 'religion.' No you don't! A family is a created relationship beginning with husband and wife, mother and father, and then children. Children are in a created relationship. Are they in a 'religion'? *No!* So, for us to say that we are to have a *way of life before God*, in a family relationship—and that is the important thing—is the whole focus of what we need to be concentrating on with the love of God to accomplish the purpose of God. This is what Paul is trying to bring out here.

1-Corinthians 3:1: "And, I, brethren, was not able to speak to you as to those who are spiritual, but as to those who are carnal—even as to babes in Christ." Babes in Christ behave like this: When they have some knowledge, they think they know everything. Then they get ideas, and those ideas are not rooted in the Spirit and the Word of God, then they go off on carnal tangents and create 'religion.' That's precisely what they were doing here.

Verse 2: “I gave you milk to drink, and not meat; for you were not yet able to *receive spiritual meat*; and neither are you able now, for you are still carnal. For since envy and contention and divisions *are* among you, are you not carnal? And *are you not* walking according to human ways?... [carnally] ...When someone says, ‘I am of Paul,’ and another one *says*, ‘I am of Apollos,’ are you not carnal? Who then is Paul? And who *is* Apollos? *They are* but ministers through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to each one” (vs 2-5).

Notice what Paul thought of himself, though he came with the authority of an apostle, he didn’t get up there and be all mad and shake his jowls and say, ‘Don’t you know I’m an apostle? *NO!* He said, ‘Who are they but ministers to serve, to do what God wants, because God has a work that is greater?

Verse 6: “I planted *and* Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.” Just like a seed. What work do you do when you put a seed in the ground and water it that makes it grow? *Nothing!* What God contained in the seed is what does all the work. I’m continually amazed at all the different flavors and tastes and things that can come out of seed, out the same ground side-by-side.

In our backyard we have two orange trees, two apple trees, one plum tree, two apricot trees, two pomegranate trees. Then we have a garden space to plant in where we can get tomatoes, carrots, radishes, onions, and all these things out of the same ground comes all these different tastes.

It’s the same thing with what God is creating. We are all different, but we are all in the ground of Christ. That’s the foundation, as we will see.

Verse 7: “Therefore, neither is he who plants anything, nor he who waters; for *it is* God Who gives the increase.” That’s what’s important, brethren!

- Christ is the Head of the Church
- God the Father gives you of His Spirit
- Christ in you is the hope of glory

All of those things is where it needs to be.

Verse 8: “Now, he who plants and he who waters are one, but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.” Now he’s talking of the ministry: himself, Apollos and so forth.

Verse 9: “For we are God’s fellow workers; *and* you are God’s husbandry, *even* God’s building.” All the brethren belong to God.

- Who called the brethren? *God did!*
- Who gave them the Spirit? *God did!*

- Who opened their minds to the understanding of the Word of God? *God did!*
- Who led them to repentance that they might be baptized? *God did!*

He may have used a man to be a preacher, but God still did the work, because the words of God are spirit and life! That is what convicts your mind and soul—isn’t it? *Yes!*

Verse 10: “As a wise architect, according to the grace of God that was given to me, I have laid *the* foundation, and another is building upon *it*. But let each one take heed how he builds upon *it*.” Now it gets down to us.

- How are we building on our Christian lives?
- What are we really doing?

Verse 11: “For no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ.” You can’t do it. No other foundation than Jesus Christ!

Verse 12: “Now, if anyone builds upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay *or* stubble... [I hope we’re building the first three and not the last three] ...the work of each one shall be manifested; for the day *of* trial will declare *it*, because it shall be revealed by fire...” (vs 12-13). 1-Pet. 4:12 is the fiery trial that we go through.

“...and the fire shall prove what kind of work each one’s is” (v 13). God will put us through it one way or the other. Many times at a time we least expect, and in a way we don’t realize that it’s going to come. If we knew how it was going to come, and if we knew what it was going to be, would we not then fortify ourselves so that we could withstand the trial? *Yes!* But then who would be doing the work? *We would!* So therefore, God gives us trials of a different sort, rather than what we expect; and it comes!

Verse 14: “If the work that anyone has built endures, he shall receive a reward.” That’s why we need to be careful how we’re building.

Verse 15: “If the work of anyone is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but *he* himself shall be saved, yet, as through fire.” I think that’s where a lot of those whom we viewed as brethren, when we look back and analyze about brethren, we know that we had true brethren who were converted; false brethren who never were—as Paul talks about false brethren. Also amongst us we had tares. I think we can begin to understand the difference between true brethren and false brethren, and tares and the wheat. That is they are always ‘religious,’ which appears good.

Even Satan himself appears as an angel of



light and his ministers as ministers of righteousness, but they're not.

God is going to be merciful in the end, and I think this is talking here about that he himself shall be saved even though he loses a certain amount. I think a good example of that is Sardis: 'You have a name that you are alive, but you're dead. Nevertheless, if you hold fast to a few things you'll be in the Kingdom of God.'

Verse 16: "Don't you understand that you are God's temple, and *that* the Spirit of God is dwelling in you?" We all need to know that, brethren and really understand that we do. That doesn't mean you're going to be perfect. That doesn't mean that you're going to be without weaknesses. *NO!* You're going to have weaknesses.

Verse 17: "If anyone defiles the temple of God, God shall destroy... [that's going to the unpardonable sin: defile it with wrong works] ...him because the temple of God is Holy, which temple you are."

Now Paul starts getting into some strong things here, because he built up to this point and the rest of it goes into 1-Cor. 4.

Verse 18: "Let no one deceive himself...." That's what everyone is subject to; that's why everyone needs to have someone who is going to come and iron sharpen iron, and look them in the eye and say what about this, that and the other thing. I need that as well as anyone else.

Just like you don't want to be treated like a fly and exterminated with a canon, neither do I. I'm willing! I don't want to keep anything that is not right. I don't want my human nature. I don't want my way. Unless my desire is—and your desire is—to let God have His way with us through Christ, then we may be found fighting God. We don't want to do that!

"...If anyone among you thinks *himself* to be wise in this world..." (v 18). Worldly wisdom is not going to bring spirituality. That's what Paul is saying.

"...let him become a fool, so that he may be wise *in God's sight*. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God for it is written, 'He entraps the wise in their own craftiness.' And again, '*The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.*' Therefore, do not let anyone boast in men..." (vs 18-21). I don't want anyone to glory in me; I don't want anyone to glory in any man, except the man Christ, risen from the dead, the Son of God!

"...for all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or *the* world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come—all are yours" (vs

21-22). The whole Kingdom of God.

What are you out there striving over who is controlling this and that. 'I follow this one. I follow that one.' If you're not taught the Word of God it doesn't matter who you follow, because you're just following a man. But if you're following Christ and are taught the words of Christ, then that's what you need; that's what I need. I come under the same rule as you do. Paul says, 'You that teach another, do you not teach yourself?' And with the help of others, learn! That's the way it needs to be.

Verse 23: "And you *are* Christ's, and Christ *is* God's."

1-Corinthians 4:1: "So then, let *every* man regard us as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." The apostles had something special beyond that no other man had. That is, they were given by inspiration, the mystery of God revealed to them to be written for us and the rest of the Church, and they had to be faithful in it.

Verse 2: "Beyond that, it is required of stewards that one be found faithful."

- faithfully handling the Word of God
- faithfully doing the things that God wants them to do

Verse 3: "But to me it is an insignificant matter that I am judged by you, or by man's standard; and neither do I judge myself." Rather, he uses the judgment of God on him. That's what we need to do: take the Scriptures of God and judge yourselves by the Word of God and the Spirit of God. That way we don't have to be judged and condemned with the world. That's what Paul is talking about.

In saying that he doesn't judge himself, he's also saying, 'I'm not looking to what I have done.' That's the way it needs to be with all of us. What we have done, we have done. If it's good, that's great! If it's bad, *repent!* What we did yesterday is fine, but we can't stand on that and say, 'Hooray! I did this yesterday, look at how good I am today.' Then you've just sinned!

Verse 4: "Now I am not conscious of anything against myself..." The Greek here is '*eke*': *out from himself*. He's not preaching himself, and that's the hardest thing for anyone who is a teacher, to not teach himself. That is the easiest temptation to get into. Then with that carry human authority and say it's God's authority, when it isn't.

"...yet, I am not justified by this; for the One Who is judging me is *the* Lord. Therefore, do not judge anything before *the* time; *wait* until the Lord comes..." (vs 4-5). Don't be thinking you

you've got it made is what he's saying here. If you judge things before the time, chances are you are *misjudging* that person! Without a doubt!

"...Who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the motives of *all* hearts; and then shall each one receive praise from God. Now these things, brethren, I have applied to Apollos and myself for your sakes; that in us you may learn not to think *of men* beyond what is written, so that no one among you is puffed up on behalf of one *of us* against the other" (vs 5-6)—which means that coming along 'don't anyone of you go puffing up Peter or Paul or Apollos and set them one against the other.' That's just politics; that's what Paul is saying here.

- Paul knew!
- Paul understood!
- Paul realized!

Verse 7: "For what makes you superior to *others*? And **what do you have that you did not receive?**..." This is one verse that I myself have personally taken as one that I really keep in mind everyday. ***I have nothing I didn't receive!***

- nothing physically
  - nothing spiritually
  - any understanding of Scripture comes by the Spirit of God
- Did I receive it? *Yes!*  
➤ Could I have done it on my own? *No! No way!*

This is what God wants.

Like this one teenaged girl asked: 'What does it feel like being the top man in the Church?' I never even thought of it until she asked it. I told her that. I said, 'I never even thought of it until you asked it, because Christ is the Head of the Church. And if He's not the Head of the Church, then we're all in big-time trouble!'

But if you also received *it*, why are you boasting as if you did not receive *it*?

- Christ is the Head of me
- Christ is the Head of you
- Christ is the Head of everyone

We are called into this family relationship. That's why Sabbath-keeping is so important. Not to make it a social club that we get together because we particularly like each other.

I hope we all like and love each other, but why do we come together? *Because God puts His special presence when we gather together in His name!* When we ask God to bless what we do in the name of Christ, we are asking God to put His

presence here. So therefore, that's the attitude that we need to have when we come, so He can put His presence here so God doesn't have to fight against all kinds of carnal attitudes.

- Can we not be all inspired more when we understand properly?
- When we have the right relationship with each other?
- That any of you can come to me and talk to me about anything at any time, and I can come to you and talk to you about anything at any time?
- Isn't that the way it should be? *Absolutely!*
- Why should it be any different?

I love and respect you, and I know all of you love and respect me. I don't expect to be treated any differently than you expect to be treated yourself. As a matter of fact, I don't expect to be treated in any particular way, that is of myself because I am me. Otherwise, that would be expecting something for my carnal self—wouldn't it?

That's why Paul said—and I'll include myself—if *I talk too much about myself then it becomes foolishness! After all, all the glory goes to God and Christ!*

"...you have that you did not receive? But if you also received *it*, why are you boasting as if you did not receive *it*?" (v 7)—meaning that you have inheritantly in you. 'Look at who I am!' *NO!* Then Paul really gets to them:

Verse 8: "Now you are satiated. Now you have been enriched...." If that's not the Laodiceans, I don't know...

"...You have reigned without us...." (v 8). You've made it into the Kingdom of God already!

"...And I would that you did reign, so that we also might reign with you. For I suppose that God has made us apostles **last**..." (vs 8-9). Anyone want to be first, let them be last; anyone want to be the head, let them be the tail. That's what Paul is saying here.

"...as it were appointed to death; for we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. *We are* fools for the sake of Christ, but you *are* wise in Christ..." (vs 9-10). They were saying that they knew more than Paul, Apollos and Peter. That they had all the carnality striving with them. This is an incredible book! It is so powerful!

"...we *are* weak, but you *are* strong; you *are* glorious, but we *are* without honor. To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and wander without a home" (vs 10-11). All of us have the blessing of

knowing where our bed is, knowing where our houses are. That's why I say and have tried to reiterate so many times, if, while the tree is green, we do not work, what will we do when the tree is dry?

Verse 12: "And we labor, working with our own hands. When railed at, we bless; when persecuted, we bear *it*; when reviled, we entreat; for unto this day we are as *the* refuse and *the* off-scouring of the world. I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but as my beloved children I warn *you*" (vs 12-14). He's warning them because they are getting away from Christ and getting into 'religion'; getting into all these carnal things that human beings get into.

Verse 15: "For you might have ten thousand tutors in Christ, but *you do not have* many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I did beget you through the Gospel"—by God the Father. That's what it's referring to. Paul was not saying that he was a father who begot them; he begot them in the Gospel by God the Father! Not by Paul's work.

Verse 16: "Therefore, I am exhorting you to be imitators of me." And he says in another place, 'As I follow Christ!' (1-Cor. 11). And followers means to be *imitators*. ***We have nothing that we didn't receive!***

Notice how Paul is building up to the biggest problem that they have in 1-Cor. 5—that great horrible incestuous relationship in the Church. And walking in and out of the Church and parading about it, bragging about it, and being puffed up about it. Thinking to themselves that they're wise and spiritual.

Verse 17: "For this cause I sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved son, and faithful in *the* Lord, who will remind you of my ways that *are* in Christ, exactly as I teach everywhere in every church." He's not saying '*follow me as I follow a man, but follow me as I follow Christ, as Christ has inspired me to teach in the Churches.*'

If someone wants to run off and go on false doctrine, based on what they do—and we've seen it time and time again, that if we're not focused on Christ and not truly living the very words that Paul has written, as he lived them; Paul wrote what he lived—then we are people most miserable!

Verse 18: "Now, some of you are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you; but I shall come to you shortly, if the Lord wills; and I will know not *merely* the words of those who are puffed up, but the power. For the Kingdom of God *is* not in words, but in power. What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of meekness?" (vs

18-21). What do you want? *He laid it on the line!*

It's better to come in the spirit of meekness. But there has to be reciprocity in the spirit of meekness on both sides. Otherwise, what would you have? *A carnal knock-down drag-out!* What does that accomplish? *Nothing!*

Then Paul says, 'Get rid of this problem! Put him out of the Church! 1-Cor. 6-13—where Paul talks about love—he brings out all their difficulties and problems.

I remember years ago I started a series in 1-Cor. and was sitting here with about ten of us, and when I got up to chapter six, it finally dawned on me: 'None you here have these problems, so we'll go on to something else.'

There was even one minister in Worldwide, years ago before there were a lot of problems in the Church, who said he could not understand why 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. were in the New Testament, 'We don't have any of these problems.' Well, he was almost like a prophet in reverse. Lo! They are coming!

That's what it has to be with all of us. Brethren, this is what God wants all of us to project to other people. That's what He wants. If we do that and we love each other, and do the things together that we need to do—and if you can help sharpen me, help me. If I can help you, *I'll help you*. We put it all together, and with God's Spirit and He blesses us, then what more could we desire. That's what's important.

There's another thing that affected our children and affected other people in the Church. When you first came to the Church of God, what did you expect? *You expected that it wouldn't be like any other church, because it was the Church of God!* Why should it be like any other church?

Then over a period of years, lo and behold, it became like any other carnal church in the world. That turned off a lot of people! A lot of people that maybe God was working with and was perhaps calling, or at least they were there evaluating whether they wanted to take the dip or not, were discouraged and turned away because of the behavior of people within the Church, and the behavior of the ministry. That is tragic!

Look at all the things that God has put us through! If we could learn the lessons from that, wouldn't that be great? If God can help us help other people see their way through all this, and out of it, won't that be great? And all the glory goes to God!

Also, I didn't realize it, but a lot of the young ministers were giving double standards. They had one standard for the adults and one standard for the teenagers. I didn't know that until I took the

basketball team and the cheerleaders from the Monterey Church down to Pasadena and they had a dance. It was the raunchiest, loudest rock music. It was just beyond belief.

I wouldn't let those from Monterey participate! The former minister from Monterey—who was a young suave up and coming political climber within the organization—was in charge of it. The music was so loud that I went up to tell him what I thought of it, and I got within one foot of his ear and shouted as loud as I could and he barely heard me.

I could see that it was too much to try and fight as one person. I told him what I thought and just walked out. Those things are designed to scramble the brain and to get people so they won't know how to think. Right in the Church!

*When you see the world in the Church, then you better know we're in trouble! **God help us!***

All Scripture from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Luke 7:31-41-42
- 2) Matthew 5:43-48
- 3) Matthew 18:21-35
- 4) Luke 7:40-50
- 5) Matthew 5:23-24, 3-12
- 6) 1 Corinthians 13:1-13
- 7) 1 Corinthians 3:1-23
- 8) 1 Corinthians 4:1-21

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Ephesians 4
- Ezekiel 9
- 1 Corinthians 1-12
- 1 Peter 4:12

FRC:bo  
Transcribed:6-5-14

## Forgive That You May Be Forgiven

Fred R. Coulter

Greetings, brethren! This Sabbath we're going to have a special pre-Passover message. It is something very important for us to understand in our relationship with God, and our relationship with each other.

For the Passover, one of the things the Passover does is renew the New Covenant. ***The New Covenant is a special relationship with God through grace by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin, the receiving of the Holy Spirit and for an ongoing relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ to grow in grace and knowledge until we come to the time of the resurrection;*** whether we die in this life and are resurrected or whether we endure to the end and are changed from flesh to spirit.

One of the most important things that God wants us to do is to understand His nature, and His relationship in relationship to us, and then we impart that same kind of relationship to each other.

Matthew 26:26—this has to do with when they were taking the Passover: “And as they were eating, Jesus took the bread and blessed *it*; then He broke *it* and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body.’ And He took the cup; and after giving thanks, He gave *it* to them, saying, ‘All of you drink of *it*’” (vs 26-27). That does not mean to empty the whole cup, but it means *all of you drink of it*.

Verse 28: ***“For this is My blood, the blood of the New Covenant, which is poured out for many for the remission of sins.”*** If there's any one thing that everyone wants, it is *forgiveness*! I want it! You want it! Every one who comes to God wants it! That's the whole basis of our relationship with God. As human beings we need forgiveness. We need *lots of forgiveness*!

When we go to God and ask Him to forgive us our sins, *He does*, and we have the blessing and privilege of coming right into the Holy of Holies, which is a new and living way. There is no better way than the New Covenant and access to God through His Holy Spirit in prayer. No other religion in the world can possibly even come minutely close to the greatness and superiority of the New Covenant. Let's understand how this is accomplished.

Hebrews 10:4: “Because *it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.*” Let's also understand that the rosary cannot take away sin, the Eucharist cannot take away sin. And the way that

the Catholics do it is sacrificing Christ every time they perform the Mass. That is absolutely contrary to the Scriptures.

The only One Who can truly forgive sin completely is God the Father through Jesus Christ. Every other means of forgiving sin in any other ‘religion’ *is not a forgiveness of sin*. It's just a ritual, a physical thing that people do, and no physical thing can accomplish the spiritual means of forgiving sin. Sin is not an exterior thing.

- Sin comes from within!
- Sin comes from human nature!
- Sin comes from the heart!

Therefore, the true forgiveness of sin is the operation of the heart: ***your heart in repentance to God, and God's heart in love toward you!***

That's why the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin. Here is how God solves the problem, and this also shows why we need to come through Christ:

Verse 5: “For this reason, when He [Christ] comes into the world, He says, ‘Sacrifice and offering You did not desire...’” It never really forgave sin. You need to understand that all animal sacrifices—even to the temple of God in Jerusalem when it was up and functioning before its destruction in 70 A.D.—only forgave sin to the justification of the flesh at the level of the temple worship. With the New Covenant, we are now dealing with the forgiveness of sin in heaven above before the throne of God. ***This requires a greater sacrifice, because it's a greater forgiveness!*** Christ did not offer any sacrifices. God really doesn't desire sacrifices. You can read Isa. 1 & 66 and understand that.

“...but You have prepared a body for Me. You did not delight in burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin. Then said I, “Lo, I come (*as it is written of Me in the scroll of the book*) to do Your will, O God”” (v 7). That's a special covenant between God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Verse 8: “In the saying above, *He said*, ‘Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin (which are offered according to the *priestly law*) You did not desire nor delight in.’” Why didn't God not have pleasure in it, even though He commanded it? ***Because those sacrifices never changed the heart!*** There was never any conversion of the person.

Verse 9 tells us why God did not have the

pleasure in it. Even though they went up and offered them—go back to Jer. 7 and understand that they even offered these sacrifices to the gods of the nations around them—right at the temple in Jerusalem! But lots of times people would offer the sacrifice of the animal and then go do their own thing again. God doesn't want that. Far more important than sacrifice is:

Verse 9: "Then He said, 'Lo, I come to **do Your will**, O God.'..." That's the most important thing, **to do the will of God!**

"...He takes away the first *covenant* in order that He may establish the second *covenant*; by Whose will... [the will of God the Father and Jesus Christ] ...we are sanctified through **the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all**" (vs 9-10). That means every one who repents, and also for all time.

Verse 11: "Now, every high priest stands ministering day by day, offering the same sacrifices repeatedly, **which are never able to remove sins.**" It means it can never take away sin, only justified to the temple.

Verse 12: "But He [Christ], after offering **one sacrifice for sins forever**, sat down at the right hand of God." In the earlier part of Hebrews, He's at the right hand of God as our High Priest and Intercessor.

Verse 13: "Since that time, He is waiting until His enemies are placed *as* a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has obtained eternal perfection *for* those who are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after He had previously said, 'This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after those days,' says the Lord: 'I will give My laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds'" (vs 13-16). This is accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit through repentance.

Repentance: you confess your sins, you ask God to forgive your sins, but then you also ask God for the help and determination to do the commandments and laws of God so that you don't sin. As we know in the New Covenant, it doesn't end up being overt sins that we are doing, but most of them are inner sins because you're overcoming human nature. And through that process God writes and inscribes His laws into your mind and heart.

Then God gives a promise, v 17: "And **their sins and lawlessness I will not remember ever again.**"

- God can forget them!
- God can put them away!
- God can never remember them!

*It be as if they never existed.* This is how you are blameless before God.

Verse 18: "Now, where remission of these *is*, it is no longer *necessary to offer* sacrifices for sin." That is offering of animal sacrifice or the offering of Christ again.

I hope you understand why the Catholic Eucharist and the Protestant communion—which is really not much different, except the Catholics say that the real presence of the body and blood of Christ is in the bread and wine—are *blasphemous to God!* It has nothing to do with the Truth of the Bible. You need to understand that. There is no more offering for sin, so there cannot be the offering of the sacrifice of the Mass every time the priest does it. It's an impossibility, though they do it, it's a vain thing, which does not accomplish anything.

Verse 19: "Therefore, brethren, having confidence to enter into the *true* Holiest by the blood of Jesus." Christ is our High Priest, and we enter in directly before the throne of God through prayer, on our knees. When we say, 'Our Father in heaven,' we have direct access to God the Father in heaven above. ***There is nothing greater than that in this life!*** There is nothing greater that you can do except come to God with a repentant heart and a contrite spirit. Brethren, we are not to take this lightly, either our repentance—which has to be from the heart—or our relationship with each other.

Verse 20: "By a new and living way... [not only to God, but toward each other] ...which He consecrated for us through the veil (that is, His flesh), and *having* a great High Priest over the house of God, let us approach *God* with a true heart... [quite different from Jer. 17] ...with full conviction of faith..." (vs 20-21)—no doubt!

When you go to God and ask, 'God, forgive me of my sins' and you really repent and really mean it from the heart, don't get from that prayer and say, 'I wonder if God forgave me?' You just lost everything you did! ***God does forgive! He promises!***

Go back and read the account of Manasseh and Ahab and understand. I have never met, nor have you ever met, anyone in the Church of God that has sinned as greatly as Manasseh or Ahab, and *God forgave them!* So, we have *full assurance of faith!*

Having "...our hearts having been purified from a wicked conscience..." (v 21). That we're not duopolistic minded, we don't have an agenda for ourselves with God, but we are simple minded and simple open-hearted to God.

"...and our bodies having been washed with pure water. Let us hold fast without wavering *to* the hope *that* we profess, for He Who promised *is*

faithful” (vs 22-23). God promised He would forgive. *He does forgive!*

Let’s see a little more about how He does this. Again, this is the whole operation of

- salvation by faith
- forgiveness by faith
- repentance
- baptism

which ties in with the New Covenant and all of that together.

Romans 3:23: “For **all have sinned**, and come short of the glory of God.” Everyone sins! We’re going to see that we sin much more than we really figure. But nevertheless, “...**all have sinned**, and come short of the glory of God.”

Verse 24: “*But* are being justified freely...” It didn’t cost you; you didn’t put money in vending machine; you didn’t pay a priest. You didn’t have to travel to heaven, you didn’t have to go under the earth.

“...by His grace through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus; Whom God has openly manifested *to be* a propitiation... [a continual atoning mercy seat for our sins] ...through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness...” (vs 24-25). This means that He counts *you* righteous. Imputes this righteousness to you, because when He forgives sins and wipes them away and remembers them no more, *you are righteous!* That’s the righteousness it’s talking about.

“...in respect to the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God...” (vs 25-26). It’s described again in a little bit different way by the Apostle Paul when he was writing to the Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:3: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *things* with Christ.” That’s what we need to focus on and understand; not that we go to the extreme and just focus on Christ and forget about prophecy; forget about understanding the Word of God; forget about those things as many of the Protestants are now doing. They’re saying, ‘Focus on Christ’ and have a gospel of feel good, get rich and all of these sorts of things, which is not the Gospel of Christ. You focus on all the spiritual blessings and the heavenly things.

Verse 4: “According as He has personally chosen us for Himself before *the* foundation of *the* world in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love; having predestinated us... [by calling us] ...for sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will, to *the* praise of *the* glory of His grace, wherein

He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved *Son*; in Whom we have redemption... [the remission of sin] ...through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, **according to the riches of His grace**” (vs 4-7). This is how God has this operate before us, our relationship with Him.

Let’s see how often we need forgiveness of sin. By our very nature, by the fact that we have *the law of sin and death* in us means that we have forgiveness of sin daily. Yes, many times more than once a day.

Luke 11:1: “Now, it came to pass *that* as He was praying in a certain place, when He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us how to pray, as John also taught his disciples.’ And He said to them, ‘When you pray, say, “Our Father Who *is* in heaven, hallowed be Your name; Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, *so* also upon the earth. Give us our bread *as* needed day by day; and **forgive us our sins, as we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us**; and lead us not into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.”’ (vs 1-4). There is also another condition: ***as we forgive everyone who is indebted to us!***

Let’s read the Lord’s prayer in Matthew; it’s just a little bit different. He adds something here that is very important, that we need to realize.

Matthew 6:9: “Therefore, you are to pray after this manner: ‘Our Father Who *is* in heaven, hallowed... [sanctified; Holy] ...be Your name; Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth, as *it is* in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors”’ (vs 9-12). This is not quite sin. These are things where people do things and you get upset about it.

Verse 13: “And lead us not into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one. For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.” Why do we have “...For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever...”? *Because that shows us how the things that we ask for are accomplished!*

Verse 15: “But **if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**” There is the condition, and this is something we need to understand. It’s very important with our relationship with each other. Especially having gone through the history of the Church and all of the difficulties and all the false doctrines, offenses, sins and all of the things of nonsense that has gone on in the name of God, which was really *practicing religion* rather than living the way of God, as we should be living.

We’ve all experienced it. We’ve all had things where people have done things to us that we

probably have even said, 'I'll never forgive that person.' Think about it for a minute. What position does that put you in? Verse 15: **"But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."** That's important! That's profoundly important.

Here's what we need to understand and the kind of attitude that we need to have. This can only be a Godly attitude. If we have this attitude, then God is going to intervene and do things for us. This is the attitude that Jesus had; if we're going to have the mind of Christ, this is the attitude we need to have. This is a very difficult one. Not only just your brothers or sisters in the Church, or your neighbor, but now Christ even gives *a requirement for your enemy*:

Matthew 5:43: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies..." (vs 43-44). How do you love your enemies? *Obviously, you can't agree with him!* You can love your enemy

- by wishing he would repent
- by doing no harm to him
- by staying away from him

You can love your enemy in many different ways; even pray for their conversion. It's possible! Look at the case of the Apostle Paul who was Saul before he was called. You talk about an impossible case of conversion. I would say, humanly speaking that would be an impossible case. But did God love Saul? And call him even though he was an enemy? *Yes, He did!*

"...bless those who curse you... [that's hard to do] ...do good to those who hate you... [that is difficult to do] ...and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (v 44). That's even harder to do.

You've probably heard the story of some of the things concerning William Tyndale. It is said that when he was in prison, before he was burned at the stake, and I think he was there about a year and a half. I think during that time he was able to finish all the rest of Old the Testament and give it to John Rogers who made the *Henry Matthew Bible*, which was the first one to be published after the death of William Tyndale.

It is said that his jailer, and the jailer's wife and daughter were converted to Christ, because of Tyndale's attitude, because of his love. So, it's possible. And even though God did not spare his life, through his death more was accomplished by the fact that you have a Bible here today, than any other event in the world. So, even in that God's blessings still continue.

Here's the reason why you're to do this, v 45: "So that you yourselves may be *the* children of your Father Who *is* in heaven..." In other words, if you don't have this attitude, you need to ask: Are you really the children of your Father in heaven?

Here's why: "...for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *on the* good, and sends rain on *the* just and *on the* unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*? And if you salute your brethren only, what have you done *that is* extraordinary? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*?" (vs 45-47).

Here's the whole goal in everything that we are to do, v 48: **"Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who is in heaven is perfect."**

This shows very clearly that you can't be perfected instantly. Perfection is a process, a growing, overcoming, a getting rid of sin. Obviously, loving your enemies is a process. You don't automatically, just by changing your thought love your enemy. You don't automatically pray for those who persecute you and spitefully use you. The natural reaction is, 'I'll get you!' Or like it has been said. You come to the Catholic priest and ask him, 'When I am hit on the right cheek and I turn my left cheek and hit there, what then do you do?' *You hit them back, my son!*

*NO!* That's not the way God wants it done! It's difficult! It is hard! Did not Jesus do this? Did not Jesus do exactly this same thing when He was on the cross? He said, 'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.' Did not Stephen say, while they were stoning him and he was on his knees looking up into the heavens, say, 'Lord, lay not this to their charge'? *Yes, he did!* This is a hard, tough, high, and perpetual spiritual standard that we need to continuously work at.

Let's see how this is put together. Matt. 18 tells us how we need to do it, and it also gives us some understanding of what God will do for us, or won't do for us. Here also shows another process of conversion.

Matthew 18:1: "At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Who then is *the* greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?'" You see the carnality involved here. Is this loving your neighbor as yourself? *No!* 'I want to find out who is going to be the greatest, and I want it to be me.' That's what James, John and their mother wanted. They came to the Lord and 'Lord, let one sit at the right hand, and one sit at the left hand.' This is the opposite of humility.

Now He's going to teach them a lesson, v 2:



“And after calling a little child to *Him*, Jesus set him in their midst.” Obviously, not children today. You couldn’t even sit them in the midst; they’re up and running and just monsters. But these are children under normal conditions.

Verse 3: “And said, ‘Truly I say to you, unless you are converted... [be changed from this attitude of self-exaltation] ...and become as little children... [looking to God, believing in God, loving God, helping each other] ...there is no way that you shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.” That’s quite a profound statement. Everyone expects that they’re going to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but are you really going to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven?

- here’s a condition
- here is a standard
- here is a test
- here is an attitude check

Verse 4: “Therefore, whoever shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.” When men pull themselves up by their bootstraps to their very highest, it’s all total vanity anyway.

I was in Staples and I saw one of the self-improvement programs: *Be Your Greatest Self*. It had a picture of this man who was kind of smug and I said, ‘Look what that thing breeds.’ I wonder what would happen if I went to one of his lectures and whipped out a Bible and said, ‘Here’s the standard? It would be a totally different thing.

Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven! Why? *Because what God is going to give you in eternal life, with a spirit body and everything that He gives you is going to be so much greater than anything you can be or accomplish on this earth in this life!* That’s why the conversion of the heart and mind and the love toward each other is profoundly important, because that leads to conversion and spiritual perfection.

Verse 5: “And whoever shall receive one such little child in My name receives Me. But whoever shall cause one of these little ones **who believe in Me...**” (vs 5-6). We’re going to talk about offenses. People today are very easily offended. I can understand why, because many people have been through so many things, that they come to the point that they have very little tolerance left. Nevertheless, these things are still there.

“...to offend, it would be better for him that a millstone...” If you look in *A Harmony of the Gospels* you will see that a millstone was turned by a donkey; which is something that weighs 400-500 lbs. That’s put around your neck and you’re cast off into

the water, you’re going right to the bottom.

“...be hung around his neck and he be sunk in the depths of the sea” (v 6). That has to do with you and I. There are going to be offenses in the world. Christ said that He came, not to bring peace but a sword. So, you also have that aspect of it. But that’s between the converted and the non-converted, and between those who are Christ’s and those who are persecuting.

Verse 7: “Woe to the world because of offenses! For it is necessary... [ordained; no way around it] ...that offenses come, yet, woe to that man by whom the offense comes!”

Here’s how serious it is. God doesn’t want you to commit an offense and go cut off your hand, because you’ll commit an offense in the next five minutes and you’ve got to go back and cut off the other hand, and you can’t do it very well with a foot. So, the lesson is that it’s going to take the same effort and the same determination to overcome offenses as it would as if you determined to lay your hand on the chopping block and whack it off.

“...and cast *it* from you; for it is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed than to have two hands or two feet *and* be cast into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to offend, pluck it out...” (vs 8-9). Well, you only have two chances because you only have two eyes.

This means that you put forth the effort to overcome the evil eye unless all of those things—criticism, looking down, all of that—as if your eye was going to be plucked out and cast from you.

“...and throw *it* away; for it is better for you to enter into life one-eyed than to have two eyes *and* be cast into the fire of Gehenna. Take heed *that* you do not despise one of these little ones...” (vs 9-10). Sometimes this is very difficult. Not only little ones concerning children, but little ones in the Church. It is difficult because God has called the weak, those of us with problems, so therefore, we are not a homogeneous instant mixing and matching where we fit together like a hand in glove. God determined it that way:

- so that we can have things to work on
- so that we can have things to overcome
- so that we can see our faults and our problems
- so that we can change

That’s why the whole purpose and operation is for change and for conversion! So that you begin to have a heart with the Spirit of God more like the heart of God, rather than the heart of a man.

He gave a warning, “...for I tell you that

their angels in heaven continually look upon the face of My Father, Who is in heaven. For the Son of man has come to save those who are lost” (vs 10-11). This has to be our attitude. This is why I’ve always said *as long as there is life there is hope!* There is always a chance of repentance.

That’s why for even those who have sinned grievously we do not wish evil upon them. Listen, if they sin evilly and they sin against God with determination:

- Don’t you think that God is very capable of taking care of them?
- Don’t you think that God is very capable of either leading them to repentance or bringing punishment and judgment upon them?
- If it’s His desire?
- Much more so than we?
- What could we really affect?
- What does it really affect when you are angry at someone and they don’t even know it?
- Have you affected anything besides yourself in your mind, heart and attitude? *No!*
- You haven’t done anything. Does the other person know? *No!*

Maybe they don’t even know that they have offended you. Maybe they are just sailing along in their life in blissful innocence and don’t know, and you’re sitting there all mad and angry. Furthermore, you never talk to them again because of what they did. How are they ever going to know?

We’ll see how Christ solves the problem here. He asks, v 12: “What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them has gone astray, *does he* not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and search for the one that went astray?”

Most people won’t do that today. *NO!* Their standards are not like that; they’ll say, ‘At least I’ve got 99. Most people when they do things today, they try and that’s good enough, whether they succeed or not you’ve got to accept them because they try. *No!* This shows it takes work. This also shows the work of Christ in coming after those of us who sin and go out of the way, and are temporarily lost.

I got a wonderful message from someone who has been in Worldwide and had almost given up on everything. Went to both extremes: from being a Pharisee of a Pharisee and ridged and going to make everything work to, ‘I’ve given it all up; I’m disgusted with men and I’m not going to do anything.’

God didn’t reject him. Christ didn’t cast him

away. Spiritually, Christ went looking for that one who was lost. After receiving the materials we sent, they are restored to God. This needs to be our attitude. This is why we call ourselves *The No Hassle, Recycled, Last Resort Church of God!* We say ‘last resort’ because the last resort is if you’re not right with God then everything has gone over the waterfall.

Verse 13: “And if he finds it...” The effort is made. Christ is not going to lose any that are truly His—He said so. So, He’ll find them.

“...truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray” (v 13). Remember the parable of the prodigal son.

Verse 14: “Likewise, it is not the will of your Father Who is in heaven ...” What do we pray every day? *Our Father Who is in heaven, Holy and sanctified is Your name! Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven!* What is the will of the Father on earth concerning those whom He has called?

“...that one of these little ones should perish” (v 14). It doesn’t say ‘except those who have problems; except to those whom I don’t like.’ *NO!* It doesn’t say that, because God looks at it entirely differently. What we are going to have to do is we have view it the way that God views it, especially in relationship to each other and our inner action with each other. Remember, He has given a warning, and we’re going to see how that warning will be carried out. We will see what that really, really means.

(go to the next track)

Let’s see that Christ gives us a very practical way of applying all these instructions that He has given to us. This is something that has not been practiced very much in the past. If you’ve come out of any of the corporate Churches of God, this was *never* practiced. Rather, they would have the minister do all the ‘policing’ of everybody in the Church and the settling of all problems for all the difficulties that were in the Church. ***That is against Scripture! He is not to do that!***

What happens with corporate middle management of a church is—which is completely the wrong approach; you need to understand that—the ministers are so involved in activities and settling problems between people that he doesn’t have time to study nor to pray, nor to teach the brethren how solve their own problems. And God wants you to solve your own problems. The ministry is here to teach and to counsel, but not to live your life for you. Not to take the burden of your problems and try and solve them for you in your relationships between each other. That becomes each ones own

personal responsibility.

Here's what Jesus said, and this is what needs to be, because too many people take the attitude, 'Well, I'll never speak to that person again.' You just cut yourself off from God, because you're going contrary to Jesus' instructions.

Verse 15: "So then, if your brother sins against you..." Go tell the minister, or the minister's spy, or the deacon, or the ministers wife, or the deacon's wife. **NO! NO!** That becomes busybodiness' and gossip!

He says, "...go and show him his fault **between you and him alone...**"

- now you're going to have to face each other face-to-face
- now you're going to have to be honest with each other
- now you're going to have admit your own faults and mistakes, whatever they may be
- now you're going to have get over your self-righteous attitude of never speaking to that person again

Because that makes you just as much at fault as the person who committed the fault!

He says, 'Your responsibility is to go to that person *alone* and tell him his fault *alone*.

"...If he is willing to hear you... [which he probably will] ...you have gained your brother" (v 15). You've also solved another problem. The difficulty is resolved between the two principle parties, therefore, it is not knowledge, news or gossip in the Church, and that is important. If you have a problem with someone—there are certain people who have problems with people and they write me. Look! I'm not going to answer the letter; it is your problem, your fault to solve, not mine.

You're trying to push your responsibility onto me or onto someone else. If there is a difficulty or problem between you and someone else—brother/brother, sister/sister, brother/sister, sister/brother, within the Church—then you are to, if you love God, if you keep His commandments, you're having the Word of God written in your mind, you'd better write this in as a way of practice. You go to that individual.

I've even had people say, 'I'll never do a Matt. 18.' Well, don't think you're going to be in the Kingdom of God, because you're not. Remember what Jesus said, 'If you do not forgive your brother their sins, neither will your Father forgive you your sins.' Yet, the first thing you do when you pray, when you get on your knees, is say, 'God, forgive me.' When God does, then you have a responsibility

toward your brothers and sisters within the Church.

Here is the first line of responsibility. Ninety-five to ninety-nine percent of all problems will be solved at this level. Because if you do that, if you pray about it, you have difficulty...

The way you do it is this: If you have a problem with someone, you say, 'Hey, I really need to talk to you alone, Matt. 18. Let's pray about it so we'll have a good attitude before we get together.' You pray about it before you come. Then you sit down and

- you put away all of your defenses
- you put away all of your self-justification.
- you put away everything that is resistant within you toward that person

and sit down to solve the problem.

If you do that, let the person explain completely what the problem is, how he/she feels about it, and maybe it's a completely mistaken thing. Many, many times these faults are not that real. Many times they're assumed in our mind as a fault. Many times people get offended because of *the way you think* that a person looks, and *you think* you know what they're thinking in their mind, therefore, that must be the reason that they have this look on their face.

Let's understand something. I can attest to that, because I'm one of these persons with the kind of face that is very easily mistaken, because of my personality and what I am. Maybe there are others in the same situation. That's why you have to come and put everything aside when you come one-to-one. When you do, do everything:

- with the Spirit of God
- with the power of understanding within you
- with mercy and forgiveness
- repentance and reconciliation

to each other to solve the problem, bury the problem, and do as Christ has done and forget the problem and go on.

If you come to a real obstinate difficulty, then v 16 takes place: "But if he will not listen, take with you one or two others... [make sure that these are people of character and responsibility and understanding, and knowing of the Word of God] ...so that in *the* mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."—so that you know exactly where everything is.

Ninety-nine percent of the problem should be solved here:

- step one—one to one (v 15)

- step two—take one or two more with you that you get everything established, work on a solution (v 16)

When you work out a solution then that also is to be a *private matter* not discussed with anyone, if it is worked out. If the problem becomes such that that doesn't work, then the final resort is public exposure. Rather than have public exposure first, *Christ has public exposure last!*

Verse 17: "And if he fails to listen to them, tell *it* to the Church...." This *does not mean* the ministry! What is the Church? Is the Church only the ministers? *No!* The Church is all the body of believers! *It's all the brethren within a congregation!* How do you tell it to the Church? Do you go around with a sign or placard? Do you have demonstrations? 'This guy offended me and I want the whole church to know it, and everybody on my side come over here.' The other person is walking up and down with his placard: 'This person won't listen to me and everybody on my side, come over here.'

*NO!* That's not the way it's to be done! How do you tell it to the Church? I think the way that it should be done is this: The two or three of you who went to the person who did not hear you, then you do go to the minister for this purpose. Not to tell the problem to him, but to inform him that there is a problem and you have done step one and step two and you request that he setup a meeting with the congregation. The elder can preside at that, but the Church has their input on the solution to it. So then, the problem is stated before the whole congregation.

Maybe if the congregation is so big there may be some who may be appointed to do that, and you have a smaller meeting. That could be possible. But with smaller churches and fellowship groups like we have now it can be handled that way. Then you sit down and you find out what the problem is, have the input from both sides. You look into the Scriptures, you resolve the problem, and the whole Church makes the decision. The elder or minister is *only* the 'chairperson' in this. He also, once the congregation has made the decision, can say, 'The ministry agrees.'

I think you would be surprised at the amount of wisdom that there is out in the congregations, when the congregations have been taught to exercise their minds, to use the Word of God, to have these kinds of relationships with each other.

If he refuses to hear the Church in that kind of meeting, then Jesus says. "...But if he also fails to listen to the Church, let him be to you as the heathen and the tax collector" (v 17)—and he is put out!

Let's see how the Apostle Paul handled this

same situation with the man who was committing incest with his step-mother. 1-Corinthians 5:1: "*It is commonly reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—allowing one to have his own father's wife. You are puffed up and did not grieve instead, so that he who did this deed might be taken out of your midst*" (vs 1-2).

They did not exercise the steps that we just covered in Matt. 18. Now Paul intervenes, because this is a widely known problem in the Church and he commands them what to do in following the instructions of Christ.

Verse 3: "For I indeed, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged *concerning* him who has so *shamelessly* committed this *evil deed* as if I were present: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, and my spirit, together with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ to deliver such a one... [because he didn't hear, he didn't listen and now the final step is put in place] ...to Satan... [put out in the world] ...for *the* destruction of the flesh... [whatever may happen; whatever God's judgment is upon him] ...that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (vs 3-5). That means that with this action he will repent so he can be saved. That's what they were to do.

We know that in it worked (2-Cor.). We know that the man repented. We know that the Corinthians purged this out of themselves—their attitude and his attitude—and Paul told them 'Whom you forgive, I forgive and you come back together with the way that it should be.' When that happens, then you must also be forgiving when that person comes back. Don't let that be a hammer that you hold in your hand over that person and your attitude toward him.

Please understand, God is perfectly capable of judging and taking care of it. *He will!* But people who get into circumstances like that, and especially today, we can apply that to people who are coming out of this society who have been involved in drugs and all kinds of things. When they come back and they are rehabilitated, you can't hold a hammer over their head and continually say, 'You better never slip back.' They know that! *Encourage them!* Tell them that they are doing 'good':

- keep up the good work
- keep doing the things that you need to do
- look to Christ
- look for His Spirit
- continue to grow and overcome

That's what God wants.

Remember Matthew 18:11: "For the Son of

man has come to save those who are lost.” And because now we are in a state of *being saved*, somehow it escapes our mind that *we are just as lost as anyone else without Christ!* All very important.

Verse 18: “Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on the earth will have already been bound in heaven...” What is Jesus talking about here? Binding and loosing doctrine? *No!* He’s talking about the solution of the congregation in relationship to the problem. Or the decision between one and one, between one, two or three—whatever decision you make.

What if someone borrowed a thousand dollars? Promised to pay it back, *promised to pay it back*, and now it came time that you really have need and they have the means to pay you back. You go to them and say, ‘please pay me back my \$1,000.’ *No, I won’t, I won’t do it!* You’ve gone through the whole process and the decision is made that this person now is to pay \$100 a week until the \$1,000 is paid. O maybe you have success in meeting one-to-one and he says, ‘Oh, I’ve got the money and I’ll get you a check tomorrow.’

If that’s the decision, you are bound in heaven above to go get that check and give it to that person and pay what you owe. That’s what this means.

“...and whatever you shall loose on the earth will have already been loosed in heaven” (v 18). What if the person says, ‘Look, I’m really broke, the most I can possibly give you is \$500. Will you accept that?’ *Yes, I accept that!* You loose the \$500 and bind the \$500. That is your decision.

Verse 19: “Again I say to you, that if two of you on earth shall agree concerning any matter that they wish to request...” This has nothing to do with doctrine; this has to do with your agreements between each other.

One of the most grievous problems that have been in the past is where brethren get into business together and they don’t do it right. Whatever you agree upon, on anything on the earth that they shall ask, you’re bound by that. If it’s one of those things that you now go to God the Father, because of this problem and you say, ‘God, help us to work this out. Let this be the solution to the problem.’

“...it shall be done for them by My Father, Who *is* in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there, I am in *the* midst of them” (vs 19-20). This can apply to two or three just getting together to study, to worship. This can apply to two or three getting together, in the name of Christ, to solve a problem. Christ is there in the midst to solve the problem. That’s why you do it

the way that God has laid it out.

These Scriptures have a whole lot different meaning than a lot of people have ever understood. Follow this along and you will see what I mean. That’s why Peter asked this question. After having all this instruction:

Verse 21: “Then Peter came to Him *and* said, ‘Lord... [I’ve understood what you said, but I have question] ...how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?’” God, I want a limit. Lord, I want a guideline. I want something definite that I can put my finger on and say ‘enough and no more.’

Verse 22: “Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you until seven times, but until seventy times seven.’” That’s 490! Have any of you suffered from a problem, difficulty, sin or mistake by someone committing against you 490 times? *I dare say, none of us!* So, if someone does something and they say, ‘Forgive me,’ then *you forgive!*

What if it’s a weakness and it’s one of those things that’s just kind of buried in their behavior pattern because of the way they have lived in the past, or because of their personality and it’s just one of those things that constantly happens? *You’re still to forgive them*, but also admonish them, ‘Please make an effort to overcome.’ You pray about it for them, and ask them to pray about it. That’s quite a thing.

Christ is telling us very clearly: He wants all of you to solve all of your problems between each other with the Spirit of God and the Word of God so that you’re not like the rest of the world. The rest of the world goes to court. If it’s someone in the world, you may have to go to court.

What if you back out of a parking lot and you smash into one of the cars there—one of the brethren’s car—and you mess up his car and your car, you’ve got to go to your insurance companies and get it solved. That’s okay. That you already have working within the land. That’s all right.

But Jesus is saying here, ‘I want all these problems solved and you solve them yourself, because it is your Godly responsibility toward each other.

I’m telling you that before the Passover, if you have a problem or difficulty with someone; if you have something and you have not done what Matt. 18 says, you go solve it *before* Passover. Let’s see why. Jesus is going to make a point to Peter. Not only 70 times 70, but now more importantly:

Verse 23: “Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man, a *certain* king, who

would take account with his servants. And after he began to reckon, there was brought to him one debtor who owed *him* ten thousand talents” (vs 23-24). That’s like 20-30 million today. Can you imagine this with some people today?

Verse 25: “But since he did not have *anything* to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. Because of this, the servant fell down *and* worshiped him, saying, ‘Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ And being moved with compassion, the lord of that servant released him, and forgave him the debt” (vs 25-27).

There are several lessons here. Remember the debt we owe God is that our sins killed Christ. He forgives us—doesn’t He? *Yes, He does!* That’s one lesson.

In dealing with each other, here’s another lesson that comes: When you have your sins forgiven by God the Father, you do not go out and do as this man did toward your brother. Rather than be grateful and thankful and go back and tell everyone that owed him everything, ‘I forgive you because I’ve been forgiven.’ *NO!* Notice what he did:

Verse 28: “Then that servant went out *and* found one of his fellow servants, who owed him a hundred silver coins... [a pittance little nothing] ...and after seizing him, he choked *him*, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe.’ As a result, his fellow servant fell down at his feet and pleaded with him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ But he would not *listen*; instead, he went and cast him into prison, until he should pay the amount that he owed. Now, when his fellow servants saw the things *that* had taken place, they were greatly distressed; and they went to their lord *and* related all that had taken place. Then his lord called him *and* said to him, ‘*You* wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt, because you implored me”’ (vs 28-32). You asked me and I had compassion on you.

That’s why, don’t go before God and ask Him to forgive your sins while you’re on your knees and confess that you’re a sinner—which you are—and have your sins forgiven, and then get up out of that prayer and you treat your brothers and sisters in a nasty, unforgiving way.

God is going to do something to you! You want your sins forgiven and forgotten. Yes, we all do! However, if you have the attitude of this unforgiving wicked servant, here’s what God is going to do:

Verse 33: “‘Were you not also obligated to

have compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had compassion on you?’ And in anger, his lord delivered him up to the tormentors, until he should pay all that he owed to him” (vs 33-34). In other words, all the debt was reinstated! **Do we want all of our sins reinstated upon us?** Think about it!

Verse 35: “Likewise shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each *of* you does not forgive his brother’s offenses from the heart.”

That’s the way we’re going to have to do it, brethren. This puts the responsibility on each one of us. This makes us responsible to overcome our own faults, sins and mistakes; makes us responsible to go to the one who has offended us—which is hard. It’s easier to go to someone and say, ‘Did you know...’ *I never knew...*

If someone comes and does that to you, you look them right in the eye and say, ‘Have your gone to that person, yet?’ *No!* ‘Then I don’t want to hear another word. You go, because that’s your responsibility before Christ.’ I tell you, verily all problems will be solved!

- That will stop gossip!
- That will stop busyboddiness!
- That will stop entering into other people’s business!

Every minister needs to teach that. Every minister who does not teach that does not uphold the Word of God, and does not teach the true teachings of Jesus Christ, though he may claim to be a minister of God. It’s that simple! We are now living toward the end of the age, and we’re down to cases.

- Are we going to do what God says and be converted?
- Are we going to have the humble attitude?
- Are we going to be forgiving of each other?
- Are we going to be responsible for what we say and do and correct our own problems?
- Are we going to go to the person and work out our problems?
- Are we going to do it *or* not?

I’ll tell you one thing, there is no way that we are going to enter into the Kingdom of God unless we have our sins forgiven. ***The wages of sin is death!***

- You see how important this is!
- You see how profound it is!

Let’s see how we make this work, because we are to make it work. It can work!

- If God said to do it, will it work? *But of course!*
- If God says to keep the Sabbath, will it work? *Yes!*

- If God says to keep the Passover and Holy Days, does it work? *Yes!*
- If God says to love one another, forgive one another, does it work? *Yes!*

Let's see that it also requires changing on both sides if there is a dispute or problem.

Ephesians 4:22: "That concerning your former conduct, you put off the old man..."—which is vengeful, unforgiving, not taking care of your responsibility face-to-face with the brethren, but you're going to the minister or someone else and creating problems and gossiping and being busybodies. You put that off!

"...which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts" (v 22). That is true, because you're just satisfying your own lusts to go *inform* about someone, and the problem and difficulty.

- What are you serving?
- Who are you serving?
- *Self and Satan!*

Verse 23: "And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind... [with Matt. 18, so that you do it right] ...and that you put on the new man... [which is Christ in you, being perfect as your Father Who is in heaven] ...which according to God is created in righteousness and Holiness of the Truth" (vs 23-24).

If you want the character of God created in you, then that's how you're going to do it when you have difficulties with brethren within the Church. It's not going to be solved any other way! You may have to really pray about having enough courage to go do it, but remember, you can always give yourself an easy opening by saying: 'Hey, So and So, I really need to talk to you, and it's got to be a Matt. 18.'

If someone says that to you, put your antenna up and you be willing to listen. And both of you set to resolve the problem and forgive each other and love each other, and bury it. That is creating true righteousness and Holiness in your relationship with each other.

Verse 25: "Therefore, let each one put away lies..." That's where a lot of the problems come. It's so easy to lie because lies are right there, because human nature is deceitful!

"...and speak the truth with his neighbor because we are members of one another. *When* you become angry, do not sin..." (vs 25-26). Don't carry it beyond. There's a right time to be angry, then get over it!

"...Do not let the sun go down on your anger" (v 26). Remember this, every time you're

tossing and turning in bed because you're angry or mad or wrathful, or there's a problem or something that hasn't been resolved, all you're doing is just bearing the whole thing yourself. Put it on Christ. Go to the individual and solve it. Why lose sleep anyway?

Verse 27: "Neither give place to the devil." Because that gives the devil a place!

Verse 32: "And be kind *and* tenderhearted toward one another, **forgiving one another**, even as God has also in Christ forgiven you." When we do that let's see what our conduct is to be, and let's see how the congregation and fellowship groups are to be.

Ephesians 5:1: "Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children." That ties right back with Matt. 18, to have an attitude as a child.

Verse 2: "And walk in love..." Not in strife, not in doubt, not in suspicion, not in antagonism, not in busybodiness toward each other.

"...even as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself for us *as* an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor" (v 2).

Here's how to avoid the problems: *Don't let them happen!* Verse 3: "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, do not permit it even to be named among you, as is fitting for saints."

Here's where a lot of offenses take place; it is the tongue with the speed of light plowing through people's emotions and feelings.

Verse 4: "Nor filthiness, nor foolish talking or jesting, which are not becoming; but instead, thanksgiving." Don't stand in the congregation and think that you can be justified because *you're right, and you won't talk to that other person!* That won't work. It won't work any more than these other things, because you put yourself in the same category as these:

Verse 5: "For this you know, that no fornicator, or unclean person, or covetous *person*, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

What we have to do, v 9: "(because the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and Truth); proving what is well pleasing to the Lord" (vs 9-10). That's what we need to do.

Here's what we need to do in our relationship toward each other. When we get the problem solved and we have them buried, we have them forgiven, we have them forgotten, and we go on. Here's what we are to do:

Colossians 3:12: "Put on then, as *the* elect of

God, Holy and beloved, deep inner affections... [compassion and feeling] ...kindness, humility, meekness *and* long-suffering; forbearing one another..." (vs 12-13). Someone has a little fault; don't let it upset you.

"...and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another; **even as Christ forgave you, so also you *should forgive***. And above all these things *put on* love, which is *the* bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which you were called into one body, and be thankful" (vs 13-15).

This is what God wants us to do. Brethren, if you have a fault, a difficulty, a problem; if any of these things have been between you—brother/brother, brother/sister, sister/sister—***go solve the problem and get it buried before Passover!***

All Scriptures from *the Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- Matthew 26:26-28
  - Hebrews 10:4-23
  - Romans 3:23-26
  - Ephesians 1:3-7
  - Luke 11:1-4
  - Matthew 6:9-13, 15
  - Matthew 5:43-48
  - Matthew 18:1-17
  - 1 Corinthians 5:1-5
  - Matthew 18:11, 18-35
  - Ephesians 4:22-27, 32
  - Ephesians 5:1-5, 9
  - Colossians 3:12-15
- 
- Isaiah 1; 66
  - Jeremiah 7; 17
  - John 17

Also referenced: Book:

*A Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter

FRC:bo

Transcribed: 6-4-14



## Are You God's Policeman?

Fred R. Coulter

I just want to relate something to you that someone in Phoenix told me about translating the Bible, and he said that he asked the question years ago: 'Why, with all the things that Church had, the college, the ministers and all the personnel and everything, they couldn't put together a Bible that would be accurate according to the original and according to the Word of God? The answer was, 'We'd get puffed up! We'd get all proud!'

I said, 'My experience in doing the Bible had exactly the opposite. It was humbling to realize how many men, in jeopardy of their lives, copied, translated, and preserved the words, so that we could have it, and how God watched over it; *God kept it!* It was really a very humbling experience—I have a copy of one of the original printed Stephen Text 1550—to hold that and look at that, and to realize I have something in my hands that is over 450 years old. There's the Word of God!

The Greek is a little different and is a little harder to read, but there it was. So, here we are down at the end-time and anything we can do doesn't puff us up at all, because God expects us to do it. He'll give us the strength to do it, and he will help us to do it. All the glory and everything goes to God. After all, just stop and think, everything we have, everything that we are, all comes from God.

That's what makes 'religion' so insane! More insane than atheism, which is one form of insanity. But insane from the point of view that *men* correct God! *Men tell God what to do!* 'Oh, we like this, God, but we don't want this. We'll still be good, but we don't want anything to do with this.'

I think that in going through and looking at the Old Testament as much I have, I've had exactly the same experience. Here's the Word of God talking about things and people, which forms the very history of the backbone of all of God's plan, coming down to the Church and we have it all right here in one book—the Bible. What God did in causing so many billions of copies of New Testaments and Bibles to be produced in the world, it doesn't matter who did it. God made it happen! If we can serve the Church and serve other people to help lead them to the Truth, that's what God has laid before us to do!

I thought that was quite an answer that was given, and here we are just little ole us doing things hundreds of millions of dollars couldn't do. It has to be what God desires, and that's the whole point of why we're here. We do what God desires! We do what God wills! We have to fight off the things that

we are confronted with. We have to overcome our own problems. We have to fight against the world, and fight against even so many judgmental brethren that end up being '*God's policemen!*' '*God's self-appointed policemen!*'

Everyone is a an Inspector Trousseau with his magnifying glass going around, or Sherlock Holmes, trying to find the least little thing, the least little evidence, and they miss the whole point of what God wants us to be and to have, and how we are to conduct our lives.

If there's anything we can do to help brethren come back to that point and see what they need to do, then we need to really emphasize it. The thing that's important to understand is that ***God did not create a 'religion!'*** God created a way of life.

- Cain created a 'religion'
- Nimrod created a 'religion'
- many other people since then have created 'religions'

{note sermon series: *Why God Hates Religion*}

All of them, one way or the other, end up being the 'policemen of God.' They also end up being the Vicar of Christ, and end up telling God what to do! They miss the whole point.

They love the Scriptures that say, 'God is love.' They love the Scriptures that say, 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whomever believes on Him may not perish but have everlasting life.' Then they march up to God and tell Him what to do. They love all the Scriptures about love, because it makes them feel good, rather than understanding that having the mind of Christ... and didn't Jesus say that He loved us? that we are to love one another?

What was one of the most important messages that Christ gave His disciples on that last Passover? '*Love one another as I have loved you, and by this all men shall know that you are My disciples!*'

In the comments that we have discussed here, many have experienced that they have been treated better by people in the world than by people in the Church, because in establishing righteousness they are gardeners in other people's garden. Instead of tending to their own weeds and their own problems, they are hoeing, trimming, clipping and rooting up in other people's garden.

Jesus talked about this; one of the very first things He brought out. Remember the account in

John 7 when they brought the woman caught in adultery—they failed to bring the man, because you can't commit adultery alone—and they were all wanting to have her stoned, and said, 'Master, Moses says that we're to stone such a one as this, what do You say?' Jesus stooped down to write in the sand. Everyone wants to know what was written in the sand. I think it was, 'Where is the man?'

Then He stood up and said, 'Every one of you who is without sin, you pick up the first stone.' They all began to leave beginning with the older to the younger. The older you get the more you realize that you're a sinner. That's a truism. The younger that you are the more right that you feel that you are, and crusader for the world and all this sort of thing. They were the last ones to leave.

In Matt. 7 we're told about judgment. This also becomes a responsibility. {note sermon series and booklet" *Judge Righteous Judgment*}

- judgment without mercy
- judgment with knowledge
- judgment without facts
- condemnation based on opinion
- talking about people
- busy-bodying into other people's business

becomes a practice in the Church. What we need to do is perhaps—and I think it would be wise to do so—bring some sermons on it, bring some Bible studies on it and use some good examples to help people so that they are not God's *self-appointed* 'policemen'!

You have that atmosphere on the news today. Every reporter is a policeman! Everyone has got to correct someone else! So, the whole world is in an atmosphere of who's right and who's wrong. Who did this and who did that and who did the other thing. Rarely when they get all the facts is it ever known.

Standing for the Truth is one thing. How you treat someone you see is sinning is another thing. So, Jesus covered it here:

Matthew 7:1: "Do not condemn *others*, so that you yourself will not be condemned." Because it always comes back—doesn't it? There are some people who are always condemning.

Verse 2: "For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you mete out, it shall be measured again to you."

Everyone wants mercy. When you get in trouble, you want mercy and forgiveness. Remember this: ***If you want mercy, you show mercy!*** If you don't want to be judged, especially by 'God's policemen'—who don't have all the facts—***then***

***don't you do it.*** Give everything a benefit of doubt and don't rush to judgment like in the Natalie Holloway case. No one knows what happened. They know she is gone. Where she has gone nobody knows. Until they find something that is conclusive, then they shouldn't rush to judgment. This is what Jesus says:

Verse 3: "Now, why do you look at the sliver that *is* in your brother's eye..." That's what happens. When you have a magnifying glass a sliver looks really big and you can stretch it all out of proportion.

"..but you do not perceive the beam in your *own* eye? Or how will you say to your brother, 'Allow *me* to remove the sliver from your eye'; and behold, the beam *is* in your *own* eye?" (vs 3-4).

Here's what happens when you rush to judgment without the facts, and you get all emotional. You don't take time to know and you make accusations that ought not to be made in the heat of the moment, because you're angry. You never stop and ask, 'Why am I angry?' The first thing to do is ask: Is it your business? If it's not your business, ***get out of someone else's garden!***

And since you're 'God's policeman' you don't give credit to God for being able to take care of it. Is God able to take care of it? *Well, He's God of the whole heaven and earth*—isn't He? Certainly He's able to take care of it!

Then He gives a piece of advice, v 5: "*You hypocrite, first cast out the beam from your own eye, and then you shall see clearly to remove the sliver from your brother's eye.*"

John gave us another admonition in 1-John 5:16: "If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *that is* not unto death, **he shall ask...**" He is to pray; put it in God's hands and then do what you can to encourage the person without being 'God's policeman.' Maybe that individual just needs some befriending. Or if it's a real serious problem, you don't get out and pound the drums and condemn and run an inquisition and ready to kill. What does God say? *He says that He will answer the prayer!*

Let's read what it says leading up to that, v 13: "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God in order that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue to* believe in the name of the Son of God. And this is the confidence that we have toward Him: that **if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us**" (vs 13-14).

- Is it God's will if someone sins that they come to repentance? *Of course, it is!*
- Are you God's messenger of repentance? *Not*

*unless God makes it absolutely clear to you that you are!*

Therefore, what you do, v 15: "And if we know that He hears us, whatever we may ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him. If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *that* is not unto death, **he shall ask** and He will give him life for those who do not sin unto death. There is a sin unto death; concerning that *sin*, I do not say that he should make *any* supplication to God" (vs 15-16). That's when a person is so far gone and out there serving the devil. They have separated themselves completely.

If someone is sinning, don't march right up and say, 'Oh, you're sinning. Don't you know you shouldn't do this? Don't you know you shouldn't do that?'

- Why?
- Have you heard?
- Did you see?
- Do you know?

Then you add sin to sin by becoming a talebearer and a gossip. That's what happens with people in the Church.

Let's see another thing that's important. Here is the whole principle. Here's what Christ desires.

Matthew 9:9: "And passing from there, Jesus saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office, and said to him, 'Follow Me.' And he arose *and* followed Him. Then it came to pass, when Jesus sat down *to eat* in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And after seeing *this*, the Pharisees... [who were 'God's policemen' of the time] ...said to His disciples, 'Why does your Master eat with tax collectors and sinners?' But when Jesus heard *it*, He said to them, 'Those who are strong do not have need of a physician, but those who are sick. Now, go and learn what this means: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." For I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners to repentance'" (vs 9-13). So, the brethren need to know:

- to be merciful to each other
- to be kind to each other
- to be loving to each other

Likewise we to them! The good lesson for the 'policeman' to learn is that love is a way of life. There's an awful lot that we can learn. Isn't that something that is interesting about the Word of God and about how we view things and take things and understand things? When you come back to Scriptures that we've gone over many times and go

over them again, we learn a whole lot more.

Actually, when you read 1-Cor. 13 here is a loving way of correcting. A lot of this is very, very corrective. But done in such a way that gives a desire to change. This is what we need to do whenever there's something that needs to be corrected. Paul applies it to himself. I think God inspired it to be this way, rather than saying *you*. The first thing Paul addresses is vanity. That's very important!

1-Corinthians 13:1: "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels..." I don't know anybody who knows an angelic language.

"...but do not have love, I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal." (v 1). Not *as* but *are*; you become that. The brethren need to realize that much of the policing that they do in a destructive or hateful manner toward other brethren is because of:

1. vanity
2. they want to exalt themselves and prove that they know more and can do better than the person that they're correcting

—and as 'God's policemen they better listen to me.'

Even if you have love, even the correction that you give, even the things that you point out that are wrong, are going to fall on deaf ears, because they'll say, 'Oh, listen to that!'

This is why, if you will notice in the sermons that I bring, very rarely do I do any correcting. If I can teach them the way they need to go, then where does the correction come from? *It comes from the self; from within!* This is what Paul is doing, and by using the application of himself, he removes himself from being the hypocrite and the one who is condemning. He's saying something that applies to everyone by applying it to himself.

What did he say of himself later on? *Christ came in the world to save sinner of whom I am the chief!* (1-Tim.). In applying this to himself he's helping those who hear to take it and apply it to themselves and say, 'Oh, yeah, what about what I say, what I think, what I talk about? Do I have love?'

Verse 2: "If I have *the gift of prophecy*..." Isn't this something that people get all excited about in church? 'Well, So and So understands prophecy. He doesn't understand prophecy, tell me.' In all the years in the church how the prophecies came to past and how we were told years ago didn't happen!

"...and understand all mysteries..." Understand everything that's in the Bible, figure out everything that you could possibly think of.

"...and all knowledge..." Don't they 'police' and say, 'He doesn't know his Bible very well.' You can almost hear it. Then when they tell someone else...

"...and if I have all faith..." (v 2). 'You don't have faith, people aren't healed like they ought to be.' Healing is important, but what about the 'trial unto death.' Is that not also important?

Let me just tell you this concerning faith, healing and taking care of things. You can do everything absolutely right; you can eat all organic food; you can avoid everything that causes cancer; you can have perfect health until the day you die, but you're still going to die! God is in the business of bringing saints faithfully to the end of their course, that they die in the faith! As a minister said that he 'delights in bringing a sermon for those who have endured to the end and are faithful to the end,' and so do I! I'll just say this: Given the average age of the Church, one of your most frequent activities in the future will entail funerals. It's not a matter of a lack of faith, it's a matter of faith *to die in the faith*. When people go around and start judging people's faith:

- he didn't have faith
- she didn't have faith
  - Why did this happen to them?
  - they must have done something wrong
  - Who knows what they have done? *God knows!*
  - Why should we judge them?
  - Why not pray for them?
  - Why not send them some flowers?

*Why not say:*

- we're praying for you
- we know it's difficult
- we know you're trusting in God
- we know you're doing everything you can
- if there's anyway I can help, let me know

If you had great ability to perform miracles, "...so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing" (v 2). The whole point of conversion is that we come to realize that we are nothing. That God *only* is the One Who is everything!

The book of Job has been given to show us that it doesn't matter how righteous you are, how many faults you can find in other people, how much you police other people, what good works you do and so forth, unless you have love...

When you analyze what Job said and what he did, he did not have the love of God! He was perfect in the letter of the Law, but he was lacking in love. There are many of us in the Church that fit into that category—don't we? We have a lot of

knowledge, but we're lacking in love. What we lack in love then our carnality comes out and we become condemning and judgmental. After Job challenged God and said, 'God doesn't recognize my righteousness; I wish God would come down and talk to me and I would let Him know how good I have been.' So, God answered His wish, after Elihu softened him up along the way.

Elihu stood up and said, 'I've heard you talk all this time, and my spirit is ready to explode in me; I've got to talk.' The first thing he said is, 'I perceive that the elder men are not necessarily wise. I have sat here and listened to you three. How dare you talk against God and say that you're more righteous than Him.' Here's God's answer to Job. This is God's answer to all of the 'policemen of God'; these *self-appointed* 'policemen of God.'

Job 40:1: "And the LORD answered Job and said, 'Shall he who contends with the Almighty instruct *Him*? He who reproves God, let him answer it'" (vs 1-2).

- if God is perfect, *which He is*
- if God is love, *which He is*
- if God is merciful, *which He is*
- if God is kind and longsuffering, *which He is*

What man is going to correct God? In a sense, when the 'policemen' take it upon themselves to correct people, in a self-appointed way, they're reproving God in this way: When there is a problem in a person's life, does God know it? *Of course, He does! Yes, He does!*

Now, if someone comes and asks for some help and you have an opportunity to point some things out to them, consider yourself first, and do so in a humble way. Admit your mistakes and your faults and some of the things that you have done. Tell them, 'I know how you feel.' So that you're not contending with God. "...He who reproves God, let him answer it..."

Verse 3: "And Job answered the LORD and said, 'Behold, I am vile!....'" (vs 3-4). That's the first time he said that. He'd been saying all along how 'good I am; I've done this and that and the other thing. I've gone here and done this, helped this and so forth.

"...What shall I answer You? I will lay my hand on my mouth. Once I have spoken; but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.' And the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, 'Gird up your loins now like a man. I will demand of you, and you declare unto Me. Will you even annul My judgment?....'" (vs 4-8). We can add in there:

- Will you disannul God's mercy?

- Will you disannul God's Spirit in that person?
- Will you disannul any of the work that God is doing by setting yourself up as 'God's policeman' to correct the problem?

Then furthermore, get your helpers—the busybodies around—to reinforce what you're saying and doing, and causing more difficulties and divisions.

“...Will you condemn Me so that you may be righteous? And *have* you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like His? Deck yourself now with majesty and excellency, and array yourself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of your wrath; and behold everyone who is proud, and abase him. Look on everyone *who is* proud, *and* bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; *and* bind their faces in darkness” (vs 8-13).

In other words, He's saying, 'Look, all of these things are My job, Job. You can't do them!' Stop and think:

- Who converts us?
- The policemen of God?

or

- God?

*God converts us!*

Verse 14: “Then I will also confess to you that your own right hand can save you.” You know the rest of the story, *Job repented!*

Very similar to 1-Cor. 13; if you have all of these things, all of these gifts and you are totally perfect in keeping the commandments of God—which you can't be, because if you were I don't think your vanity could stand it. God would probably make sure that you tripped up over yourself and you would find yourself sinning. People like to do 'good works' for God.

1-Corinthians 13:3: “And if I give away all my goods, and if I deliver up my body that I may be burned, but do not have love, I have gained nothing.” In the *King James* it says, 'give all my goods to the poor,' but it doesn't say that in the original. People can give their goods to causes to fund great things—not to the poor necessarily—and that's a commendable thing.

Here's the way of life and here's the correction, because the first part of it Paul applied to himself so that others would then in turn apply it to themselves. Now he's saying from v 4 to apply this to yourself, this is the standard. In the place of love, put your name there and let this be something that will correct you:

Verse 4: “Love is patient...” What happens

with 'God's policemen'? *They're the most impatient in the world!*

“...and is kind...” They are not, they're talebearers; they're finger-pointers.

“...love envies not, does not brag about itself, is not puffed up” (v 4). You get into other problems, too, of human nature.

All of this becomes a very correcting thing. If we focus on the Word of God and help the brethren focus on the Word of God—and I hope that if there are any *self-appointed* 'policemen of God' listening to this sermon, that you would take the correction from the Word of God and apply it to yourself. Wouldn't it be absolutely the most ideal church situation if:

- everyone loves each other
- prays for each other
- watches out for each other
- does not condemn anyone
- does not pull the 'policeman' routine
- does not pull the judgment routine

but puts it all in God's hands and encourages everyone to grow in grace and knowledge and overcome. That's what this is designed to do. That's what God wants us to do. That's what God wants the brethren to do. That's why, in handling certain situations and things, you don't immediately go in and do it, because the person can come along and find out and correct himself or herself.

How many times have you done something that later on you look back on it and you see how wrong you were? see how vain you were? see how selfish you were? *And you repent!* What has happened? *God has brought the correction!* What John said, 'If you see someone sin not a sin unto death, you pray for them.' Well then, God is going to answer that prayer. We're told that God will answer that prayer. This is how it needs to be.

Verse 5: “Love does not behave disgracefully...” That is one thing that *self-appointed* 'policemen of God' do.

“...does not seek its own things, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil” (v 5). All of those things apply to 'God's policemen.' 'I'm going to go around and find out what So and So is doing. Have you heard this? Did you know that?' I tell you one thing that's important that we need to get across to the brethren: ***Do not talk about one another:***

- unless it is encouraging
- unless it something that is good
- unless it is something that is positive

That will help overcome a lot of these

problems and difficulties that people have. When people get exposed to other people's sins and make it their business and talk about them and pass it on, sometimes it even creates such an atmosphere that the person feels that there is no hope. A person feels that everyone is against them. We need to help the brethren create the right kind of atmosphere in whatever group they are with.

Verse 6: "Does not rejoice in iniquity..." if you don't rejoice in iniquity you don't pass it on. If you don't talk about it and don't pass it on, those who are in the business of being 'God's policemen' accuse you of doing nothing about it and accuse you of participating with them when that is not the case. They may not even know that you're trying to help that person and work with that person and help them overcome.

"...but rejoices in the Truth" (v 6). There's another Scripture that says, 'Love covers a multitude of sins,' which is a very important Scripture to remember. It doesn't mean that it overlooks them, it means that it doesn't broadcast them abroad; it means that you're praying for the person who has the problem or whatever the sin is. When there is a solution then you don't broadcast that abroad, *just let the change be evident!*

A minister baptized a man some time ago and the change was like day and night. What did he do for him? *He counseled him and made sure that he repented of his sins; made sure that he understood what he was doing so that he could receive the Spirit of God!*

It's God's Spirit that entered into that man's mind and heart and changed his life. This is the way we need to approach a lot of these things. I think that too many brethren, even in the Church, have not gotten out of 'religion,' yet. They don't see the big picture of their calling and the big picture of their relationship with God. They need to understand that so they can be inspired.

The way that people can change the most is to be inspired to change, so that they will have the inner motivation to make the corrections, the inner motivation to do what they know they need to do. Just like you, when you sin and you know that you ought not, but you haven't gotten around, yet, to know what you ought to do and repenting of what you ought not do.

What happens? When you hear something that really inspires you, what does that lead you to do more than anything else?

- The desire to change!
- The desire to repent!
- The desire to go ahead!

- The desire to understand!  
*That whatever the obstacle is*

- God is there!
- You can do it!
- It can be overcome!

This is what Paul is trying to do here in 1-Cor. 13; saying that the overall goal of the character that you need to have—which is the mind of Christ and God—that you have the love of God. It is *a way of life* and it comes out in your life in everything that you do. It doesn't mean that you're going to be perfect. You're still going to have problems and difficulties that come along, too. But this is always the goal! This is always the course.

(go to the next track)

Verse 7: "*Love bears all things...*" Regardless of the trial, you can bear it. With every trial, God gives a way of escape! God will help you out of it. "...bears all things...": the good, the bad, the ugly! Sometimes we have to deal with those things.

"...believes all things, hopes all things..." ***As long as there is hope!*** I got a letter where someone received a New Testament; I think one of the brethren gave it to her. She wrote and said, 'I was in total despair, ready to give up on everything! She had been in the Church of God for years and years. I didn't know what to do, and I didn't know where to go. Someone gave me the New Testament, and *I am alive again!*'

Remember: ***As long as there is life, there's hope!*** If there is sin and they're still living, there can always be repentance. That's why you need to pray for them. For those who have troubles and problems, don't go around being 'God's policeman' and point it out to everyone and say, 'Have you heard? Have you noticed? Did you see?' Pray for that individual. Put it in God's hands! Then do what you can to encourage them.

"...endures all things" (vs 7). There are going to be a lot of things that we're going to have to endure! I think about all the things you've had to go through and endure up to this point. There are going to be many, many more.

- If you are inspired, *you won't get weary!*
- If you have hope, *you won't get depressed!*
- If you have faith, *you will always believe!*
- If you have love and a relationship with God, *you're going to make it!*

Guaranteed plan, v 8: "*Love never fails...*" ***Always works!*** That's what needs to be. In light of this, all the 'policemen' need to do is stop and ask: How do I line up with 1-Cor. 13? How can I police myself?

Let's change the emphasis. You be 'God's policeman' for *yourself!* Not 'self-appointed' for *other people!* Let God intervene and help you learn the love of God so that you can help other people. 'A kind word spoken lifts the heart.' That's what we need for all those who have sinned a sin not unto death. "Love never fails..."

"...But whether *there be* prophecies..." These can't be the prophecies of God, because Jesus said, 'Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away.' So, these are prophecies of men!

"...they shall cease..." (v 8)—they shall fail. Isn't that true?

"...whether *there be* languages, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part..." (vs 8-9). We're looking ahead to the future.

"...and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part shall be set aside" (vs 9-10).

Let's see what it is that God is doing with us. God is the One Who is going to do it. God is the One Who is to make it happen. This fits right along with what we're talking about here:

Matthew 5:43: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'" That's what happens with *self-appointed* 'policemen for God.' They end up despising someone, which is next to hate and to become your enemy, rather than your brother or sister, or friend.

Verse 44: "But I say to you, **love your enemies...**" This is a whole change of attitude. If we are to love our enemies, which Jesus says we are, what do you think Christ is going to think about the fact that we don't love each other the way we ought to? Think about that!

"...bless those who curse you..." Let's stop and ask: All these words spoken by Jesus, did He live by them? *Yes, He did!* Everything against Him was worse than any human being in the world.

"...do good to those who hate you..." I can't help but think of the guard that Peter cut the ear off, that came out there. And Jesus reached up and healed him. Was that doing good? *Yes, it was!*

"...and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (v 44). If you are to do that for your enemies and those who hate you and persecute you and so forth, what should you do for the brethren?

Verse 45: "**So that you yourselves may be the children of your Father Who is in heaven...**

[very important] ...for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *on the* good, and sends rain on *the* just and *on the* unjust." You live! You breath!

- Who gives life and breath to even sinners? *God does!*
- Is God going to judge them? *Yes, in His way, and in His time!*
- Does He desire they repent? *Yes!*
- Is He willing to give them mercy when they do? *Yes!*
- Should we not do so with the brethren?
  - ✓ to love the brethren?
  - ✓ to show mercy to them?
  - ✓ to help them?
  - ✓ to encourage them?

I'm not talking to the elders so that they do this to the brethren; *they're expected to do this.* I'm saying this to the brethren, that you do it to other brethren. Just because we're covering this in an elder's conference does not mean that this is only for the elders, and what a bunch of unloving elders. I think you'll find it's just the opposite. They are very loving. They are very kind. They have gone out of their way in time, effort, money, prayers and many different things, even though they have their own shortcomings and their own faults—which we all do, and I do. This is for the brethren so that when we get together we *truly love each other.*

Jesus gives a warning, v 46: "For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing?*" This gets into little cliques, and in bigger churches this is a bigger problem because you have a little group over here and a little group over there, rather than everyone really loving each other the way they ought to. It ends up that you have partiality that way. You should not have it that way.

Verse 47: "And if you salute your brethren only..." You walk into church and there's someone you know real well and you walk up and hug them. Here's a person that you're 'policing' and they come up to you and you stretch out your cold hand and your cold eye and say, 'Hi, how are you doing?'; instead of going up and giving them a hug and saying, 'I know you've been going through a lot; I'm praying for you.' See the difference?

Here is the goal, v 48. It says in 1-Cor. 13 'when that is Perfect has come,' there's going to be a day when you're going to be perfect. But that won't happen until the resurrection.

Verse 48: "Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect." The goal; the great goal! That's what God wants. It

can only be accomplished with love.

- you've got to have *faith*
- you've got to have *hope*
- you have to have *righteous judgment*
- you have to have *all the attributes of God's Spirit*

But this is the goal, and that's why Paul said:

1-Corinthians 13:10: "But when that which is Perfect has come, then that which is in part shall be set aside." That's when minds and hearts are going to be changed from flesh to spirit.

Verse 11: "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I reasoned as a child; but when I became a man, I set aside the things of a child. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then *we shall see* face-to-face; now I know in part, but then I shall know exactly as I have been known. And now, these three remain: faith, hope *and* love; but the greatest of these *is* love" (vs 11-13).

We need them all together. That's why I've said we need to:

- **walk in faith**
- **believe in hope**
- **live in love**

but "...when that which is Perfect has come, then that which is in part shall be set aside" (v 10).

This is something we need to work at. It's not just an emotional or a feeling in the heart. It's not just a welling-up of feelings and thoughts. That's only part of it. Love is there, as Paul explains, in everything: thru thick and thin, good and evil—all the things. We're going to be facing every one of these things down the road; *every one of them*. If we can say anything to any *self-appointed* 'policeman of God':

- put away your magnifying glass
- tie your horse up
- restrain your tongue, except as you pray for them
- always ask yourself: Is it my business?

If it's not your business, don't get involved. Pray for them!

Let's see again, this is why John wrote so much concerning love. He saw what was happening in the Church with all of the gnostics and the antichrists and all the things that were coming through.

We have to be on defense against the things that are wrong and evil, that is true, without a doubt. John talks about it and we are to know:

1-John 4:3: "And every spirit that does not

confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not from God. And this is the *spirit* of antichrist, which you heard *was* to come, and even now it is already in the world." Satan is preparing for his grand finale!

Verse 4: "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them because greater is He Who *is* in you than the one who *is* in the world." Not only for the individual reading this, but also for the individual that you are criticizing.

- Do they have the Spirit of God? *Yes!*
- If they have the Spirit of God, is Christ in them? *Yes!*
- Can He help them? *Yes!*
- Can He change them? *Yes!*
- Can He bring about what needs to be done in their life? *Yes!*
- Does He know greater than you, though you may know something about it? *Yes!*

Therefore, put it in God's hands, because Christ is in them.

We also need to watch this, v 5: "They are of the world; because of this, they speak of the world, and the world listens to them." There is a dividing line coming down between the people of God and the world that is going to be absolutely crystal clear, and the final separation point is going to be the *mark of the beast*. That's not far down the way. So, the final dividing line between the world and the people in the Church of God is going to be the *mark of the beast*.

Let me tell you something, unless you really, really love God, you may cave in to their persuasiveness, which will be:

- Don't you think it's rather silly that you won't take this mark of the beast?
- Don't you love your family?
- Don't you want food for your children?
- Don't you want to have a job?
- Don't you want to be protected by the government?

➤ You haven't had any food here for a week, because you refuse to take this *mark of the beast*, you could have it and go down to the store right now and get everything you need for your family and your hungry children, and your crying wife.

- It's going to be hard!
- It's going to be persuasive!

And unless we love God 'with all our heart, mind, soul and being,' it's going to be most difficult, indeed! You have to give your life! But either way:



- You're already dead in Christ—are you not?
- You've already given your life as a pledge—have you not?
- *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 5: “They are of the world; because of this, they speak of the world, and the world listens to them.” That’s why the Sabbath is such a dividing line.

Verse 6: “We are of God; the one who knows God listens to us... [because they know it's the Truth] ...the one who is not of God does not listen to us...” So, whatever we do, say or preach, print or publish, those who are of God will listen; those who are not will not listen, but it's a witness against them.

That's why the book *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days—Which?* has both of them in there, so it's going to be an expose` of things that are wrong and a witness against them of the things that are right that they should be doing.

“...By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception” (v 6). Satan is that spirit that is deceiving the whole world.

Verse 7: “Beloved, we should love one another because love is from God...” What I want you to do is look at that in context with the battle that is going on in the world. The way we're going to help people is not ‘police’ them. *Love them!* If they've done things that are really grievous, always leave the door open for them to repent and come back. Put it in God's hands and let Him handle it. He can do it!

“...and everyone who loves has been begotten by God, and knows God” (v 7). That's why we have to, with God's Spirit, have our behavior and way of life conform to that. That's important. As a matter of fact, that's central and key to eternal life.

- ✓ Do you think that we can live forever with ‘self-appointed policemen’ going around reporting everything to God?
- ✓ Causing strife and confusion?
- ✓ Finger pointing and accusation?
- Do you want to live for all eternity that way? *No!*

That's why we need to learn the love of God and learn how to handle it now and be perfect, as Jesus said.

Verse 8: “The one who does not love does not know God because God is love.” That's the main characteristic of God.

You've heard us talk about having the *mind of Christ*. But what is the first thing in the mind of

Christ? *Love!* He had to love the world in order to come down here to do it. Not only did the Father have to love the world, but Jesus did! He had to have the right kind of love that He would take upon Himself the judgment that He gave upon all human beings so that He could rectify all mankind to God, in the plan that God had.

Verse 9: “In this *way* the love of God was manifested toward us: that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, **so that we might live through Him.**” This is why we need to pray for the brethren, that they can *live* through Christ. If we pray for them, ask God to work with them, they still have—each individual in that case—their part. That is each one must respond to the prick of conscience that God brings to your thoughts when you do something wrong. You must respond to it. ***If you don't, it'll come again!***

Every person has a choice to either listen and repent or to continue to resist and harden the heart. Then God will increase the correction to soften the heart, and hope that the conscience will be pricked with that. All you have to do is read Deut. 28 and Lev. 26 to see how God does that.

- If they repent, *God will hear!*
- If they repent, *God will restore!*

This is what the whole thing is about. The Church of God is here to help lead people to repentance, to lead them to ***the love of God, the Truth of God and to stand for the Truth of God!*** If we keep that as a central focus of what we're doing, then God is going to bless the brethren, bless us, bless the things that we do. Then people will say, ‘I can tell you're the people of God because you love one another.’ Isn't that what Jesus said.

Not like 1-Cor. 14 where Paul said, ‘When someone comes here into church, one of you has a prophecy, one of you has a revelation, one has a tongue, one has a psalm.’ *I'm of Peter, I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollo, I'm of Christ.* Does that sound like the Church today? That's why we need this; “...that we might live through Him.”

Verse 10: “In this *act* is **the love**—not that we loved God... [we've covered that with Job] ...rather, that He loved us and sent His Son *to be the* propitiation for our sins.” That is *the love*. Our lives are totally dependent on God for absolutely everything, be it physical, spiritual, emotional or intellectual; absolutely dependent upon God! He has given to us everything that we have as a person:

- everything that we own in the way of physical goods
- everything that we eat
- everything that we drink

- every breath of air that we breathe

I wonder how many times we all breathed during the course of this meeting? *At least enough to get through it this far!* God has given it all! We need to understand that.

Verse 11: Beloved, if God so loved us, we also are **duty-bound** to love one another.” Especially for the *self-appointed* ‘policemen of God’ who think they have a duty to snoop and expose and condemn and correct people they see having problems, difficulties and sins. They think they are duty-bound to do that. The Word of God doesn’t say that! The Word of God says you are “...**duty-bound** to love one another.” That will help solve a lot of problems.

If you’re a ‘self-appointed policeman’ and you have been, in your mind and to others, snipping and carping against someone about some fault that someone may have, why don’t you do an about face and show some love to that person:

- give him or her a hug
- spend some time with them
- say some nice words to them
- encourage them

And I bet you would see whatever perceived problem you think you need to ‘police’ and ‘correct’ disappear. It may take a little time, but it can happen.

Verse 12: “No one has seen God at any time. Yet, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is perfected in us.” That’s the perfection. We’re to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect, and God is love. So then, what is He doing in us? *He’s perfecting His love in us, which is reflected in the way we need to behave in 1-Cor. 13!* That’s what God is doing.

Ephesians 2:1-3 says how we’ve all been led around by Satan and we’re children of disobedience and wrath.

Ephesians 2:4: “But God, Who is rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us... [we’re to reflect this] ...even when we were dead in *our* trespasses...” (vs 4-5). He gave us life, breath, food, water, clothing; all that from the love of God.

“...has made *us* alive together with Christ...” (v 5). I don’t think we comprehend that verse in the relationship that God wants us to have with Him.

“...(For you have been saved by grace.).... [not by your ‘policemanship’; but by God’s mercy, love and grace] ...And He has raised *us* up together and has caused *us* to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (vs 5-6). That’s our destiny! To sit there with Christ!

Verse 7: “So that in the ages that *are* coming He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” That in turn goes to the world.

God has chosen to call *His* people to share in His great work of salvation for this world. God could achieve it on His own, but He made us in His image and He has called us to share in that. The greatest thing that we share is going to be the same kind of love that God is going to have to bring salvation to the world. How can we bring salvation to the world if we don’t love each other now?

Verse 8: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works...” (vs 8-9).

- What is ‘self policing’?
- Is it not a work that you are doing?
- For what purpose?
- Did God appoint you?

That’s why even the ministers and elders don’t get up there and slam, bam, correct people right and left.

Where are the Churches of God now that used to do that? *They’re not around!* Everybody has been scattered and you probably came from one of them and you’re dragging in the baggage from where you came. Instead of allowing the Spirit of God to work, you’re allowing the spirit of carnality and correction to work. Here’s what God is doing:

Verse 10: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus...” He is creating in us:

- His love
- His hope
- His joy
- His patience
- His mercy
- His longsuffering
- His kindness
- His goodness
- His meekness
- His humility

Those are the *good* works!

“...unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them” (v 10). Once you understand the commandments of God, which we all do; keep the commandments of God, which we all do—which is an expression of the love of God; but it’s not the sole expression of the love of God, *it’s the beginning of the love of God!*

Then we are to grow in our lives in loving God with all our heart, mind, soul and being! *That’s how we are perfected in love!* This is what

God wants for us.

1-John 4:14: "And we have seen *for* ourselves and bear witness that the Father sent the Son *as the* Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God... [truly] ...God dwells in him, and he in God. And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love, and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him" (vs 14-16). What will happen, God's Spirit will:

- increase in you
- increase in the other person
- increase in the brethren
- increase in the fellowship group
- increase in the congregation

and you will have the *love of God!* Will that be pleasing to God? Stop and think! In the history of the whole world how often has that ever occurred? How long did it continue? Quite a thing!

***God trusts us to dwell in us!*** That's an amazing thing— isn't it? That is a very humbling thing to contemplate!

Verse 17: "By this *spiritual indwelling*, the *love of God* is perfected within us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment... [it's all going to be added up in the day of judgment] ...because even as He is, so also are we in this world. ***There is no fear in the love of God...***" (vs 17-18).

If you're going around 'policing' people, you're fearful because things are not exactly the way you see them, that somehow God is going to be angry and you have to take care of it. ***NO!*** You don't have to fear that. If you're loving God, it'll be all cast aside.

"...rather, perfect love casts out fear because fear has torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the *love of God*. We love Him because He loved us first. If anyone says..." (vs 18-20). Here is the test. Whenever you do something that is unloving and unkind, think about this:

"... 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar. For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen?" (v 20). Remember where I started, 'No one has seen God at any time!'

Verse 21: "And this *is* the commandment *that* we have from Him: that the one who loves God should also love his brother."

Everyone wants to be the Philadelphia Church of God, the Church of Brotherly Love. But I have yet to see any Philadelphia Church of God be

the Loving Church of God. They all degenerated into 'God's policemen'; whether from the pulpit or from the brethren.

God has given His Spirit that you live your life before Him. You're accountable to Him, not to any 'policeman.' In that then He trusts you with His Spirit to:

- grow in grace
- to grow in knowledge
- to love Him
- to be faithful
- to be loyal
- to stand for the Truth

I hope this will help all the self-appointed 'policemen' ***to turn in their resignations in repentance to God!***

All Scriptures from *the Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 7:1-5
- 2) 1 John 5:16, 13-16
- 3) Matthew 9:9-13
- 4) 1 Corinthians 13:1-2
- 5) Job 40:1-14
- 6) 1 Corinthians 13:3-10
- 7) Matthew 5:43-48
- 8) 1 Corinthians 13:10-13
- 9) 1 John 4:3-12
- 10) Ephesians 2:4-10
- 11) 1 John 4:14-21

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 7
- Deuteronomy 28
- Leviticus 26
- 1-Corinthians 14
- Ephesians 2:1-3

#### Also referenced:

#### Sermon Series:

- *Why God Hates Religion*
- *Judge Righteous Judgment*

Book: *Occult Holidays or God's Holy Days—Which?* by Fred R. Coulter

FRC:bo  
Transcribed: 6-4-14

## Don't Carry Past Baggage

Fred R. Coulter

What is it that God wants us to do? We've covered many things concerning what we do personally, individually, publicly and together, so let's look at it from a little different point of view, because one of the things that we discussed at the conference was how do we help the brethren with the problems, especially those who have gone through so many different churches?

One of the most difficult things that there is, is to be in the Church of God and have it disintegrate in front of you, or out from underneath you, or around you, and you don't know what on earth is happening, and why it is happening. Part of it is that this is a test that has gone on over and over again through the history of the Church in order to purify the Church, to test what we believe and so forth.

The book of Jude is an important book because it helps us understand part of some of the things we need to do. We're living in this age and the reason that these things are put in the Bible and preserved for us is because all of these things are necessary for us to receive and understand the instruction from God of what we need to do.

Here's a critical time, when Jude wrote this the Church was also coming apart, splitting apart and going into the various beginnings of the pagan phases of what later became to be known as the Roman Catholic Church, etc.

### I. Fight for the Faith/Stand for the Truth

Jude 3: "Beloved, when personally exerting all *my* diligence... [he was really urgent about the matter] ...to write to you concerning the common salvation, I was compelled to write to you, exhorting *you* to **fervently fight for the faith**, which once for all *time* has been delivered to the saints."

We have to fight for the faith because there are a lot of people—ministers, teachers and so forth—to try and take you from God! To fight for the faith also means, not only do we need to hold fast to the Word of God, but it means that those of us who are doing the teaching for the brethren—and whatever teaching you may do for other brethren—that ***we are to be steadfast in holding and preserving the Truth of God!***

If the Truth cannot be preserved within the Church of God, you can well know it's not going to be preserved anywhere in the world. That's part of our responsibility: ***stand fast and preserve the Word of God!***

When we read over in Rev. concerning the Church at Ephesus, it says that 'you have lost your

first love.' It was at the city of Ephesus where John had died, where the New Testament was canonized. This is the very first place that accurate copies of the New Testament were copied and sent to the different churches all over the world.

Could it be that in referring to losing the *first love* they left off being diligent concerning the Word of God, which also led to some of the problems that we have had down through history, even to our day? I don't know, that's just speculation. But it just makes me wonder, because look at what we have seen today in people, supposedly grounded in the Truth, just all of a sudden giving up on it. Why? *Here it is! We have to exercise diligence!*

He says, "...I was compelled to write to you, exhorting *you* to fervently fight for the faith, which once for all *time* has been delivered to the saints. For certain **men have stealthily crept in...**" (vs 3-4). This is what has happened to the Churches of God!

{Note video: *Jesuit Agenda for the Seventh Day Adventist Church*} When you see those videos you will know precisely what happened to the Worldwide Church of God. It was infiltrated, taken down and that was part of the punishment for sin, because ***they did not stand fast for the Truth!*** It's still going on.

{Note book: *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight} Knight belongs to the Church of God Seventh Day. He's trying to wake up his brethren to the infiltration that has happened at their headquarters in Denver to where they are ready to start going to Sunday-keeping because of the infiltrators.

They are proposing the same thing they have always proposed: Let's have Sabbath services and Sunday services—step #1—same way with the Seventh Day Adventists.

I'm convinced that the Catholics are going to hold off direct persecution against us little groups because we don't matter in their eyes, simply because they're too busy building their great world-religion. While we have the time, we need to:

- fight for the faith
- preserve the faith
- teach the faith

This is the blessing of not having a vast huge organization and no hierarchy: *No one can come in and take over and control.* This will help us keep the faith, not only personally, but publicly.

It talks about "...ungodly men, who are perverting the grace of our God..." (v 4). Then Jude talks about coming out of Egypt, the angels who sinned, Sodom and Gomorrah and all of those who have gone the *way of Cain*.

Verse 10: "As for these, whatever things they do not understand, they blaspheme; but whatever things they understand by instinct, as irrational brute beasts, **they are corrupting themselves in these things**. Woe to them! For they have walked in the **way of Cain...**" (vs 10-11). What is the *way of Cain*? What does that have to do with faithfully preserving the Word of God?

I'll tell you very simply what the *way of Cain* is: **You decide you're going to tell God what He's going to do, and what He must accept!** If I feel good in my heart and I want to bring something to God—though it's contrary to His commands—"God, You've got to accept it." That's why God said to Cain, 'sin lies at the door. If you do well, will you not be accepted?' That's what we find in the world today; everyone tells God what to do. That's the *way of Cain*.

"...and for gain, they have wholly given themselves up to Balaam's delusion..." (v 11). That is you can bring in pagan perversions and God must accept them! It's the *way of Cain* built upon the superstructure of Balaam.

"...and have perished in the rebellion of Korah" (v 11). Go back and read that! That was a special rebellion against Moses. No man sits in the seat of Moses today; you can be guaranteed that! They wanted to take over and do the things the way *they wanted* to do. You see how this builds, and he's using this as an example. These things have all affected the Church of God and we've lived through it.

- What must we do?
- How can we help the brethren?

Many come to me and say, 'What can I do?' Even ones that are in your own family or close friends that have been in the Church. I know that out our way there's a man in Hollister who helped us build our house clear back in 1978. It's all we can do to even reach him. I'm sure you've experienced that, too.

Verse 16: "These are complainers *and* critics, who are walking after their own personal lusts, *while* their mouths are speaking great swelling words, flattering persons for the sake of advantage. But you, beloved, remember the words that were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" (vs 16-17). That's why we have all their writings. How could they remember them unless they had them written?

I mean, most of us cannot even go to the store without a grocery list. Unless you have a cell phone and then you can call home and walk up and down the aisle: 'I'm going past the bread aisle, what do you need?' I've heard that! That's why God intended it to be written.

Verse 18: "Because they said to you that in *the* last time there would be mockers, who would be selfishly walking according to their own ungodly lusts. These are the ones who cause division; *they are* psychic, not having *the* Spirit of God" (vs 18-19). In other words they're not using the Spirit of God. The Greek is 'psuche' and that's where we get *psychic* and *psychic phenomena* and things like this is actually telling us they're not just earthy, as the *King James* says, because what is the power behind that? *Satan!*

## II. Build on Faith:

Verse 20: "But you, beloved, **be building up yourselves** on your most Holy faith, praying in *the* Holy Spirit, *so that* you keep yourselves in *the* love of God..." (vs 20-21). That's a key to what we must be doing in our lives; that's a key in what we need to be doing in helping the brethren come out of the confusion.

"...while you are personally awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

## III. Show Mercy:

Verse 22: "Now on the one hand... [this shows us how to deal with brethren that have been affected by this]: **show mercy to those individuals who are doubting.**"

- show them mercy
- give them understanding
- talk to them
- encourage them
- pray for them.

Verse 23: "But on the other hand, save others with fear..." There comes a time when they get so close to the edge of the line that you have got to remind them, and it is a duty-bound obligation that we have if they are really ready to slip over the line, to encourage them by telling them, 'Look, ***God has called you, don't give up on God for the sake of men!*** If you go too far, you need to be careful you don't commit the unpardonable sin!' That's what it's talking about here.

"...snatching *them* out of the fire, hating even the garment *that has been* defiled by the flesh" (v 23). Compare that with the white garments that we are supposed to be having. If they go out and get involved in other religions, what do they have? *They*

*have on other garments!*

Verse 24: "Now, to Him Who is able to keep them from falling... [that's all of us together] ...and to bring *them* into the presence of His own glory, blameless in exceeding joy, to *the* only wise God our Savior, *be the* glory and greatness, *the* might and authority, even now, and into all the ages of eternity. Amen" (vs 24-25).

#### IV. Pray for Them:

Let's look at the next step that we need to do. This will help us a lot in many of our personal relationships; here's what we do:

1-John 5:13: "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God in order that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue* to believe in the name of the Son of God. And this is the confidence that we have toward Him: that **if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us**" (vs 13-14). We can claim that promise! *He will hear us!*

Maybe—and you're the ones that are going to have to do it—you can help retrieve some of them out the spiritual fire by praying for them. Part of the way to pray for them is this: 'God, please intervene in their lives, because the circumstances that they are confronted with will help draw them back to You.' Remember this: ***As long as there is life there is hope!*** Never forget that! So, you pray for them.

Here's a guarantee, v 15: "And if we know that He hears us, whatever we may ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him." So, we could have a lot of answered prayer. Sometimes it takes a long time continually praying.

If you are praying the same prayer continually because you're still expecting an answer—guess what? *That is not a vain repetition!* Go back to Luke 11 and we're to continually beseech God until He answers. We may have to modify our prayer a little bit, because we need to conform it to the will of God. All of this each one of us can do.

Verse 16 is a key, and this will help us in our inner relationship with the brethren, with each other, with husbands/wives, and so forth. Whenever you see a wrong or a fault don't leap in like a lion and devour the prey. Here's a profound principle: If you see a brother or sister in fault, do you not think that God knows it? *Yes, indeed!* Who has the most power to change that individual? Sometimes they're in no mood; you run up to them and say, 'Hey, don't you know you're really sinning?' *Get out of here, go away!*

Verse 16: "If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *that is* not unto death, he shall ask..."

You pray to God. Lots of times in husband/wife relationships do the same thing, pray and ask God to put it in his or her mind. Pray and ask God to intervene in that person's life. *He will!*

"...and He will give him life for those who do not sin unto death. There is a sin unto death; concerning that *sin*, I do not say that he should make *any supplication to God*" (v 16). This is what we should do. Pray for the brethren; continue to do so even though it looks like it is many years down the road and the problem is almost insoluble.

I had a man talk to me about a person he knows that has had difficulties for the past nine years. But God is intervening in their lives and circumstances to begin to change that person's mind. That's why it's important to pray.

Don't sit there and wring your hands and wonder what God is doing? *He's purifying His Church! He's getting rid of the tares!* Pray that God will bring all of those that are His together. They don't have to be with us necessarily. If they can, that's fine. If not, that they are right with God. That's fine, and whatever we can do to help them.

#### V. Do not let a man come between you and God!

Here's another thing that's very, very important because all of us have come from one of the Churches of God. We have gone through the process we have just talked about in Jude. Now what do we do?

Here's what each one of us needs to do, and also encourage those who are having problems. One of the key things that may be a triggering statement that will help people come back to their senses is this: Please, ***whatever your difficulties are, do not let a man come between you and God!*** Do not let *anyone* come between you and God!

Part of the problem is that when they see ministers do wrong, or brethren do wrong, then they get mad at God. Sometimes they feel very, very justified. Sometimes you don't even know what to think. I remember one time that at my lowest, lowest point—spiritually speaking—I didn't know what God wanted me to do, or where to go, or what He expected of me. I was out driving around—that's when I was a loan broker—and there's this hill here in Hollister and I climbed to the top of the hill and got up there and prayed. I said, 'God, heal my soul!' because of all of the things that I had gone through.

I had to learn something very, very important from that. God heard and answered that prayer. Not right away, but He began at that time to answer that prayer and give me understanding as to

what I was going through. To remain faithful to God was the paramount important thing. It's difficult when you go through a near faith-destruction experience, and you suffer at the hands of brethren and ministers—"We're your friends!"

- What do you do?
- Do you get bitter?
- Do you stay angry?
- How do you handle it?

#### VI. Don't bring your baggage from your past experiences

This is another thing that we all need to do: *Don't bring your baggage from your past experiences*, whether in the Church or in the world. We have to do like the Apostle Paul did here, because he had gone through everything, his whole experience and his life. After he relates all the physical things that he did:

Philippians 3:7: "Yet, the things that were gain to me, these things I have counted *as* loss for the sake of Christ." That goes back to when we were baptized; what was one of the things that we did? *Counted the cost!* Remember that? Do we love God 'more than father, mother, brother, sister, lands, children, wives, and yes, our own life also,' *then we cannot be His disciple*. This is what Paul is talking about. "...the things that were gain to me, these things I have counted *as* loss..."

Verse 8: "But then truly, I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count *them* as dung; that I may gain Christ." You see his spiritual mindset, *that he kept his mind on Christ!*

Go back and read in 2-Cor.11 all the things that the Apostle Paul went through. If your feelings are hurt, your ego is shattered, if you have problems with anger and bitterness, go back and read what the Apostle Paul went through, and then list out all that you went through, and I think you'll find that it's a paltry, miserable little list and you're really *feeling sorry for yourself!* Maybe you can help some of the brethren get out of their difficulties by remembering that, too.

Verse 9: "[That I] may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is derived* from law, but that *righteousness* which *is* by the faith of Christ..." If your faith is lacking or wavering, do just like the man in Mark 9 when the Lord said to him concerning casting the demon out of his son: 'Do you believe?' *Yes, I believe, but help my unbelief, Lord!* Let Him give you of His faith! "...which *is* by the faith of Christ..."

"—the righteousness of God *that is* based on faith; that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection..." (vs 9-10). That's why we're here. I cannot help but think what a fantastic day that is going to be!

God says in Isa. 65 that it is 'a whole nation born in one day,' which is a prophecy of the Church! When we come to the end of the line we're weak, we're dilapidated—the Bible calls it *corrupting*—but don't worry about it, that's all *the process of faithfulness*. God is still with you. God promises that *He will not* abandon you when we're old and gray.

"...and the fellowship of His sufferings..." (v 10). We can't have exactly the "...fellowship of His sufferings..." in the way that the Apostle Paul did, but just look at it this way: *Christ is fellowshiping in your sufferings* and took upon Him your sufferings so that *you* can have faith and trust in Him.

"...being conformed to His death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (vs 10-11). The whole purposed in everything we're doing is to:

- keep our mind focused on *the goal*
- keep our mind focused on *the calling*
- keep our mind focused on the fact that we are *in training for eternal life*

If we do and we keep that, I guarantee:

- you will want *to pray*
- you will want *to study*
- you will want to *do the things that God wants you to do*
- you will not desire to sin
- you will want to overcome sin by the power of God's Spirit

#### VII. Forget what is behind:

Here's another great thing we need to do: *Realize every day*—even the athletes understand that—to just take it day-by-day. They will ask a pitcher: a pitcher lost two games in the ninth inning when they were ahead by run and had two outs, and he threw a homerun ball two days in row! Of course, the press is going to be there and ask: 'How do you feel?' *That's a dumb question!* How are you going to handle this? *I put it behind me! I still have more to do! I'll overcome it!*

That's what Paul is talking about here. Not that he's already attained, but he's still striving.

Verse 12: "Not as though I have already received, or have already been perfected; but I am striving, so that I may also lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do

not count myself as having attained; but **this one thing I do**—..." (vs 12-13). This is how we are able to not drag the baggage from the past into today—

- regardless of what it was
- regardless of how it came about
- regardless of who may have perpetrated it
- regardless of your own personal sins

"...**forgetting the things that are behind**..." (v 13). That's important! We come to God and He says that He forgives our sins and iniquities and remembers them no more. **God does not expect us to remind Him of the sins that He has already forgotten!**

We need to have a remembrance of *truth and righteousness* and a forgetfulness of sin! What are you doing in that process with the use of the Holy Spirit by Christ? *You are reprogramming your mind!*

#### VIII. Press Toward the Goal:

"...**and reaching forth to the things that are ahead**, I press toward *the* goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (vs 13-14). That's what we are to do. When you are dealing with brethren that need help, encourage them in the same way.

- What if they're hung up on a minister that did them in? *Say, 'You're not the only one!'*
- What if they've had brethren betray them? *Remind them that Judas betrayed Christ!*

So you have been betrayed; so you have been mistreated; was not Christ? *Yes, indeed!* We need to take the same attitude: "**...press toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus**"

#### IX. Have the Mind of Christ:

Verse 15: "So then, let as many as *be* perfect **be of this mind**..." That's how you can overcome, and that is how we can help the brethren overcome.

Some of the people that God is going to call in the future from out of the world—and He's going to do it, because we'll also see that's part of what we need to do; *God will do it*—they've got to take the same attitude and the same mind, and that comes with the Spirit of God. "...let as many as *be* perfect **be of this mind**..."

"...And if *in* anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal even this to you" (v 15). When you go along and all of a sudden you find sin

your mind, Who is revealing that to you? *God is!* For what purpose? *So you can repent!* So you can bring every thought into the captivity of Christ. This is all a part of the process.

Encourage the one who may have been hurt and say, 'Remember this, here's a promise, if you come back to Christ understand that ***all things***—it doesn't say some things, part of the things or most of the things or hopefully—but ***all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose!***

You can tell them this: ***Let the things that you have gone through—with the Spirit of God—work for good!*** That it can bring about some change in your life. God will make it happen! *He will do it!*

We are going to face some times down the road that are going to get progressively more difficult and harder to handle if we don't keep this attitude. And it's not just keeping the attitude, we are to set an example. No, that's not true! We are ***to be*** an example by what we do, say and think; then we become the example.

We are to keep our mind on this so that when it comes down—we are getting almost ready for the next to the last step of *the mark of the beast*, which is a national identity card with a GPS chip in it. I know that when I first read the report that they just voted on it in the House of Representatives and passed it by nearly a hundred votes and they didn't even read the bill and they don't even know what is in it. They have just voted for a police state in America! When I read that I was depressed! I was! Then I moped around about a day or day and a half, and I thought *this is stupid!* Is my worrying about it going to change it?

Everyone who worries, be thankful when you have nothing to worry about. Don't worry if you have nothing to worry about. *Rejoice!* Remember this: Have concern but don't worry. What worrying—that I have lost sleep over, or have I have not been able to think or do my job, or I've been depressed about—ever changed a thing? *Not one!* So, I had to have a little talk with myself. It's okay to talk to yourself. It's okay to answer yourself, as long as it's according to the Scripture. You need to have those talks with yourself every once in a while.

I had to say to myself: 'Look, you've got to get your mind focused on what is right. That's the only way you're going to be able to handle it.

This is what God wants us to do. This is part of it. So, when people come from other churches... If some come with us who have been with the Wisconsin experience, it's going to be a difficult thing for them. But this is exactly, precisely what



they need to do. Remember this, those who saw them die, shot by someone who is supposed to be a church member, and they are resurrected and they are on the Sea of Glass and they're looking for you, but you got so upset and miserable and rotten and gave up on God and left in a huff and you lost out on it. They need this very thing.

Verse 16: "Nevertheless, *in regard* to that which we have attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. Brethren, be imitators together of me, and bear in mind those who walk in this way, as you have us *for* an example" (vs 16-17). Then it talks about those who go contrary to it and everything.

Verse 20: "But for us, the commonwealth of God exists in the heavens, from where also we are waiting for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who will transform... [this is what God is going to do to us in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye] ...our vile bodies, that they may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the inner working of His own power, *whereby He is able* to subdue all things to Himself" (vs 20-21).

If we have that goal constantly before us, every day; and if when you have problems and difficulties where you get down and discouraged, don't stay down and discouraged very long. Ask God to help you and lift you up. You may not necessarily be filled with joy, but you have

- peace of mind
- the assurance
- God's Spirit
- God working with you

(go to the next track)

Here is collectively what we need to do. We've talked about what we do individually. The truth is this: How you are in your life during the week—day by day—in study and prayer and growing close to God—is then how you will be on the Sabbath Day. If you are doing the things that I mentioned already, then when we come together on the Sabbath Day, then the Sabbath becomes a powerful, spiritual experience and tool for us. That's what God wants it to be.

Philippians 2:1: "Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love..." Remember, we have the Holy Spirit that is called *the Comforter!* That comforts us in all trouble, all distress, all problems, all difficulties. We may get frustrated; we may have to fight our carnal nature—which we do—but there is that comfort of love.

"...if any fellowship of *the Spirit*..." (v 1). When we come together on the Sabbath, there is God's Spirit, because this is the Sabbath Day and

it's the day that He has appointed. If we use the Sabbath Day in the right way and worship God, His presence is there because He promised it. He said, 'Wherever two or three are gathered together, there I am in the midst of you.'

With Christ in us you will see how we can have good relations with one another, by this very process.

"...if any *deep* inner affections and compassions, fulfill my joy, **that you be of the same mind**, having the same love, being joined together in soul, minding the one thing" (vs 1-2)—attaining to the Kingdom of God and the resurrection of the dead.

Verse 3: "*Let* nothing *be* done through contention or vainglory, but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself." Love the brethren, love each other; don't bring in carnal attitudes of judging, condemning and putting down. If you see a problem, pray about it. God can change that individual. If you expect God to work with you, to change you, cannot God change someone you pray for? *Absolutely!*

So, when we come together we have love, we don't have a group over here with this little doctrine, a group over there with tongues—like the Corinthian Church or the Worldwide Church of God. You go to a big church and all the troubles and gossip going on, and this group over here talking and another group talking over there. 'What's up?' *Well, I called Pasadena and I talked to so and so!*

**Vomit it out!** When we come together, God wants us to have the love of His Spirit and each other. That's what He's talking about here.

Verse 4: "Let each one look not *only* after his own things, but *let* each one also *consider* the things of others. **Let** this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus" (vs 4-5). Notice that you have to *let it*, which means you:

- desire it
- want it
- pray for it
- study for it

and this is a continuous process.

After it shows what Christ did and what He went through, v 12: "So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

We are going to make it! Brethren, we are going to be in the resurrection! As long as we're faithful and love God, *we will be there!* You have a guarantee of it, because God said you would!

*Heaven and earth and His words* will not pass away!  
You have a guarantee that your own physical body is the down payment on the resurrection. It's got to be buried first, or changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

"...not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God Who works in you both **to will** and **to do** according to *His* good pleasure" (vs 12-13). There's another thing we need to pray for: *that we will desire the will of God!* Not our will, but God's will!

- He'll show us!
- He'll lead us!
- He loves us!
- He's called us!

***We will attain it!***

If we can apply these Scriptures and help the brethren in need, and also reach out to new people. Let's reach out to the brethren who are in need. Let's help them, and through it:

- you're going to grow in grace and knowledge
- you're going to grow in experience
- you're going to grow in the love of God

***This is what God has set before us!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Jude 3-4, 10-11, 16-25
- 2) 1 John 5:13-16
- 3) Philippians 3:7-17, 20-21
- 4) Philippians 2:1-5, 12-13

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Luke 11
- 2 Corinthians 11
- Mark 9
- Isaiah 65

Also referenced:

- Video: *Jesuit Agenda for the Seventh Day Adventist Church*
- Book: *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight

FRC:bo  
Transcribed: 6-4-4

## How to Know Your Sins are Forgiven

Fred R. Coulter

How do I know that God has forgiven my sins? One of things that Satan wants us to believe and to feel is that God cannot forgive us. He wants us to be in doubt that God will forgive us so that he can hold us in the bondage of fear and in the bondage of sin.

Let's look at the nature of man. Some of this is going to be very basic as we go through this, but this is the time and season that we should go through all of this so that we understand:

- what God is doing
- what we need to do
- what God is doing for us

What we know as history is very little of what actual history really is. There are many parts of the world that we have really very little accurate history at all. Here was a point that the earth came to, and we know that Jesus said that 'as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of man.'

There is a deceptiveness to all of this, because Jesus said that they were 'marrying and giving in marriage, eating and drinking until the day that Noah entered the ark.' So, there is a certain development of sin that takes place to where that when it really becomes really corrupt they don't recognize it, so they don't think they are. Look at the world today.

I was given a report about what they're doing with the food, plants and animals. They think that they are doing great things, but they're actually laying the groundwork for the destruction of the human race. For example, they ran a test on mice using this engineered corn, and they thought that they wouldn't find any problems with it, but when they examined the intestines and the stomachs of the mice, they were thickened greatly, meaning that none of the nutrients could be taken out of it so that the animal would be properly nourished.

What are we doing? *We're setting up a whole generation of malnourished people who don't even know it!* They've discovered something else. They can take a gene from a flounder, insert into the tomato gene so it can survive frosts.

God had a reason for 'kind after its kind' and species after species. They have just discovered this: I forget the fish that it came from, but they took a gene from a very fast-growing fish and put it into a salmon. Now the farmed salmon are going to be gigantic. In the same length of time it requires to

grow a normal salmon, this one will be three times as big. What is that going to do to us? *We don't know!* But do people really think that all of this is wrong? *No!* They say, 'We're going to have double the population, so we're going to have to feed everybody.'

Same way with morals, same way with everything that man does. People don't see anything wrong with the morality that is in the world. Homosexuality is not a sin to them. Yet, they're dying with AIDS! Forty percent of Africa has HIV or AIDS! They don't see anything wrong. They have corrupted everything:

- the way that business is done
- the way that people work
- the education
- the government

People moan and groan and scream, but they don't know what is wrong and they don't understand that it is because of the very nature of human beings. That's why:

Genesis 6:5: "And the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great on the earth..." It's going to get even greater in the future. What we find is that the weird and the perverse become 'normal.'

Look at some of the ads on television now. They're just mind-altering ads; just turn off the sound and watch them. They are insanity, idiocy! They are designed to make you a 'dingbat!' That's what it is.

**"...and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually"** (v 5). That's what the human condition really is, especially if it's fed on evil and it thinks that it's right, and especially when it thinks that it is of God.

Verse 6: "And the LORD repented that He had made man on the earth, and He *was* grieved in His heart. And the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the crawling thing, and the fowl of the air; for I repent that I have made them'" (vs 6-7).

I truly believe that they had a lot of genetic engineering back there, and that's why God had to kill all the living things. There's a reason why He killed them, destroyed them. God does not do things for no reason. Look at how long God lets sinners go before He intervenes. He told Abraham that the sin of the Amorites had not yet come to the full, and he gave them another 400 years; actually 470! It was

430 before they came out of Egypt, and then they wandered for 40 years; that's 470 years! When it says this, I think there's no way that we can see the degree of how bad it really was.

Verse 8: "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD." How many survived that whole first civilization? I know sometimes people who are alone and discouraged, they say, 'There's nobody but me.' Then they check around and they find about the others, and it's strange that they really don't believe what God says. Or they go to this church or that church. I got a letter from a man who said that he's been searching for years.

***There were only eight in the whole world!***  
That's why there are few today, because the earth is getting corrupt.

Verse 11: "Now the earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." We have that today in spite of the fact that they were marrying and giving in marriage, and eating and drinking. Isn't that what we have today? Violence happens, and people say, 'Oh well, the plane crashed, 10,000 died; it doesn't affect me.' You go on eating, drinking, and go on with your plans.

Verse 12: "And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt—for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth. And God said to Noah, 'The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them. And, behold, I will destroy them *with* the earth'" (vs 12-13).

I don't know if they had television before the Flood, but I tell you what the tool of television and movies and CDs and the MTV and MTV-type of music and things like this, you put them all together and ask: What does it do to program the mind even of righteous people to not be upset concerning evil? And to accept the perverse as normal?

I think Rush Limbaugh said that it's defining deviancy downward! When you do that, pretty soon even the most devious act is no longer devious. Even the most perverted is no longer perverted. We're living in that society again. Even after the Flood it didn't change the nature of man.

Genesis 8:21: "...the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will not again smite every living thing as I have done." God said He wouldn't curse the ground as He did with Adam.

As soon as they got going again, what happened? *Human perversity took over* in the case of Canaan, the grandson of Noah.

This is the whole story of the Bible. People who do not want to believe the Bible, do not

understand human nature, because human nature is perverse in thinking that is right regardless of how evil it may be thinking, and especially when they come to the point that they have no conscience left.

All of that comes over a period of time of succeeding generations to train and retrain and to get rid of consciousness of God, the knowledge of God, the Truth of God and to substitute all of Satan's ways in there. Yet, man is living in sin and doesn't know it and doesn't understand it!

So, the place to begin to understand whether your sins are forgiven or not is to understand that man of his own way thinks he is right. The Proverb says that 'there's a way that seems right to a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death!' The first thing to acknowledge so that you can see sin, that you can repent of it so that you can have it forgiven, is to understand:

Jeremiah 10:23: "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself; *it is* not in man who walks to direct his steps." Yet, it seems right. What is so deceiving is that it seems so right because so many good things—supposedly—can be done. The tree that man eats of is the Tree of Good and Evil! Don't be fooled about your nature by the good things that you can do.

These Scriptures are all basic, and this is why we have the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread every year; and these things are to be preached in season so that we ourselves never lose the knowledge and understanding of what we really are, so that:

- we do not get exalted in vanity
- we do not get lifted up in self
- we do not set ourselves before God in the place of God

Jeremiah 17:9: "The heart *is* deceitful above all things..." The first thing the heart will do in thinking it's right is lie to itself. 'Look at all the good we can do with this evil!'

"...and **desperately wicked**; who can know it?" (v 9). Who is going to understand the wiles of the carnal mind? Law enforcement agencies know this, because as soon as they figure out a way of—say, with the Internet bandits—catching them, they've already devised a way to get around the system. "...desperately wicked, who can know it?" But there is a God and He is going to hold everyone accountable.

Verse 10: "I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings." Judgment day comes!

Romans 8:7: “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God... [that’s an enemy of God!] ...for it is not subject to the Law of God; **neither indeed can it be.**”

What has to happen? *There has to come a point of repentance!* God is the One Who leads us to repentance. Sometimes the circumstances around us force these things upon us. That’s why the Tribulation is going to come. There’s no way of getting around the Tribulation; it is going to come!

What is sin? *The transgression of the Law!* 1-John 5:19<sup>[transcriber’s correction]</sup>: “...the whole world lies in *the power of* the wicked one.” But the world doesn’t believe that! Even the good that they do is so tainted with sin that it cannot be acceptable to God. That’s why no one can save themselves. ***That’s why it has to be by grace!*** Let’s see that **God** has to give repentance!

There is initial repentance that comes when God is calling you. What are you to do then? *Of course, God leads you to that!*

Romans 2:4: “Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering... [God is] ...not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?” What you have to do first, in order to understand about your sins, is you’ve got to understand the goodness of God.

- God is Holy
- God is righteous
- God is perfect
- God is love
- He is Lawgiver
- He is the One Who is Creator
- He is the One Who gives you life
- He is the One Who is responsible for everything

That’s the starting point! Then the next point is you have to understand the laws of God so that you have conviction of sin.

- you have no conviction of sin if you don’t know what right and wrong is
- you have not conviction of sin if you think that evil is *good* and good is *evil*

Which is what the world is today! What we’re doing and saying here today is considered by the world to be *evil*, because

- we’re pointing out sin
- we’re talking about law
- we’re talking about God
- we’re talking about the things of the Bible

Of course, they don’t want to do that! ***Sooner or later they’re going to have to face God!*** He leads you to repentance!

Verse 5: “But you, according to your own hardness and unrepentant heart, are storing up wrath for yourself against *the* day of wrath and revelation of God’s righteous judgment, who will render to each one according to his own works” (vs 5-6). That’s what we need to do, compare our actions with the Scriptures. That’s why there’s the Ten Commandments. That is the basic thing that God has given so that we can understand what sin is.

When you are pricked in the heart—which repentance leads you to do—you ask yourself, what should I do? You understand that *you* cannot handle your sins.

Acts 2:38: “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” That is the initial repentance that comes, that God’s leads us to.

Romans 3—here Paul begins to show us how our sins are forgiven. Human beings are made to need forgiveness, because they’re incomplete. Having a nature like this—which you are born with—God has to provide a way, and He does:

Romans 3:23: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God... [that’s where we all are] ...*but* are being justified freely by His grace...” (vs 23-24). In other words, God’s goodness and grace leads you to repentance, and when you repent then all of your sins have been blotted out.

That’s what Peter said, ‘Repent, that your sins may be blotted out.’ They are blotted out! Now you are under the grace of God. But remember that ***God does not save you in your sins! He saves you from your sins!*** Grace is not given so that you can continue living in sin, that ‘grace may abound,’ Paul said, ‘God forbid!’ Grace is given so that you’re put in right standing with God to receive His Holy Spirit, that you can love and obey Him, and you can live a life where you are overcoming sin; *not that you continue in it!*

“...through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus” (v 24). That’s why Christ came! That’s why He died! As Creator and giving this nature to human beings and turning them over to sin, Christ came to redeem them from those sins—as many as He would call—and He took upon Himself the penalty of that sin. He will lift that penalty of the sin from you provided that you repent and begin to obey God.

Verse 25: “Whom God has openly manifested *to be* a propitiation...” Because of human weaknesses and things that we have, and because we have the *law of sin and death* in us, Christ is the propitiation; ***we can continually come back to Him!***

We sin, but we're not living in sin! Do you know what the difference is? *You keep the commandments of God!* The sins that you commit are more in the mind, because you're fighting sin, which is a condition that cannot happen unless you have the Spirit of God. You will sin in certain acts because of weakness, but you are not *living in sin*. Living in sin means:

- to be totally out in the world
- no thought of God
- no consciousness of sin
- no understanding of true right and wrong according to the Bible
- you just go merrily your own way
- you do some things right
- you do some things wrong

*but you're living in sin:*

- you don't keep the Sabbath
- you don't keep the Holy Days
- you know nothing about God

*You're just out there in the wicked world and you are living in sin!* If you are in a 'religion' you may understand some things about God, but unless you keep the commandments of God—if you keep Sunday, Easter, Christmas, New Years—you *are living in sin!*

But since we've been called and put under God's grace, we no longer live in sin, *but* there must be repentance. Let's focus in on this initial repentance even more, and also repentance after we have been baptized.

Joel 2—this is during the time of the Great Tribulation that's going to come. God is going to get the attention of people. There will be many who will repent. There will be many who will not repent. But here's the message that God has:

Joel 2:12: "Therefore, even now," says the LORD, "turn to Me with **all your heart**..." That's what God wants! The opposite of that is the attitude of Simon Magus, which is that he said, 'Pray these things don't come upon me.' *No repentance at all!*

Or like Jesus said in Luke 13, 'I want to ask you, the 18 that died in the Tower of Shalom, do you think they were sinners above all people? No,' He says, 'I tell you unless you repent, you shall all likewise perish.' Or 'the ones that Pilate slaughtered and mingled their blood with the sacrifices on the altar, do you think they were sinners above all men? *NO!* Except you repent you shall all likewise perish!' That's why God wants repentance *from the heart!*

"...and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning.' Yes, rend your heart and not your

garments..." (vs 12-13). That's what it has to be! That's how you come back to God! That's why we have the Passover and Unleavened Bread every year, so that we can do that.

"...and return to the LORD your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and He repents of the evil" (v 13). *That's the kind of repentance that it needs to be!*

Let's see the terms that God gives. This is both Old Testament and New Testament. What happens when there's repentance? Even the world understands repeated crime. That's why they've cracked down so much on drunk driving because they had repeated offenders. They kept killing people. So, *when God deals with people, He brings out the same thing.*

Let's see what the nation is going to become, and we will see that this nation is advancing very, very rapidly.

Isaiah 1:2: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth..." Look up all the places where God refers to heaven and earth when He says something. He said 'heaven and earth will pass, but My words will not pass'

"...for the LORD has spoken, 'I have reared and brought up children, but they have rebelled against Me. The ox knows his owner... [even the animals don't do that] ...and the donkey his master's crib; **but Israel does not know Me; My people do not understand.**' Ah, sinful nation, a people burdened with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the LORD; they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger; they have gone away backward" (vs 2-4).

I tell you, in a generation that is so callous as it is today, it's going to take some things to turn them back to God. Most of them are going to say, 'I've heard this religious stuff before.' So, they go on their way.

Verse 5: "Why should you be stricken any more? You will revolt more and more; the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even to the *top of the head there is* no soundness in it; *only* wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; they have not been closed, nor bound up, nor soothed with ointment" (vs 5-6). Sooner or later it is going to come to this:

Verse 7: "Your country *is* a desolation, your cities *are* burned with fire. Strangers devour your land right in your *very* presence... [we're seeing that happen right now] ...and *it is* wasted, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard, like a hut in a garden of cucumbers, like a besieged city" (vs 7-8). In other words, all those things are going to come upon it and

they don't even know it.

Verse 9: "Except the LORD of hosts had left us a very small remnant, we would have been as Sodom; we would have become like Gomorrah." Brethren, the small remnant that we are, it is something! Yet, in it they were 'religious.' They were bringing their sacrifices. God said, 'Away with it, it is iniquity, I cannot stand it!'

Verse 15: "And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood." Then He gives the terms of repentance. Not only does God lead us to repentance, but we have the things that we need to do.

Verse 16: "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do good..." (vs 16-17). Those are the terms that God gives. That's why we are to repent and be baptized and keep the commandments of God. That's learning to do well; ceasing to do evil.

"...seek judgment, reprove the oppressor. Judge the orphan; plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together," says the LORD...." (vs 17-18). The way you reason with God is this: *I am a sinner!* Just like Job. Job was perhaps the most perfect man that was, *in the letter of the Law*. He had to repent—didn't he? Why? *Because his righteousness became sin!* How could righteousness become sin? *Because he didn't give the glory to God!* It was all *his own* righteousness.

- Where did he learn to take care of the widows?
- Where did he learn to help the down and out?
- Why was it that he was perfect in the letter of the Law?
- *Because God gave him the Law!*

You reason together by admitting your sins. Job had to, 'Wherefore, I abhor myself and repent in sackcloth and ashes.'

"...Though your sins are as scarlet... [regardless of what they are] ...they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool. **If you are willing and obedient,** ..." (vs 18-19). That's the whole key, you have to be *willing and obedient to God!*

Then "...you shall eat the good of the land... [that is for us to obtain eternal life] ...but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured *with the sword*"; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken *it*" (vs 19-20). Ultimately, ***the only way out of sin is through repentance!*** That's why Christ came!

Let's see some other things concerning the nature of God and confessing our sins, and this ties right in with Joel 2. Finally you're overwhelmed with your sins, you feel like you're in a great hole, and that's what's brought out here:

Psalms 130:1: "Out of the depths I have cried unto You, O LORD. LORD, hearken unto my voice, and let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O LORD, who shall stand?" (vs 1-3). The very nature of human beings in sin!

Verse 4: "But **there is forgiveness with You,** that You may be feared. I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope" (vs 4-5). There is forgiveness of sin with God! Even for carnal people in the world, if they quite sinning. Not unto salvation, necessarily.

- Could Israel repent? *Yes!*
- Did they receive the Holy Spirit? *No!*
- Did God forgive them in their status that they were in? *Yes!*

The whole goal that God has for us is even greater now.

Psalms 85:1: "O LORD, You have shown favor to Your land; You have brought back Jacob from exile. You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people; You have covered all their sins. Selah. You have taken away all Your wrath; You have turned from the fierceness of Your anger. Restore us, O God of our salvation, and cause Your anger toward us to cease" (vs 1-4). *God is the One Who has to turn us!*

Let's see how that happened. We're going back and examine the situation with David. Many of us are very familiar with that, but let's look at it in 2-Sam. 12. There was forgiveness of sin! We will see that God is ready to forgive sin. David was already under God's grace. David was already called unto salvation. This is the encounter that he had with Nathan the Prophet when Nathan brought David to understand that he had sinned greatly!

David deceived himself for quite a while. We don't know how long this whole affair went on. But the child was born right about this time, right after David's repentance, and the child died! So, we can say that it lasted 10 months, 12 months, maybe a little over a year.

2-Samuel 12:7: "And Nathan said to David, 'You are the man!'"... Sometimes it takes another individual to come along and point out your sins to you.

"...Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out

of the hand of Saul. And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if that *was* too little, I would have given to you such and such *things* besides'" (vs 7-9). God says he would have given him even more.

Verse 9: "**Why have you despised the Word of the LORD to do evil in His sight?....**" (v 9). This is a deliberate thing that he did. This is the overt sin, outside; let alone all the deception and conniving that went on inside. I imagine that during the year that this was going on, I don't think he was before the sanctuary singing psalms to God. *NO!* The evil had gotten hold of him, just like you when you sin and don't go to God. What happens? *You avoid it and avoid it!* Finally one day it has to come to your attention and that's what Nathan did here with David, brought it to his attention.

"...You have stricken Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife *to be* your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now, therefore... [sometimes there comes a punishment and correction that stays]: ...the sword shall never depart from your house because you have despised Me..." (vs 9-10). You never want to let your sins get to the point of despising God.

"...and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house, and I will take your wives before your eyes and give *them* to your neighbor. And he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun, for you did *it* secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun'" vs 10-12). There was a real judgment! No one is going to mock God, not even David!

Verse 13: "And David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD.'.... [this shows that David repented] ...And Nathan said to David, 'The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die'" God did forgive him! Was that not instant forgiveness? God is instant, and God is ready to forgive sin.

Verse 14: "Only, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, this child born to you shall surely die.'" This was right after the child was born, apparently. And it did die!

Psalms 51 brings out, sums up, the whole nature of repentance and human nature. If you've had sins and you've had a hard time overcoming them, ask God to bring you repentance. That's where to start. Ask God to help you with that, then you go ahead. After the encounter with Nathan and David came to himself, he could see and understand what

he had done:

Psalms 51:1: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin" (vs 1-2). Now he could begin to see even more than just the acts and the deed that he had done, and all of the deception and wretchedness that went with it.

Verse 4: "Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight..." David couldn't blame anybody else; he was the king! Today, too many times we blame other people.

But "...that You might be justified when You speak and be in the right when You judge" (v 4). God is perfect and God is always right! That's the first place to being in understanding about God, and understanding about the nature of God. God is always right. God is there and ready to forgive, and He is there to help.

Here's when he began to see and understand that this nature was a very part of him, v 5: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." This does not mean that he was born of adultery. This means that the human nature and *the law of sin and death* comes with conception. That's what Rom. 5 is talking about.

Verse 6: "Behold, You desire Truth in the inward parts..." That's why prayer is secret. That's why you are to pray in private. If you have to confess to a man, or you have to tell on yourself the things that you have done, which are not right, what happens? *You never truly give all the facts! You never truly give all the motivations! Why? Because you don't want to look so bad in the eyes of that person!*

So, when you pray and confess your sins, you do it in secret. **God alone knows**, which then is the greatest justification for not having confession to a priest. *God alone knows! He understands it!* But for our edification this was put in the Psalms so that we could go to God in the same manner.

Verse 7: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean..." It's just like anything else, you let it get dirty, you neglect different things, and what happens? *Then you have to go back and do a real scrub job!* That's what this is, a spiritual scrub job.

"...wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness that the bones which You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (vs 7-10). There are times if you sin and you do a sin that is



profound, you really have to have a *right spirit* created in you again, and *that can only come from God to be renewed!*

(go to the next track)

Verse 11: “Cast me not away from Your presence...”—because there will be a time if you sin and don’t repent that you cannot come before the presence of God.

“...and take not Your Holy Spirit from me” (v 11). We are dealing with David, who was converted, who sinned to the point that he was afraid of losing the Holy Spirit of God, which shows that had he not repented he could have committed the unpardonable in.

We need to remember that even if you come to the point that you think God can’t forgive you, then what you need to do is to ask God to lead you to repentance, *and He will!* Here’s part of the way that David reminded God:

Psalms 86:1: “Bow down Your ear, O LORD, answer me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul, for I am Holy...” (vs 1-2). In other words, he was already set aside for conversion.

“...O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You. Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I cry unto You all day long. Rejoice the soul of Your servant, for to You, O LORD, do I lift up my soul, for **You, LORD, are good and ready to forgive...**” (vs 2-5). Look how quickly God forgave David when he said, ‘I’ve sinned!’

- He’s *ready* to forgive!
- He is *willing* to forgive!
- He *wants* to forgive!

But that has to be upon repentance.

“...and rich in mercy to all those who call upon You. Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer, and attend to the voice of my supplications” (vs 5-6). When there is the kind of repentance that there needs to be, then we have:

Psalms 103:1: “Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His Holy name.” Again, we’re dealing with the heart, with the full expression of yourself to God.

Verse 2: “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies” (vs 2-3). God does that through Christ. That is how this is accomplished.

Verse 8: “The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in mercy.”

God is there! In examining ourselves before the Passover, this is all part of what we need to do.

Verse 9: “He will not always chasten, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins... [If God should mark sin, who shall stand?] ...nor rewarded us according to our iniquities, for as the heavens are high above the earth, so is His mercy toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” (vs 9-12). They are removed!

Let’s see in the New Testament the operation of how that is done. Then we will see some other things that go along with this. We have the assurance of God that upon repentance all sin can be forgiven! *All sin, upon repentance!* The unpardonable sin is there is no repentance; it’s simple. So, there must be repentance.

1-John 1:6: “If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him... [that’s the whole purpose of all of this] ...but we are walking in the darkness... [out in the world in Satan’s way] ...we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth.” So, if you’re walking in the Light you have to practicing the Truth.

Verse 7: “However, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin.**” This means every sin.

Verse 8: “If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins... [to God] ...He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to **cleanse us from all unrighteousness**” (vs 8-9). That’s how the operation is done.

Once we have our sins forgiven, then there are other things that take place. Let’s look at some of the attitudes that we have to look at, which then inspires God to forgive our sins.

Luke 7:36: “Now, one of the Pharisees invited Him to eat with him. And after going into the Pharisee’s house, He sat down *at the table*. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that He was sitting in the Pharisee’s house, took an alabaster flask of ointment; and she stood weeping behind Him, *and knelt* at His feet... [here she is repenting] ...*and* began to wash His feet with *her* tears and to wipe *them* with the hairs of her head; and she was ardently kissing His feet and anointing *them* with the ointment. But when he saw *this*, the Pharisee who had invited Him spoke within himself, saying, ‘This *Man*, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what the woman *is* who

is touching Him because she is a sinner.’ Then Jesus answered *and* said to him, ‘Simon, I have something to say to you.’ And he said, ‘Teacher, say *on*.’” (vs 36-40). He did know that Jesus understood his thoughts.

Verse 41: “‘There were two debtors of a certain creditor...’” Our sins are *debts*; that’s why we ask God to forgive us our debts. And the note of debt that was nailed to the cross is the listing of our sins.

“...one owed five hundred silver coins, and the other fifty. But when they did not have *anything with which* to pay *him*, he forgave *them* both. Tell *Me* then, which of them will love him most?’ And Simon answered *and* said, ‘I suppose *the one* whom he forgave the most.’ And He said to him, ‘You have judged rightly.’ And after turning to the woman, He said to Simon, ‘Do you see this woman? I came into your house, and you did not provide *any* water to wash My feet; but she has washed My feet with *her* tears and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head. You did not give Me a kiss; but she, from the *time* I came in, has not ceased to ardently kiss My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil; but she has anointed My feet with ointment. For this cause, I tell you, **her many sins have been forgiven...**” (vs 41-47). This shows that there’s an act of worship that is involved, the act of desiring forgiveness is involved, and also that it comes through the person of Jesus Christ.

“...because she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, he loves little” (v 47). That’s where a lot of people get in trouble today. They come to the point of forgetting about what their nature is.

Verse 48: “And He said to her, ‘Your sins have been forgiven.’ Then those who were sitting with *Him* began to say within themselves, ‘Who is this, Who even forgives sins?’ But He said to the woman, ‘Your faith has saved you. Go in peace’” (vs 48-50). What do we have all combined here?

- repentance
- worship
- love
- faith

All of them together. This is why it says a little later that ‘love covers a multitude of sins.’ Did her act of love toward Christ and the desire to be forgiven cover the multitude of her sin? *Yes! That’s what Christ said!* Because she has love *much* her sins are forgiven. It’s the same things with us.

Matthew 18—here’s another very important thing concerning forgiveness. This is what we need to understand, especially within the Church. If you have troubles and difficulties with anyone in the Church, you’ve got to get it solved. It’s not the

minister’s duty to solve it. That’s a mistake that too many churches make. Here’s what Jesus said:

Matthew 18:15: “*So* then, if your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault between **you and him alone...**” That’s how all problems are to be resolved first. Don’t go to someone else and talk it over. Go to the person first and you say, ‘I have something to discuss with you, can I see you?’ Go, and be all ears if you’re the one to hear.

“...If he is willing to hear you, you have gained your brother” (v 15). And when that happens, that is the end of the issue, it is buried right there. That stops it. This is how to stop festering attitudes within a group of people. You resolve it in an attitude of understanding and love to do what is right.

Verse 16: “But if he will not listen, take with you one or two others, so that in *the* mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.” Two of the biggest problems that come up between brethren has to do with borrowing money; or doing work for someone and not getting paid; or presuming to take something from a brother and using it and never giving it back.

If you have to take one or two other brethren to establish every word then you do it to get it resolved. You better listen on the first step. I recommend, and I’m sure Christ does, solve it on the first step.

The third step is one that if you fulfill step one and two, then step three won’t ever have to be used. But if it comes to that point, here is what happens:

Verse 17: “And if he fails to listen to them, tell *it* to the Church...”—which is the local congregation. How do you do that? *Here’s where the minister gets involved!* You have something to bring to the whole church because it’s a big problem. He does not solve the problem there. He sets up a meeting and everybody is there. He may help moderate it, but he doesn’t make the final decision.

“...But if he also fails to listen to the Church...” (v 17). In other words, the whole congregation of everybody involved. Not those who were just involved in the problem, but the whole congregation sitting there listening to the problem and say, ‘Well, you did borrow \$2,000 from him and you did promise to pay. Now, will you work out a payment plan to pay him back? The person may say, ‘I really don’t want any interest with it. I really do need this money.’ You try to work it out, but he says, ‘No, I won’t pay it back.’ Then:

“...let him be to you as the heathen and the tax collector. Truly I say to you, whatever you shall

bind on the earth...” (vs 17-18)—in the case of disputes. Of course, you try to judge him according to God’s laws.

“...will have already been bound in heaven; and whatever you shall loose on the earth will have already been loosed in heaven” (v 18). That is concerning the disputes.

Verse 19: “Again I say to you, that if two of you on earth shall agree concerning any matter... [that is in these agreements or disputes] ...that they wish to request, it shall be done for them by My Father, Who *is* in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there, I am in *the* midst of them” (vs 19-20). This has to do with resolving the disputes.

You were to go one-to-one—that’s two. Then you were to take one or two witnesses so it would be three or four. He mentions the three because three would be the minimum. If you agree on it, you pray about it, you’re bound before God in heaven above. That’s so our *yes* can be yes, and our *no* can be no.

Now then we come to forgiveness, and in all of this we have judgment. The first part of this is judgment in resolving a dispute. Then you may have mercy and forgiveness. If the person says, ‘I’m willing to pay back the \$2,000, but it’s going to take me quite a while to pay it back. He may say, ‘If you can get me \$500 I’ll call it square.’ They agree on it; the problem is resolved.

What happens if you have persistent sin? Verse 21: “Then Peter came to Him *and* said, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?’” This is the hardest one for people to really grasp.

Verse 22: “Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you until seven times, but until seventy times seven’”—490! I know of no person who has committed the same sin 490 times in one day.

- Do we expect God to forgive us when we repent? *Yes!*
- Should we not also give forgiveness to those who desire it? *Yes!*
- How often? *Whenever necessary!*

Maybe the sin will continue. I remember a man in Boise who said, ‘I can’t take the Passover this year because I haven’t quit smoking.

If we expect God to forgive us when we say, ‘Forgive us.’ God expects us to forgive those who sin against us when they say, ‘Forgive me.’ When you do, don’t carry a grudge after that. The worst thing in the world is carrying a grudge. That’s what this next parable is all about. This all has to do with

your sins being forgiven.

Verse 23: “Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man, a *certain* king, who would take account with his servants. And after he began to reckon, there was brought to him one debtor who owed *him* ten thousand talents” (vs 23-24)—probably about \$20-million today. That’s a big debt. And sometimes we feel as though we owe \$20-million when we’re burdened down with debts.

Verse 25: “But since he did not have *anything* to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. Because of this, the servant fell down *and* worshiped him, saying, ‘Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ And being moved with compassion, the lord of that servant released him, and **forgave him the debt**” (vs 25-27).

This is what God does for us! A debt we couldn’t pay. We could not pay with any action, any thought, any thing we could do to pay the price of the death of Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. That’s why this is here. It’s more than we can pay. **“And being moved with compassion, the lord of that servant released him, and forgave him the debt”** Didn’t even give him a stipulation of anything to do, except one thing:

When you are forgiven, you are duty-bound to forgive others, v 28: “Then that servant went out *and* found one of his fellow servants, who owed him a hundred silver coins... [just a couple of ‘bucks’] ...and after seizing him, he choked *him*, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe.’ As a result, his fellow servant fell down at his feet and pleaded with him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ But he would not *listen*; instead, he went and cast him into prison, until he should pay the amount that he owed. Now, when his fellow servants saw the things *that* had taken place, they were greatly distressed; and they went to their lord *and* related all that had taken place. Then his lord called him *and* said to him, ‘*You* wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt, because you implored me. Were you not also obligated to have compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had compassion on you?’ And in anger, his lord delivered him up to the tormentors, until he should pay all that he owed to him. **Likewise...** [exactly in the same manner] **...shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother’s offenses from the heart**” (vs 28-35).

There is a great condition for having your sins forgiven: ***forgiving others!***

Let’s see another thing that interferes with our relationship with God. When it’s time for the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, and

things need to be taken care of, sometimes you may do something and the other person may not even know that you've been offended. Sometimes when that happens we think in our mind that *the other person knows it*, and they haven't done a thing and don't recognize that 'I'm upset with this.'

Matthew 5:23: "For this reason, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you... [this has to do with prayers] ...leave your gift there before the altar, and go *your way*; **first be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift**" (vs 23-24).

What happens? *Those things cut off your prayers to God; that's why they have to be resolved!* I know that I've done things that I hadn't even realized that I offended someone. When they came to me I was very surprised. That's just the nature of the way that things are. But I had to repent and change and understand. We can do things, say things, avoid things, all of those are all part of it. But it's very important in having our sins forgiven.

Let's see that this is also in the daily prayer, because God wants us to be renewed day-by-day; He wants us to come before Him and realize that we need that forgiveness daily.

Luke 11:1: "...one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us how to pray, as John also taught his disciples.' And He said to them, 'When you pray, say, "Our Father Who *is* in heaven, hallowed be Your name; Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, *so* also upon the earth. Give us our bread *as* needed day by day; and **forgive us our sins, as we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us...**"' (vs 1-4)—a little different than Matt. 6; and it's very difficult to do sometimes.

Jesus forgave them when He was being crucified. Is that not an example for us? *Yes, it is!* So then, we have to do this daily.

Let's look at the parable of the prodigal son, Luke 15. There are some people who are kind of repeatedly like the prodigal son. They have problems and difficulties and weaknesses, and they just can't help themselves sometimes.

There was a movie with James Garner and whenever he got around a roulette wheel he became mesmerized and he had to go bet. He couldn't help himself! He tried, and I guess to make the story good, at the end he hit the jackpot. But, that doesn't always happen. But there are times when you have a sin, a temptation that is so great that you can resist it to a certain point, and then you collapse into giving into it. God understands those things, too.

What do you do when that happens? *You just sort of scrape yourself up off the ground, ask God to help you, forgive you and lead you in the way that you need to go and get everything straightened around!*

The prodigal son is somewhat like this, though this is not a repeated thing. But here in the parable of the prodigal son, we have two lessons on forgiveness and attitude.

Luke 15:11: "Then He [Jesus] said, 'A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to *his* father, "Father, give me that portion of the property which falls to me." And he divided to them *his* living'" (vs 11-12).

This is what you might say is the most stupid thing that he could do, but he did it! He probably had a compulsion that he couldn't help himself, and he just had to come back to this riotous living. Whether it was gambling or wine, women and song—you know how the story goes—he just couldn't help himself. He wasted it.

When you see people do that, you think they ought to know better. Look at the millions that go to the casinos today. Not only in the United States, but around the world. What do they do? *They know they're going to lose money!* They can't help themselves. There's such a thing as Gambler's Anonymous—like Alcoholic's Anonymous—because they can't stop gambling. Today you can get it online, all you have to do is go on the web and gamble your money away. Just flick out your credit card and waste everything away. Then what happens? *You have to face your husband or your wife!* They look at the bill and ask, 'Where did this \$4,000 on the credit card come from?' Whatever the case may be.

Verse 13: "And not many days after, the younger son gathered everything together *and* departed into a distant country. And there **he wasted all his substance**, living in debauchery. But after he had spent everything... [now he's flat broke] ...there arose a severe famine throughout that country, and he began to be in need. Then he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country... [so he could survive] ...and he sent him into his fields to feed swine" (vs 13-15).

Can you imagine a more obnoxious lower gut-wrenching job for a Jew than to go take care of swine.

Verse 16: "And he was longing to fill his stomach with the husks that the swine were eating, but no one gave *anything* to him." In other words, he couldn't even sneak a little bit of hog food.

Verse 17: "And when **he came to**

**himself...**” This is what is so important in anything. Part of your repentance and part of asking God to forgive you your sins is to *come to yourself*. If you feel that you haven’t come to yourself, you need to ask God to help you come to yourself. **He will!**

Look at what it took for him to do it. He was young, filled with vanity. He said, ‘I’m going to go out and I’m going to make a fortune. Dad, give me the money; I’m going to go!’ So, he left, and he went out and did the worst thing in the world! Now he’s in the worst circumstances in the world.

- Have you ever worked in a swine field? *It smells!*
- Have you ever seen the slop and the mud that they go in? *It is something!*

So, probably standing out there in the stench and watching the hogs eat—all the slopping that hogs do—and here he is starving and hungry and nothing to eat, and all the good food going to the hogs! He finally came to his senses! Sometimes a person has to hit bottom before they’re ready to come out of it. Sometimes they have to come clear to the bottom, which he did!

“...he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have *an* abundance of bread, and I am dying of hunger?’” (v 17). God can get your attention when you have no food and the circumstances are irretrievably bad!

Verse 18: “I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.’” He knew that he had to repent and was already practicing what he was going to say to his father. This was hard for him to do! Remember, he left with a high hand; he left with all the money so he could go out and really be something. Now he’s coming home broken, sinful and with nothing; he wasted everything that he had! It was so bad! Here’s his attitude:

Verse 19: “‘And I am no longer worthy to be called your son... [not fit to be a human being] ...make me as one of your hired servants.’” Just put me on the payroll and I’ll be fine.

Verse 20: “And he arose *and* went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and ran *and* embraced him, and ardently kissed him.” The son is repentant! If the son had come back unrepentant, it probably wouldn’t have been this way. There’s got to be repentance in these things.

Verse 21: “And his son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’” This also shows what God the Father will do for us when

we repent, though we come to the very end of the road, to the very bottom of the pit. I think that we’re going to see a lot of people out of this generation that are going to come from circumstances similar to this.

- they’ve wasted their lives on drugs
- they’ve wasted their lives on riotous living
- they’ve wasted their lives on gambling
- they haven’t been educated
- they’ve been dumbed down

All these problems are going to come crashing down upon them and they’re going to wonder what they’re going to do.

Verse 22: “But the father said to his servant, ‘Bring out a robe, the best robe, and clothe him, and give *him* a ring for his hand and sandals for *his* feet; and bring the fattened calf and kill *it*, and let us eat and be merry. For this my son was dead, but is alive again; and he was lost, but is found.’ And they began to be merry” (vs 22-24). It says that even the angels rejoice when even one sinner repents.

So, here comes the other side of the coin. What about those who have been home a long time and haven’t gone out and done that?

Verse 25: “But his elder son was in a field; and when he was coming *back*, *and* approached the house, he heard music and dancing. And after calling one of the servants nearby, he inquired what these things might be. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come *home*, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him safe and well.’ Then he was angry...” (vs 25-28). When God blesses someone we should never be angry.

“...and would not go in. As a result, his father came out and pleaded with him. But he answered *and* said to *his* father, ‘Behold, I have served you so many years, and never did I transgress your commandment; yet, you never gave me a kid, so that I might make merry with my friends... [didn’t even so much as give me a little goat] ...but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed the fattened calf for him’” (vs 28-30).

Let’s understand something, Luke 17:3: “Watch yourselves; and if your brother commits a sin against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.” The brother was not forgiving!

Verse 4: “‘And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, “I repent,” you shall forgive him.’ Then the apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith.’ But the Lord said, ‘If you had faith as a *tiny* mustard seed, you might say to this sycamine tree, “Be

rooted up, and be planted in the sea,” and it would obey you. But which of you having a servant plowing or shepherding will immediately say *to him when* he comes in from the field, “Come and sit down *and eat*”? Rather, will he not say to him, “Prepare what I may eat, and gird yourself, *and* serve me while I eat and drink; and afterwards you may eat and drink”? Is he thankful to that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. Likewise you also, when you have done all *the* things that are commanded you, say, “We are unprofitable servants, because we have done that which we were obligated to do”” (vs 4-10).

- that’s why commandment-keeping can never save you
- that’s why commandment-keeping can never forgive you

It is your duty to do! Likewise with the son that was angry:

Luke 15:29: “But he answered *and* said to *his* father, ‘Behold, I have served you so many years, and never did I transgress your commandment...’” He was bound to do that.

- there’s the absence of love
- there’s the absence of understanding

This is the same attitude as the scribes and Pharisees had toward Jesus and the sinners that came to call to repentance. Then notice that he went on, and he really had an attitude about it:

Verse 30: “‘But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed the fattened calf for him.’ Then he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that *is* mine is yours’” (vs 30-31). He lost his perspective! He got his feelings hurt when someone was forgiven!

Verse 32: “But it was fitting to make merry and rejoice because your brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, but is found.” Nowhere did the father say he was going to give him back all of his inheritance again. He didn’t say that. But he was forgiven; he was covered. Sometimes we have to come to this point. The way that we know our sins are forgiven is that:

- we ask God to lead us to repentance
- we repent
- we confess our sins
- we ask God to help us understand the depths of those sins
- we need to be willing and ready to forgive those of our brothers and sisters, and yea, even those of our enemies

We’re commanded that we are to love our enemies (Matt. 5). I can love some of my enemies when they stay far from me! ***We have to be ready to forgive even them!***

That’s why it was a difficult thing for the New Testament Church when Saul was converted. That’s why he never could go back to Jerusalem and be well received by the people in Jerusalem. They remembered all the things that he did in persecuting the Church and causing to be killed: fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, etc. Even Paul, when he was converted, never got over that. That’s why he worked harder than any of the others, because of what he did against the Church.

***This is how we know that our sins are forgiven!*** Let’s make this a part of the examination that we need to do before Passover, so that we can take the Passover worthily.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Genesis 6:5-8, 11-13
- 2) Genesis 8:21
- 3) Jeremiah 10:23
- 4) Jeremiah 17:9-10
- 5) Romans 8:7
- 6) 1 John 5:19
- 7) Romans 2:4-6
- 8) Acts 2:38
- 9) Romans 3:23-25
- 10) Joel 2:12-13
- 11) Isaiah 1:2-9, 15-20
- 12) Psalm 130:1-5
- 13) Psalm 85:1-4
- 14) 2-Samuel 12:7-14
- 15) Psalm 51:1-2, 4-11
- 16) Psalm 86:1-6
- 17) Psalm 103:1-3, 8-12
- 18) 1 John 1:6-9
- 19) Luke 7:36-50
- 20) Matthew 18:15-35
- 21) Matthew 5:23-24
- 22) Luke 11:1-4
- 23) Luke 15:11-30
- 24) Luke 17:3-10
- 25) Luke 15:29-32

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Luke 13
- Romans 5
- Matthew 6

FRC:bo  
Transcribed: 6-4-14

# Repentance and Forgiveness

Fred R. Coulter

Greetings, everybody! Welcome to Sabbath services! If you want a title for this sermon, it will be *Repentance and Forgiveness*, which we all need all the time.

The other night I was channel surfing because most of the time when you're watching television there's not too much worthwhile to watch. It just struck me how everything is just exactly like it says there in Psa. 39, 'Man at his best state is altogether vanity,' and that the human mind is 'deceitful and desperately wicked above all things.'

So, we're going to talk about the miracle of repentance and forgiveness that God is going to take something over here that is inherently evil: our human nature and our natural instincts that we do, our noble way of thinking, even the things that people think are good.

I thought of that when I was watching on television the Macy's Christmas Parade. 'Oh, this is good, this is wonderful.' Then when they showed the pictures of the door-busters, they opened up the gate and it was like cattle stomping out of a fire, going in to buy things. I thought isn't that just what it says in Rev. 18. You've heard of Black Friday? I think most people now know what Black Friday is. When I first heard the term Black Friday, I thought they were talking about some kind of witchcraft. Black Friday is that businesses are able to make enough money to have a profit for the year if they have a good Christmas season.

I thought of Rev. 18 and Babylon the Great. You look around the world and you see all the upset and all the upheaval and revolutions, killing, bombings, lootings, shootings, attacking, drownings, kidnappings, all of these wonderful lovely things that people do. I'm being very factious indeed.

Revelation 18:1: "And after these things I saw an angel descending from heaven, having great authority; and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried out mightily with a loud voice, saying, 'Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a habitation of demons, and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hated bird; because all nations... [*all nations, the whole earth, worldwide*] ...have drunk of the wine of the fury of her fornication...' " (vs 1-3).

That's the religious system. Just look at the religious systems of the world—is that not true? They make many professions, but they don't follow God. "...and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her..." (v 3). I was looking at a

special on the Vatican. The Vatican is the smallest/largest nation in the world—108 acres. They have ambassadors from every country in the world. Why is that? *Because it's also the most political organization in the world, too!* Because of the holidays:

- Halloween
- Christmas
- New Years
- Lent
- Easter
- Valentine's Day

and whatever ones come in between—"...and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the power of her luxury" (v 3).

When we got back from the Feast last year I walked into the local supermarket and guess what's there? They had all the Halloween stuff there. Then the first week in November all the Christmas stuff was there. "...have become rich through the power of her luxury."

Yet, they claim that they have the *true religion*. They claim the Bible and don't. Yet, out of this God does a miracle *so that He can confound the world and He can show that He is greater than any of the things that Satan the devil can do!* And that He can do it in a way that much of the world will never know.

Romans 3:9—Paul is introducing here how sins are forgiven by showing the nature and activities of human beings: "What then? Are we of ourselves better?..." He was referring to the Jews. To this day they still think they're better.

"...Not at all! For we have already charged both Jews and Gentiles—ALL—with being under sin, exactly as it is written: 'For there is not a righteous one—not even one! There is not one who understands; there is not one who seeks after God'" (vs 9-11). That is just out in the world in general.

If a person is seeking God sincerely, he or she will find Him. If they're wanting to know about God, God will lead them. But once God starts doing that, then they have to respond to God.

Verse 12: "They have all gone out of the way; together they have *all* become depraved. There is not *even* one who is practicing kindness...." They may be practicing kindness, whatever they're going to do, but not many.

"...No, there is not so much as one! Their

throats *are* like an open grave... [sounds like the politicians] ... with their tongues they have used deceit; *the* venom of asps *is* under their lips, whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness; their feet *are* swift to shed blood; destruction and misery *are* in their ways; and *the* way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.' Now then, we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law..." (vs 12-19).

That's every human being in the world regardless of how much they sin or regardless of how much they are obedient to some of the commandments of God.

"...so that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore, by works of law there shall no flesh be justified before Him; for through *the* law *is* the knowledge of sin" (vs 19-20).

But how does God come out of this dilemma? As we go through the Bible, we'll see that there are times of forgiveness of sin that are not related to salvation. Forgiveness of sin related to salvation also requires baptism so that you come under grace. He's explaining that right here. He's explaining something that was not revealed until Jesus had come:

Verse 21: "But now, *the* righteousness of God *that is* separate from law has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets... [the Law and the Prophets spoke of Jesus] ...even *the* righteousness of God *that is* through *the* faith of Jesus Christ, toward all and upon all those who believe; for there is no difference" (vs 21-22).

Everything under the Old Covenant was for the twelve tribes of Israel. After Christ came He said, 'Go into all the world.' Now we're dealing with *all* people. That's part of the history that we have in the book of Acts, how God begins to deal with those of different nations and how that Paul writes that if you are Christ's then you are Abraham's seed according to the promise. This is something really fantastic that God is doing, but it is also something that is very powerful and works on an individual basis with different people as they yield to God.

Verse 23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Let's see something about God how that God is the One Who is doing all of these things through His Spirit.

Romans 2:3: "Now, do you think yourself, O man, whoever is judging those who commit such things, and you are practicing them *yourself*, that you shall escape the judgment of God? Or do you

despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?" (vs 3-4).

God is the One Who leads you to repentance. He works in people's lives and finally they come to a point—and many people come to this point in their lives, but how many really turn to God—where they've seen that everything they've done in their lives has not worked out. Everything has just been upside down, backward, they are miserable; they are in terrible shape: mentally, emotionally and spiritually; maybe even physically, too. But God reaches down and He leads them to repentance and He does that with His Spirit.

So, we want to talk about all those things that God does with His Spirit in leading us to Him. In order for the next part of Rom. 3, you must repent before Rom. 3:24 applies. You repent of sin. 'Sin is the transgression of the Law.' Sin is *lawlessness*—'anomia'—***operating contrary to the laws of God!***

Romans 3:24: "*But* are being justified freely by His grace... [that is through repentance] ...through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus." Let's see a prophecy of this.

- Who is God looking to?
- Who is God going to grant this to?
- Who is God going to begin dealing with?
- What is it that He looks to?

God tells us in Isa. 55 to 'seek the Lord while He may be found,' and that we need to make our thoughts in line with His thoughts. In Isa. 66 He takes something that is really a tremendous thing, the most important thing that a man could do on earth, that is build a temple for God and He compares that to someone who is repentant.

Isaiah 66:1: "Thus says the LORD, 'The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool. Where, then, *is* the house that you build for Me? And where *is* the place of My rest? For all these things My hand has made, and these things came to be,' says the LORD...." (vs 1-2)—because He created them.

So, if you make something for God you're going to make it out of what He has already created. This is why conversion is such a fantastic thing, because you are involved in developing the mind and character of Christ.

"... 'But to this one I will look, to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word'" (v 2). Means *you see the Word of God applies to you and you begin to live by it*. That's what God wants us to do.

Let's see some of the other attributes and promises that God gives that He wants us to do



while we're repenting, while we're coming to understand, while we're realizing that our lives need to be changed, our minds need to be changed, everything about us needs to be changed. Of course, that's why there's baptism with burial in water. Let's see how all of these are connected with the attitude that God wants us to have for repentance. Then we will look at some other Scriptures concerning repentance and then we will see what God wants.

Matthew 5:3: "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.... [not filled with vanity and lifted up; not high and mighty] ...Blessed *are* those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed *are* the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" (vs 3-6). All of these things are the attitudes that we need to have and develop on a continuous basis. We don't just do it once and it's all over. *No!*

Always remember this. When you get angry and you want to execute vengeance, v 7: "Blessed *are* the merciful, for they shall find mercy." You could take each one of these and do the opposite. If you are unmerciful, you won't get any mercy.

Verse 8: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart..." Look at every one of these are spiritual characteristics that God wants us to have and only can come from God.

"...for they shall see God. Blessed *are* the peacemakers, for they shall be called *the* sons of God" (vs 8-9). Once you really find out about the Truth of God, certain things may even happen in your life that are really the opposite of what you want, but are necessary, so God tests us whether we will be faithful or not.

Verse 10: "Blessed *are* those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." Look at the opposite, the next two verses show the difference in a converted mind and converted character that God wants us to have

Verse 11: "Blessed are you when they shall reproach you, and shall persecute you, and shall falsely say every wicked thing against you, for My sake."

Normally what people do, they go out and kill. As I was channel surfing I spent some time watching the Hatfield's and McCoy's history back there in West Virginia and Northern Kentucky. What a bloody mess that was! What a terrible, terrible thing that was! Every time something happened you went out and killed, you went out and looted, you went out and burned. Finally they exhausted themselves, just plain exhausted themselves after

about three generations. They saw the cemetery out here with all of the Hatfields in one cemetery and all the McCoy's across the river in the other cemetery. Finally they said, 'This is getting us nowhere.' How much they turned to God we don't know. But it's awfully hard to say for someone doing you wrong that you won't retaliate.

Verse 12: "Rejoice and be filled with joy... [that's the opposite of when someone comes after you] ...for great *is* your reward in heaven; for in this same manner they persecuted the prophets who *were* before you."

Let's see what God is going to do upon repentance and then what repentance and forgiveness together work in our lives, Romans 3:24: "But are being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; Whom God has openly manifested to be a propitiation through faith in His blood..." (vs 24-25). For sins to be forgiven for salvation takes the blood of Jesus Christ and nothing else will do.

We see that even after that we are to go and sin no more. Then as we are converted, we begin to realize that there is the *sin within*. {note sermons: *How to Overcome the Sin Within*. How do you do that? In the first place it's all these things you've done out here; you've stopped doing all the things out here, now God wants to work in the mind. That becomes the *real work of God* with your cooperation. We'll see how that is done also. It's through the blood of Jesus Christ, His sacrifice alone. There is no law that says do this 10,000 times and you'll be saved.

"...in order to demonstrate His righteousness, in respect to the remission of sins that are past" (v 25). You can't say, 'Oh, Lord, I'm going to sin next week, forgive me it now.' Every sin that a person commits in a moment of time is a past sin. Time goes on, you've done it, it's already right there in the past though it was immediately done.

Let's see how this is going to work for us. Let's see how God does this. Let's see how He intervenes in our lives. We even see a lot of spiritual things in the prophets. In fact, all the prophecies concerning Christ and His suffering--the major ones—are in Isa. 53 and Psalms 22.

It always comes up, now that you have repented of your sins: What are you to do? What does God expect us to do? Isa. 1:15 applies to all people, not only just the religious ones, but all people. In fact as the New Testament points out, with the history of the scribes and Pharisees, they need repentance as well, even though they don't think they do.

God says, Isaiah 1:15: “And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood.... [because you’ve got to stop] ...Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean... [How do you do that? *Through repentance!*] ...put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil” (vs 15-16). You stop! We will see that Jesus said to those who had sinned, ‘Go and sin no more.’

Notice what we have to do that, v 17: “Learn to do good... [You have to learn what is right; learn to do good. That comes from God.] ...seek judgment, reprove the oppressor. Judge the orphan, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the LORD...” (vs 17-18). Here’s a promise.

Every time I read this I think of the Apostle Paul. The Apostle Paul was dedicated to Judaism, hostile against the Christians. He was commissioned by the high priest to go out and arrest the Christians, bring them and cast them into prison. He was even there holding the coat of Stephen when he was stoned to death. God reached down and called him.

“...‘Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool. **If**... [here’s what God expects when He forgives sin]: ...you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured *with* the sword’; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken *it*” (vs 18-20). That’s set before all of us.

Let’s look and see what God is going to do. Let’s look at how repentance involves your emotions and how you come to see yourself. Luke 15 is one of the most moving and important chapters in the book of Luke concerning repentance and forgiveness. How does God look at repentance? As I’ve mentioned many times in the past, God always honors repentance because He knows that within it is still there. It’s inside that God is concerned about, changing us, developing the character of God.

The first parable He spoke, Luke 15:4: “Which man of you who has a hundred sheep, and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost, *searching* until he finds it? And when he finds *it*, he lays *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing; and after coming to his house, he calls together *his* friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost’” (vs 4-6).

There is activity in heaven upon repentance, v 7: “I tell you that likewise, *there* shall be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, *more* than over

ninety-nine righteous ones who have no need of repentance.” Then He says the same way concerning the woman who lost a coin.

Verse 11: “Then He said, ‘A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to *his* father, “Father, give me that portion of the property which falls to me.” And he divided to them *his* living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered everything together *and* departed into a distant country. And there he wasted *all* his substance, living *in* debauchery. But after he had spent everything...” (vs 11-14). God works in circumstances. Here we have circumstances in general in the country.

Now we have circumstances in particular with the young man. “...there arose a severe famine throughout that country, and he began to be in need. Then he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine” (vs 14-15). You can’t have anything lower to do for a Jew than to feed swine.

Verse 16: “And he was longing to fill his stomach with the husks that the swine were eating, but no one gave *anything* to him”—because he was probably told by the landowner, ‘This is expensive and you cannot eat what you’re feeding to the swine.’ There was probably some punishment with it if he did.

Verse 17 is the very key that we all need to come to in repentance: “And **when he came to himself**...” That is a statement that says when you’re finally looking at yourself the way you are and looking at your circumstances the way that they are. You come to the realization of how you’ve lived your life and this is the first step of repentance leading to forgiveness.

“...he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have *an* abundance of bread, and I am dying of hunger?’” (v 17). It also shows he was willing to humble himself. He didn’t come waltzing back to his father and say, ‘Well, Dad, I was out there and I was in this country and unfortunately I wasted everything I have and it was just a mistake. They did it and that one did it and the other one did it.’ *No, he didn’t do that!* He humbled himself. He said to himself, ‘Look, I’m in worse shape than the servants that my father hires.’

Verse 18: “I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him...” Compare that attitude with the one where he said, ‘Father, give me the portion of the property which falls to me.’

“...‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; and I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired servants’” (vs 18-19).

This is a parable of *how God will receive us back*. That's why Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees that 'the tax collectors and harlots are going into the Kingdom of God before you.' God let us alone to live in our sins, *when we come ourselves*; that's the thought in your mind. Everyone has to experience this:

- What am I doing?
- Where am I going?
- Do I love this misery I am in?

He came to his father, v 20: "And he arose *and* went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and ran *and* embraced him, and ardently kissed him.... [Isn't that something?] ...And his son said to him..." (vs 20-21). Because he had everything prepared. Think of what it took for him to come back home. Think what it took to come to this frame of mind where he says:

"... 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son'" (v 21). That's a real repentance!

But notice, just like God has something greater for us that we just read of in Matt. 5, now God can begin to work with you. Here is a preview of what salvation's going to be all about, right here:

Verse 22: "But the father said to his servant, 'Bring out a robe, the best robe, and clothe him, and give *him* a ring for his hand and sandals for *his* feet; and bring the fattened calf and kill *it*, and let us eat and be merry. For this my son was dead, but is alive again; and he was lost, but is found.' And they began to be merry" (vs 22-24). We won't go into the attitude of the son who stayed back, but there again was a wrong attitude on his part.

Let's see the working of repentance. God is ready to forgive, just like with the father when the son came back. We're going to see a good number of Psalms; we're going to look at them and see how this helps us tell about repentance and forgiveness. Lots of times when we sin, and we know we've sinned, we say, 'I'll go pray once I get myself straightened out.' You have to get yourself straightened out by repenting. How are you going to get yourself straightened out if you don't pray? ***Because you need forgiveness!***

Psalms 86:1: "Bow down Your ear, O LORD, answer me, for I am poor and needy.... [just like the prodigal son; he was he was poor and needy] ...Preserve my soul, for I am Holy; O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You" (vs 1-2). Because you're coming to God, trusting in His forgiveness. What did the prodigal son do? He came home to the father!

Verse 3: "Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I cry unto You all day long. Rejoice the soul of Your servant, for to You, O LORD, do I lift up my soul" (vs 3-4). God is willing, God is ready, God is there to forgive, but ***we have to come to God in the right way and right attitude*** and forgiveness is there. We'll talk about what kind of sins are the sins that we can repent of and it's all but one sin.

Verse 5: "For You, LORD, are good and ready to forgive, and rich in mercy to all those who call upon You." We need mercy, forgiveness, kindness, and likewise, *we have to treat each other same way!*

Notice how he prayed, v 6: "Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer, and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, and You will answer me" (vs 6-7).

- God will answer
- God will hear
- God will forgive

Psa. 51 is preserved for us that records David's attitude after Nathan the Prophet came to him and told him concerning Bathsheba and her husband Uriah the Hittite, 'You are the man.' This is between David and God and to have this here shows us something very important. This was a great sin and it was a sin of deceit. It was a sin of exaltation of his authority as king. It was a sin of passion and lust—and Bathsheba's as well—both of them involved.

He tried everything he could to make it right. Remember he sent Uriah back to have what they call in the army 'r 'n r' (rest and recuperation) to be with his wife in hopes that he would lay with her. That was a pretty good scheme. But Uriah, even though he ate with the king, probably sitting there, 'Wonder what the king wants.' He ate and drank. David tried to get him drunk so he would stagger home and be with his wife. But he went and laid on the doorstep.

He tried two nights to get him to go lay with his wife and then when the baby was born it would be his. It didn't work. David didn't *come to himself* until God sent Nathan and gave him the parable. The rich man, who was David, took the little ewe from the poor man. Nathan said, 'What are you going to do to him?' *We're going to make him pay!* Nathan looked right at him and said, '***You are the one.***' God says, 'I made you king, I gave you what you wanted. I gave your enemies into your hand. I helped you conquer the land. I brought the twelve tribes of Israel together under you. Moreover, if that wasn't enough I would have done thus-and-such.'

David repented! *God put away his sin*. Now look at everything that was involved. There was still

the residual the rest of his life because he did this with deliberation, but he was going to have trouble in his family and, yes, he did.

(go to the next track)

We want to add some other Scriptures to Psa. 51 so that we can see the process taking place. Come to 1-John 1; here's another promise that ties in with Rom. 3 that we covered about how God accomplishes the removing of our sins through His grace by the blood of Christ. That is the sacrifice.

1-John 1:6: "If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him..." Means we have contact with God. We pray to God. We're keeping His commandments.

"...but we are walking in the darkness..." (v 6). The darkness is the light of this world from Satan the devil.

"...we are lying to ourselves..." (v 6). In other words we haven't come to grips with the deceitfulness that we do not have the ability to do things of our own, of a righteousness that God requires.

"...and **we are not practicing the Truth**" (v 6). That's a perfect description of Sunday-keeping and holiday-keeping. Of course, what he's talking about here are about those who at that time were bringing those things into the Church.

Verse 7: "However, if we walk in the light..." If you do a word study on *light*:

- the commandments of God
- the way of God
- the Truth of God
- Christ is the Light of the world
  - ✓ the Resurrection
  - ✓ the Way, the Truth and the Life

"...as He is in the light... [that's the standard for us] ...*then* we have fellowship with one another... [it also includes all of us together] ...and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from **all** sin" (v 7).

The only sin that will not be forgiven is the sin in rejecting God, rejecting His Holy Spirit. If a person has that kind of sin, they don't even care. So, if someone is worried, 'Have I committed the unpardonable sin?' If you are worried, no you haven't. The best thing to do is go repent.

Verse 8: "If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us." One of the things we are going to see is the result of repentance and confession of sins and forgiveness of sin is to replace the lies, the deceit, the evil within with Truth.

Here's a promise, v 9: "If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." God gave us the nature that we have. He is there willing; He is there ready—upon repentance and confession—to forgive our sins. There isn't any one of us who hasn't done something that is really of a great magnitude before God that needs repentance; that needs forgiveness. God will do that. Why? *Because we're out there blinded by Satan the devil*, going our way, living the way that we think is right and God is there to forgive when we come to our senses to understand what we're doing.

Psalm 51:1 also shows us how to approach God: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion, blot out my transgressions."

When you stop and think about everything he had to think of and everything David had to do to try and cover this up and yet, like it says, there are birds that fly with messages. They didn't have telephones in those days, but they had talking tongues. The country knew about this. *They knew!* You think Joab kept his mouth shut?

Verse 2: "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." Notice how this follows along with 1-John 1. "...cleanse me from my sin." and that means you have to have your mind cleared, your thoughts cleared, the mark before God against you in sinning, you have to have that cleansed and wiped away.

Verse 3: "For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me." You come to the point that there is nothing else you can think of than to repent of that sin and think to yourself, 'How could I have done this?'

Here's the truth concerning all sin. Others are involved:

- it involved Bathsheba
- it involved Uriah the Hittite
- it involved Joab the general
- it involved the soldiers that were with Uriah the Hittite

that they had to obey the command to withdraw and leave him alone so the enemy could kill him. That got out to all Israel—*all Israel knew!*

Verse 4: "Against You... [even though all those other people were involved] ...You only, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight, that You might be justified when You speak and be in the right when You judge"—because God certainly was in the right. Look that all that He did for David.

He goes clear back to the time that David was conceived, and He says, v 5: “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity... [that’s an admittance that sin is within, part of your being] ...and in sin did my mother conceive me..... [the result of repentance]: ...Behold, You desire Truth in the inward parts...” (vs 5-6). Inside:

- your mind
- your thoughts
- your spirit
- your attitude

God *will* forgive and cleanse! We’re to remember the lesson, but we’re not to go back and emotionally relive the thing again. Paul always remembered what he did to the Church. He repented of that, but he didn’t go back and emotionally relive it over and over again.

“...and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom.... [that you learn from what you did and you understand how foolish that was] ...Purge me with hyssop... [that’s the strongest cleaner you can get] ...and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (vs 6-7).

It’s like it says there, ‘He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from *all unrighteousness*.’ God is ready to forgive. Notice how quickly, when you read the account that God forgave David, He said, ‘Your sin is put away.’ “...wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.” Isn’t that what we read back there in Isa. 1? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 8: “Make me to hear joy and gladness that the bones which You have broken may rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities” (vs 8-9). All of the first nine verses is the foundation of what God wants with repentance and *forgiveness*.

Now something new is going to happen, v 10: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” That’s what God wants so that out of it we can learn the lessons, we can go forward, we can change.

Verse 11: “Cast me not away from Your presence... [He came very close to being rejected by God after all that God did for him.] ...and take not Your Holy Spirit from me” (vs 10-11). It shows that even with the Holy Spirit you can sin.

Verse 12: “Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and let *Your* free spirit uphold me.” That’s what we need, brethren. That’s why you look at the things in the New Testament and when it says, ‘If there’s someone who has a fault or trouble, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness considering yourself.’ Here is God:

- Who is perfect
- Who is righteous
- Who is Holy
- Who is loving
- Who is kind
- Who is gracious

and He’s blotting out your sins and washing them away.

Now let’s see what He does with them. When God does something, wouldn’t you say He does a good job? *Yes, indeed!* Now then, we come to God with thanksgiving, with blessing, with gratefulness, with humility. Psal. 103 tells us what God does with our sins.

Psalms 103:1: “Bless the LORD, O my soul and all that is within me, bless His Holy name.” Now you become even more dedicated to God, more thankful to God.

Verse 2: “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.” Think about everything that God has done for you in many different ways.

Verse 3: “Who forgives all your iniquities...” That’s what it says back in 1-John 1. Forgives all your iniquities, all your sins, all your shortcomings.]

“...Who heals all your diseases... [*God does!*] ...Who redeems your life from destruction...” (vs 3-4). Because sure enough, with all the sins that we have, we’re headlong for destruction. *Yes!* Redeems us—*has bought us back* with the sacrifice of Christ.

“...Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies” (v 4). Just like the father of the prodigal son.

When the son came home, he didn’t say, ‘Well about time you got back here. What have you been doing? I knew it, yeah, you go over there and you get the worst job.’ *No, he didn’t do it!* He gave him a robe, accepted him back, a ring for his finger, sandals for his feet. He must have been in miserable shape when he came home, all bedraggled, dirty.

Verse 5: “Who satisfies your desires with good things; your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.... [God is there to help you in every way.] ...The LORD executes righteousness and judgment for all who are oppressed.... [sin from Satan the devil is what oppresses us] ...He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in mercy” (vs 5-8). Isn’t that something? You go to any of the courts of the land here and see if you can get any of that.

Verse 9: “He will not always chasten, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt

with us according to our sins... [‘the wages of sin is death’ and we’re still alive] ...nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so is His mercy toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” (vs 9-12).

- They have been removed!
- They are gone on God’s record!

Verse 13: “As a father has compassion upon his children, so the LORD has compassion upon those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust” (vs 13-14). **God understands!**

Now let’s see about the prayer of intercession, confession and repentance. Let’s see how Daniel prayed. Notice how fervent this prayer was because he finally understood the seventy years that Jeremiah had written in his book. This is really a heartfelt prayer. God intervened immediately to give him the prophecy of the coming Messiah, way beyond his expectation.

Daniel 9:2: “In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel understood by books the number of the years, which came according to the Word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. And I set my face toward the LORD God... [full purpose] ...to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes” (vs 2-3). We don’t need sackcloth and ashes today, because God wants a broken spirit and a contrite heart, but we certainly do need fasting. Fasting comes with repentance, as well.

Verse 4: “And I prayed to the LORD my God and made my confession, and said, ‘O LORD, the great and awesome God, keeping the covenant and mercy to those who love Him, and to those who keep His commandments.’” Here he’s praying for the whole nation of Israel, all exiled; the ten tribes off into Assyria, the Jews over into Babylon. Here’s Jerusalem lying desolate.

Verse 5: “We have sinned and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, and have turned aside from Your commandments and from Your ordinances. Neither have we hearkened unto Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our rulers, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land” (vs 5-6). This is the kind of prayer that is necessary to heal the nation here today. Of course, we are far, far from that kind of attitude.

Verse 7: “O LORD, righteousness *belongs* to You, but to us confusion of face, as at this day to the men of Judah and to the people of Jerusalem, and to all Israel who are near and who are afar off, through

all the countries where You have driven them because they dealt treacherously with You.” Notice that deep repentance and confession here. This is quite a prayer.

Verse 8: “O Lord, confusion of face belongs to us, to our kings, to our rulers, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against You. To the LORD our God belong mercies and forgivenesses even though we have rebelled against Him” (vs 8-9). You acknowledge your rebellion.

Verse 10: “Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God to walk in His laws... [you confess your transgressions] ...which He set before us by His servants the prophets. Yea, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and have turned aside, so that they might not obey Your voice... [he realized what happened] ...Therefore the curse has been poured out upon us, and the oath that is written in the Law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against Him” (vs 10-11). That’s quite a prayer! Right after that the decree went out to release as many of the Jews as wanted to go back to the Holy Land. Then the prophecy came, the rest of chapter nine, concerning the coming of the Messiah.

Let’s see some other things concerning how we are to forgive. Here’s quite a touching one. We’re to forgive one another. Remember what Jesus said that our sins are forgiven if we forgive those who sin against us. God expects us to operate in that manner. Sometimes it’s really hard to do, especially if you’ve been offended. But God expects that to be done.

Let’s look at one of the greatest offences in the world, Gen. 50. This was quite a thing. This is after Jacob died, whose name was changed to Israel. Now came the moment of truth. Joseph and his brothers were together now.

- What had they done?
- What a thing that they did!

Joseph came out with a tunic of many colors that his father gave him and was very arrogant, smart-alecky to them. He told them, ‘I had two dreams’: One of them was that even his father and mother would bow down to him and so would they. So they got mad and they were going to kill him, but no, Judah said ‘Don’t kill him; ‘let’s sell him.’ Nice loving brotherly love, nice kindness that’s going on.

They took his tunic, took the blood of a goat, put all over it, and here came the Midians with their caravan. They sold him off to Egypt. Came back and bald-faced lied for all of those years that Joseph died; eaten alive by a wild beast. That was the son that Jacob loved and he was just like the father of the prodigal son.

Then you know what happened. When there was a famine they had to go down into Egypt. That was after, through God's blessing and grace, Joseph was raised to be second in command of all of Egypt and how through his work of the seven years of plenty they survived the seven years of famine. God worked it out that they had to come down and get food. You know what happened. They didn't recognize Joseph because he was all dressed in this Egyptian garb and was full-grown at that time. He knew who they were, but he didn't tell them.

He did several things, he put silver candlesticks in the grain they were taking back, then had the Egyptian troops go out and say, 'You've stolen things.' *No, we didn't.* 'Yes, you did.' Looked in there, 'What is this?' They brought them back and Joseph said, all right, 'Are there any others of you?' *Yes, we have a younger brother.* That was Joseph's brother, as well. He said, 'You bring him.' *We can't!* 'You bring him!'

They went back to Jacob, said, 'You have to let Benjamin go with us on this next trip.' To make a long story short, at that time then he revealed who he was and said, 'Go get my father.' So, they all came down to Egypt. They were given the best land in the land of Goshen and the children of Israel lived there.

They prospered, became mighty. Joseph lives to be 110-years-old. Before Joseph's death and after they buried his father, Gen. 50:14 is a perfect example of *forgiveness of a great sin*. I imagine that this was really quite a tremendous thing that they went through. Have you ever had a family feud that ran so hard and so deep that you did things that were so wrong and so deliberate, and yet, forgiveness is required.

Genesis 50:14: "And Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father. And when Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, 'Joseph will perhaps hate us, and will certainly repay us all the evil which we did to him.' And they sent a message to Joseph, saying... [they wrote it out] ...'Your father commanded before he died, saying, "Thus shall you say to Joseph, 'I beseech you now, forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin, for they did evil to you.'" And please now forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father.' And Joseph wept when they spoke to him" (vs 16-17).

Verse 18: "And his brothers also went and fell down before his face. And they said, 'Behold, we *are* your servants.'.... [that must have been quite a scene, indeed] ...And Joseph said to them, 'Do not fear, for *am* I in the place of God? But as for you, you thought evil against me, *but* God meant it for good to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save a great

many people alive. And now do not fear. I will nourish you and your little ones.' And he comforted them and spoke to their hearts.... [that must have really been quite a thing at that point] ...And Joseph lived in Egypt, he and his father's house. And Joseph lived a hundred and ten years" (vs 18-22). Then it talks a little bit more about Joseph there.

That was quite a thing! Now let's look at one that is even greater than that. We won't go through all the experience that Jesus went through leading up to the crucifixion, but I want you to understand that through this how ready God is to forgive sin. You go to God; you confess your sins. You have problems you're battling in your mind, we'll cover that some more even with the sermons I've been doing on *How to Overcome the Sin Within*.

Remember, all that Jesus had gone through, the mocking, the beating, the hitting, the spitting, the things that the high priest did, that the soldiers did, the scourging. If there's one thing in the movie by Mel Gibson that was correct, I think that his depiction of the scourging was really very graphic because it says that He was marred more than the sons of men.

What is God manifested in the flesh going to do? Here there is not one who repented, Luke 23:33: "And when they came to the place called *Place of a Skull*, there they crucified Him and the malefactors, one on *the* right and one on *the* left." First thing that Jesus said when they hoisted Him up on that tree to make the cross]:

Verse 34: "Then Jesus said, '**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.**'...." (vs 33-34). You talk about merciful, kind, and gracious and loving. Yes, indeed, that is sure true! Absolutely! What you need to do in going to God is:

- humble yourself
- confess your sins
- ask God to wipe them away

You have to get up and do what is right after that, ***change your behavior!*** Ask God to help:

- change your mind
- change your thoughts

***God will do it!*** That's why He's called you.

- He has called you to be His son or daughter
- He has called you to live forever
- He has called you that daily you can have your sins forgiven

Psalm 85:1: "O LORD, You have shown favor to Your land; You have brought back Jacob

from exile. You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people; You have covered all their sins. Selah” (vs 1-2)—which means *meditate on this*.

Psalm 86:5: “For You, LORD, are good and ready to forgive...”

Psalm 85:3: “You have taken away all Your wrath; You have turned from the fierceness of Your anger.... [this helps us to see how we need to pray to God, as well] ...Restore us, O God of our salvation, and cause Your anger toward us to cease” (vs 3-4)—because God is ready to forgive.

Verse 5: “Will you be angry with us forever? Will You draw out Your anger to all generations? Will You not give us life again, so that Your people may rejoice in You?” (vs 5-6). We think of that with the whole world and all twelve tribes of the children of Israel today.

Verse 7: “Show us Your mercy, O LORD, and grant us Your salvation.” That’s what we want. We want to be saved from our sins, but we want to be saved from the flesh.

Verse 8: “I will hear what God the LORD will speak... [we have it right here, written down for us] ...for He will speak peace to His people... [that’s Israel] ...and to His saints...” That is us, because every epistle of the Apostle Paul is ‘Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.’

“...but let them not turn again to folly. Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, so that glory may dwell in our land” (vs 8-9).

I love these next verses. These are tremendous and this is what God wants out of it all. God does not delight in the death of the wicked.

Verse 10: “Mercy and Truth have met together...”—through the mercy and longsuffering of God and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

“...righteousness and peace have kissed each other.... [what a beautiful, poetic thing that is written] ...Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the LORD shall give that which is good, and our land shall yield its increase. Righteousness shall go before Him and shall set us in the way of His steps” (vs 10-13).

That’s what God will do with forgiveness. This is why every day we ask God, ‘Forgive us our sins as we have sinned against others’—*everyday!* This will help us greatly when we understand the forgiveness of God. None of us have done the things as treacherously as David or as evil and hardhearted as the Apostle Paul when he was Saul.

***Whatever it is that you repent of, let God wash it away; learn the lesson and be dedicated to doing the Truth. That’s what repentance and forgiveness is all about!***

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Revelation 18:1-3
- 2) Romans 3:9-23
- 3) Romans 2:3-4
- 4) Romans 3:24
- 5) Isaiah 66:1-2
- 6) Matthew 5:3-12
- 7) Romans 3:24-25
- 8) Isaiah 1:15-20
- 9) Luke 15:4-7, 11-24
- 10) Psalm 86:1-7
- 11) 1-John 1:6-9
- 12) Psalm 51:1-12
- 13) Psalm 103:1-14
- 14) Daniel 9:2-11
- 15) Genesis 50:14-22
- 16) Luke 23:33-34
- 17) Psalm 85:1-2
- 18) Psalm 86:5
- 19) Psalm 85:3-13

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Psalm 39
- Isaiah 55, 53
- Psalm 22

#### Also referenced: Sermon Series:

*How to Overcome the Sin Within*

FRC:lp

Transcribed: 12-4-12

Formatted: bo—12-5-12

Corrected: 6-4-14



## Love, Mercy and Forgiveness

Fred R. Coulter

Let's look back at some of the things we have gone through in our lives, especially with the churches. We will begin to see something because we're going to touch a little bit on Job, because we need *love, mercy and forgiveness*. Without it, life becomes very difficult.

After Jesus taught His disciples to be persistent in their prayers, He says, Luke 18:9: "And to some who trusted in **themselves**... [they were righteous] (What happens?): ...and despised others... [Would you say there's a lack of love there?] ...He also spoke this parable: 'Two men went up into the temple... [coming before God] ...the one was a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed with **himself**... [Again, *self*. Yet, he was coming to God, even coming to the temple of God.] ...in this manner: "God, I thank You that I am not like other men—..." (vs 9-11). *I'm better!*

Notice that everything that he said here was something that God required. So, knowing what God requires is good, but then if you forget that it comes from God that's not good, even though you're in God's presence.

"...extortioners... [No one ought to be an extortioner—right?] ...unrighteous... [Ooh, I'm righteous!] ...adulterers—or even as this tax collector.... [notice what he did, he was really zealous]: ...I fast twice in the week, *and* I give a tithe *of* everything that I gain.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat himself on *the* chest, saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner"" (vs 11-13).

Every one of us has to come this point of knowing that we're sinners. Also the truth of it is, even though some people may think they're perfect in the letter of the Law, *spiritual perfection is another whole dimension*.

Have you ever gone to a church where you felt like it was full of Pharisees? *Yes!* Some churches say, 'Unless you come to church with a suit and tie and a certain kind of shoe, you can't be admitted.' You know what James said in James 2? '*My brethren, if there comes into your synagogue a poor man wearing clothes that obviously were unacceptable and there comes in a rich man and he's got his jewels of gold and all decked out and you say to the poor man, Go back in the corner, and you say to the rich man, Come up here, brother.*' James said you've sinned because you're judging the heart by the outward appearance.'

Let's go back and look at a tremendous Pharisee: Job. Remember, I asked you what was his

sin? He had a lot of sins; not just a few, he had a lot. He knew a lot about God. He talked about God. He gave God a lot of credit. But he also wanted to *go to court* with God. He was blameless in the letter of the Law—outward. But what was inside?

What is God interested in? *He's interested in the heart!* That means the mind, the thoughts and everything about you. Look at Job. This is quite an exciting book when you read it and you know what to look for. I think Job 29 highlights nearly everything. Everything that he did here was in accordance with the will of God. But if you do things that are in accordance with the will of God without loving God and without really worshiping God—you give God the credit, but you give yourself high marks.

Let's see what he said. Here he is, now just picture it. After days of talking back and forth with his three friends, having been afflicted with boils from head to toe, having a potsherd to scrape off the boils, let the pus run down, throw ashes on you to kind of keep them away. The maggots are now breeding everywhere. They love pus. You look down at your flesh and you say, 'Look, the worms are eating me up.' Poor guy, thin and gaunt, probably his complexion black and everything.

Job 29:1: "And Job continued speaking, and said, 'Oh, that I were as in months past, as *in* the days when God watched over me; When His lamp shined upon my head; and when I walked *through* darkness by His light; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God *was* upon my tabernacle; when the Almighty *was* yet with me, *and* my children were around me'" (vs 1-5).

Remember, he lost his sons and his daughters and all the things that took place. Number one lesson with all of that: *you can't save anybody, not even your own kin, only God can!*

Verse 6: "When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock pressed out rivers of oil for me. When I went out to the gate of the city; *when* I prepared my seat in the square!.... [there was Job's seat, *the seat of wisdom*] ...The young men saw me and hid themselves; and the aged arose *and* stood up... [they gave me honor] ...The rulers refrained from talking, and laid their hands on their mouths.... [because my speech was so much better] ...The noble's voice was subdued, and their tongue clung to the roof of their mouth. When the ear heard me then it blessed me.... ['Oh, Job, that's so good. Oh, what a marvelous thing, Job.] ...And when the eye saw me it gave witness to me.... [there goes a man of God] ...For I delivered the poor who cried for

help... [should do that] ...and the fatherless who *had* none to help. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I called the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me..." (vs 6-14).

Here's a good lesson for us, Matthew 9:10: "Then it came to pass, when Jesus sat down *to eat* in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And after seeing *this*, the Pharisees said to His disciples, 'Why does your Master eat with tax collectors and sinners?'" (vs 10-11).

- Don't you know that these are evil people?
- Don't you realize what is going on?
- Why don't you come with us, we're the righteous ones.

We'll take a look at one of the suppers that Jesus had with the Pharisees.

Verse 12: "But when Jesus heard *it*, He said to them, 'Those who are strong do not have need of a physician, but those who are sick. Now go and learn what this means: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice.".... [first you have love and then you have mercy] ...For I did not come to call *the* righteous... [those like Job who were self righteous] ...but sinners to repentance'" (vs 12-13).

Luke 11:37: "Now, while He was speaking, a certain Pharisee asked Him to dine with him; and He went in *and* sat down.... [notice how they look to the exterior of everything] ...But the Pharisee seeing *this*, wondered why He had not first washed before dinner. Then the Lord said to him, 'Now, you Pharisees... [notice how He talked to him]: ...cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are full of greediness and wickedness.... [that must have been a nice lunch] ...Fools, *did* not He Who made the outside also make the inside? Rather, give alms *from* the things that are within... [love, joy, mercy, peace] ...and behold, all things are clean to you. But woe to you, Pharisees! For you pay tithes of mint and rue and every herb, but you pass over the judgment and the love of God....'" (vs 37-42).

If you have righteousness outside, but not the love of God inside you are unmerciful. God wants mercy; God wants forgiveness. That's why Christ came.

So, He says: "...It is obligatory *for you* to do these things, and not to set aside those *lesser things*. Woe to you, Pharisees! For you love the chief seat in the synagogues and the salutations in the marketplaces. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are as unseen tombs, and men

who walk over *them* do not know *it*" (vs 42-44). He didn't hold back anything.

What happened, v 45: "And one of the doctors of the law answered *and* said to Him, 'Teacher, *by* saying these things You are also insulting us.' And He said... ['I'm sorry about that.' *No, He didn't!*] ...'Woe to you also, doctors of the law! For you weigh men down *with* burdens heavy to bear, but you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, whom your fathers killed. Therefore, you are bearing witness and consenting to the works of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs'" (vs 45-48). Jesus let them know—no mercy.

Let's come back to Matthew 12 and see where He told them again, finding physical fault. Listen, the key is this. ***If you love God and have the Spirit of God and you are converted inside, then the outside will take care of itself!*** They did the same thing when the disciples were plucking and eating grain. So, He told them:

Matthew 12:7: "Now, if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless." Christ came to bring mercy. Christ came to bring forgiveness.

Remember what they said when He healed the man who was the paralytic and they had four of them let him down right in front of Jesus when He was speaking? He said, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.' And the Pharisees said, 'Who but God can forgive sin?' He said, 'What's easier to say, pick up your bed and walk or your sins are forgiven?' Besides He was God in the flesh so He could say 'your sins are forgiven.' So, learn what this means.

Let's see about *mercy and forgiveness*. This is where prayer comes in. We look at what we've been doing and we see that there have been sins. What does God expect? Will God hear? There are certain Psalms that are really good for us to understand. Remember that *God has forgiven us* whenever you're dealing with people and their problems and difficulties. Because when people begin to understand about sin they don't understand how difficult it is for human beings to quit sinning and so they wonder if they're going to be forgiven. This is a good prayer to help them with. This is how we need to pray, not like the Pharisee that we saw there.

Psalms 86:1: "Bow down Your ear, O LORD, answer me, for I am poor and needy.... [Not like Job. 'Look at all the good things I did.'] ...Preserve my soul, for I am Holy; O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You. Be merciful to me..." (vs 1-3). What did Jesus say in the beatitudes? ***'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy!'*** All

right, take the opposite: Cursed are the unmerciful for they shall not receive mercy.

“...O LORD, for I cry unto You all day long. Rejoice the soul of Your servant, for to You, O LORD, do I lift up my soul... [All of this is motivated out of loving God—right? *Yes, indeed!*] (never forget this): ...**For You, LORD, are good and ready to forgive...**” (vs 3-5).

Upon repentance He is ready to forgive. What did Jesus say if you're dealing with your brothers and he sins seven times against you? What are you to do? He turns to you and says, 'I repent!' *You are to forgive him!*

“...and rich in mercy to all those who call upon You. Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer, and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, for You will answer me” (vs 5-7). God will hear your prayer. That's why repentance is so important. The whole process of conversion is this: *God is changing our heart and our mind, converting them.* It takes love and mercy and forgiveness.

Psalms 103 is a tremendous Psalm. Does God forgive all your sins? *Yes!* But God never forgives *future* sin because it hasn't been committed, yet. This is why in the daily prayer we ask God to forgive us our sins. As long as we're in the flesh, guess what? *We're going to sin!* How many here were perfect all day yesterday? Notice I didn't raise my hand very high. The whole Psalm here is the whole story of love and mercy and forgiveness. When you do something really, really wrong and sometimes you have big bloopers and sometimes you have little bloopers and sometimes you just plain mess up. This Psalm is a Psalm of great comfort to you and a promise and hope.

Psalms 103:1: “Bless the LORD, O my soul and all that is within me... [Does that agree with what Jesus said about loving God? *Yes, it does!*] ...bless His Holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits... [Does He not give us many benefits? *Yes, indeed!*] ...Who forgives... [30% of your sins? *No!*] ...Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases” (vs 1-3).

Notice what God is doing. Those of us who have the Spirit of God have the greatest thing that we can receive in this life. It doesn't come through a man. It comes through Jesus Christ. That is the Spirit of the Father and Christ in you because God loves you, has forgiven your sins, has blotted them out. So, that's the greatest thing because God wants to change us. God wants us to be in His Kingdom, to be in His Family.

Verse 4: “Who redeems your life from destruction... [*The wages of sin is death.* Is that not destruction? *Yes, indeed!*] ...Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your desires with good things; your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD executes righteousness and judgment for all who are oppressed. He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in mercy” (vs 4-8)—and most of us are not.

- we have to learn
- we have to grow in this
- we have to overcome

Verse 9: “He will not always chasten, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities, for as the heavens are high above the earth...” (vs 9-11). This is something that we cannot fathom. You know the more that they find about what the universe is all about, the more awesome God really is.

I heard a little-known fact the other day that really struck me. Every human body has about 10-trillion cells. That blew me away. Think of that! Think of all the work that God has done for us, just physically, let alone spiritually. What does God want to give you mentally and spiritually? *The mind of Christ through the love of God!*

Verse 11: “For as the heavens are high above the earth, so is His mercy toward those who fear Him.... [That obviously connotes love. Does God get rid of your transgressions? *Yes, He does!*]...As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” (vs 11-12).

He does it all *free*. All He requires is your total love to Him in exchange for eternal life. He took all the pain and He took all the suffering through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and what He went through for it. We'll cover that leading up to the Passover.

Verse 13: “As a father has compassion upon his children, so the LORD has compassion upon those who fear Him, For He knows our frame... [Yes, He made us!] ...He remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes, for the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and its place shall know it no more” (vs 13-16).

That's the way that human beings are. All of us who have been in the Church for a while, we're another Sabbath closer to the end of our lives!

- hopefully, we're learning some wisdom
- hopefully we're learning some love

- hopefully we're being converted

*With God helping us, we will be!*

Verse 17: "But the steadfast love... [that could be translated *mercy* or *love* because *mercy comes from love*] ...of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting... [conditional] ...upon those who fear Him, and His righteousness is unto children's children, To those who keep His covenant, and to those who remember His precepts to do them" (vs 17-18).

Yes, God loves the world, but not with the love that He loves those who He has called and given His Spirit to. *He has given His Spirit!* Christ has died for the sins of all mankind, but now is not the time that it applies to everyone. Now is the time it applies to us and His love *particularly to us* through His Spirit. He is called 'Our Father.' He is there *ready to forgive*. He is there *desiring mercy* to give to you and then you to those that you know.

There are times for correction, like with children, yes, that's true. There are times for correction for adults—*us*—yes, that's true. If we let God's Spirit lead us and let His Spirit guide us and let His Word correct us, that's the easiest way of receiving correction. We don't have to go through what Job went through. God blessed him in the end, but I just cannot imagine the affliction that Job had. That was something!

Let's see how *God's mercy* applies. This has to do with our prayer life. This is why praying every day is the key to your relationship with God, *every day!* Do you want God's Spirit with you every day? *Of course you do!* Then the way you keep the Spirit flowing and the way you keep things going is by yielding to God.

Mark 11:21, after they saw the fig tree that Jesus cursed the day before: "Then Peter remembered *and* said to Him, 'Look, Master! The fig tree that You cursed has dried up.' And Jesus answered and said to them, 'Have faith *from* God'" (vs 21-22). This is how you have everything. You receive the love of God, the mercy of God, the faith of God. Read some of the things that the Apostle Paul wrote and he said it is the faith *of* Jesus Christ *in* us through the power of His Holy Spirit.

Verse 23: "For truly I say to you, whoever shall say to this mountain, 'Be taken away and be cast into the sea,' and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he said will take place, he shall have whatever he shall say"—if it is the will of God. He says you pray, 'Your will be done.'

### Conversion:

- change of heart
- change of mind

### *developing*

- love
- mercy
- faith
- hope
- endurance

and all of the characteristics of God! ***It's harder to move, change and convert the human mind than to move a mountain!***

Verse 24: "For this reason I say to you, all *the* things that you ask *when* you are praying, believe that you will receive *them*, and *they* shall be *given* to you." What are the most important things—car, a house, money? *No!*

- love
- faith
- hope
- mercy
- Truth

*Wait for the true riches of God!*

There's a condition to it. We can't be like the Pharisee as we read; we can't be like Job bragging about what we do.

Verse 25: "But when you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive, so that your Father Who *is* in heaven may forgive you your offenses." That's mighty important to do, brethren.

Unfortunately, that's one of the big problems with the Churches of God and the people of God today—is it not? Wouldn't you say that's one of the biggest ones? There are some people who say, 'Why would I want to come to a Church of God where all I see is a bunch of fighting, squawking people after each other.' Why should it not be said: 'I want to come to this Church of God because everybody there loves each other.' Wouldn't that be much better? *We can't change others, but we can change ourselves.* This is why we need to pray for all of God's churches wherever they are, everywhere. And for the brethren that they will learn, that they will grow, that they will change.

Could it be that we've been cutting ourselves off from God by not forgiving each other? There are some people who have been so turned off by the 'Jobian' attitudes of the Churches of God that they want nothing to do with the Church of God. I talked to a woman who came out of a Church of God where they had the commandments. That was correct, but there was no love, there was no mercy, there was no grace. Everybody was on edge and everybody judging everybody. That's not what God wants.

Does it cut us off from God? *Yes!* It's like just saying taking the lights here. Turn them down 60%. The light is still there, but it's not of much

benefit. So likewise, if we quench or squelch or grieve the Spirit of God by hateful, self-righteous attitudes this kills us.

Let's also see this reinforced. He says this many times. Everyone wants to have their sins forgiven—don't you? *Yes, everyone!* He's teaching them how to pray. As I've covered before, but I'll just cover it again here, because you have a blessing and privilege. Be sure and go through the series *How Jesus Reveals the Father*. It's revealed more in the Gospel and the Epistles of John than anyplace else in the Bible. Prayer is not just a formality to God. Prayer is the fellowship relationship between each one of us and God.

How do we start praying? There's not one thing that says *give me*. 'Our Father,' meaning everyone who has the Spirit of God; He is our Father. I want to show you something that is really fantastic. This is important for us to understand. Here's what Jesus told Mary Magdalene when she wanted to give Him a hug after He had been raised from the dead.

John 20:17: "Jesus said to her, 'Do not touch Me, because I have not yet ascended to My Father...'"

Listen carefully to what He says. I want you to understand the close relationship we need to have with God the Father and Jesus Christ because *this is the whole heart and core of our relationship with God and why we are here*. If it were just to change the exterior behavior of what we are doing and we could join any organization that had discipline and things like that—but God is doing a work in us.

"...But go to My brethren and **tell them that I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God**" (v 17). Keep that in mind when you are praying. This will help you with your prayers. Remember there are a lot of things that you need to pray every day until they are answered. Those are not vain repetitions. Those are necessary repetitions because you need to be persistent until the answer comes.

Luke 11:2: "And He said to them, 'When you pray, say, "Our Father Who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name..."'"

- Your thoughts are on God
- You are loving God
- You are praising Him
- You are worshipping Him.

"...Your kingdom come..." (v 2). God's rule in your life. We know the Kingdom is coming. Yes, it is coming, but this is more particularly for God's rule in our life.

That's why it says: "...Your will be done... [in our lives] ...as in heaven, *so* also upon the earth" (v 2).

Now then it comes close to *give me*, but not *give me*, but *give us*, v 3: "Give us our bread *as* needed day-by-day; and forgive us our sins..." (vs 3-4). Not only are we to ask for forgiveness for our sins, but ask for the forgiveness of others. Sometimes you have to keep praying until God works with the individual and opens their minds to see and to understand. In the meantime, you don't retaliate against them. No, you pray for them. There is a condition to this:

"...as we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one" (v 4).

(go to the next track)

Let's see God's *mercy, love and forgiveness* all combined in one prayer in Dan. 9. This is quite something! Once we have it in our mind the understanding that when we pray, and it's to our Father, those prayers go to the throne of God in heaven above.

If you read the book of Revelation, the 24 elders have something to do with answering those prayers or managing them or whatever it is coming to God. Because it says that there was incense with the prayers of the saints on the golden altar. I think it's really interesting in what is written in Dan. 9. Think of this: All the time that the Jews were in captivity in Babylon they knew it was going to be for 70 years. There were three invasions over a 20-year period. How do you figure it? *Daniel didn't understand it until it was time* for the first wave of those to go back under the decree of Cyrus.

Daniel 9:2: "In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood by books the number of the years, which came according to the Word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet... [this also tells us he had the writings of Jeremiah] ...that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. And I set my face toward the LORD God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes" (vs 2-3).

So, this is time for fasting. There's time for very serious things that need to be petitioned to God and those require that. Jesus said that difficult things do not come about except by prayer and fasting.

Verse 4: "And I prayed to the LORD my God and made my confession, and said, 'O LORD, the **great and awesome** God...' Imagine how he felt. He came as a young man, as a captive to Babylon. Here he is an old man. God had given him these tremendous revelations and things, made him second

in the kingdom of Babylon. Here he's coming to God.

"...keeping the covenant and mercy to those who love Him... [loving God] ...and to those who keep His commandments.... [here's the confession]: ...'We have sinned...'" (vs 4-5). Notice how this follows along very closely with the model prayer that Jesus gave. You might take that and lay it alongside here and analyze it.

"...and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, and have turned aside from Your commandments and from Your ordinances. Neither have we hearkened unto Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our rulers, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land" (vs 5-6). That's pretty much where we are right here in the United States today.

Verse 7: "O LORD... [notice how he comes to God] ...righteousness *belongs* to You, but to us confusion of face, as at this day to the men of Judah and to the people of Jerusalem, and to all Israel who are near and who are afar off, through all the countries where You have driven them because they dealt treacherously with You." Sound a little like the Church today? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 8: "O Lord, confusion of face belongs to us, to our kings, to our rulers, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against You. To the LORD our God belong **mercies and forgivenesses** even though we have rebelled against Him" (vs 8-9). When there is *confession and repentance* God always honors that, and God forgives. Look at how long they had left God but God received them back.

Verse 10: "Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God to walk in His laws which He set before us by His servants the prophets. Yea, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and have turned aside, so that they might not obey Your voice. Therefore the curse has been poured out upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against Him. And He has confirmed His words which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us by bringing upon us a great evil, for under the whole heaven *it* has not been done as *it* has been done upon Jerusalem" (vs 10-12).

Always remember this: ***God corrects His own first!*** We can see many parallels in this in the life of the Church of God in our lifetime—can we not? *Yes, indeed!* But God always honors repentance.

Verse 13: "As *it is* written in the Law of Moses, all this evil has come upon us. Yet, we did not make our prayer before the LORD our God, that

we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your Truth." Isn't that an interesting phrase? ***You have to turn from your sin before you understand Truth!*** Why is that? *Because every way is right in a man's eyes!* You have to turn from them.

It's like I tell people when they don't know about the Sabbath and they still have questions. I give them the 4-week Sabbath challenge, which is this: You keep the Sabbath four weeks in a row and every Sabbath you spend a good portion of the day studying about the Sabbath in the Word of God, and then whatever else you want to study, too. Then you will see that man is not going to tell God, 'God, we're so good, we're going to change the day.' You will understand that if you keep the Sabbath, that's not *your* work, that's *God's* work. You will understand that *God will fellowship with us* on the Sabbath. God blesses those who assemble in His name in love and service to give them understanding, to comfort them.

Verse 14: "Therefore, the LORD did not hesitate concerning the evil that He brought upon us, for the LORD our God *is* righteous in all His works which He does, but we did not obey His voice. And now, O LORD our God, Who has brought Your people out from the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and has made a name for Yourself, as it is this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly!" (vs 14-15). Wouldn't that be something if something like this came officially out of Washington, D.C.? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 16: "O LORD, I pray You, according to all Your righteousness, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem..." Look at it today, what a pitiful, pitiful situation that is: hatred, blood, violence, war, killing, bombs, rockets. What a magnificent day it's going to be when Christ returns. Notice all of this confession of sin, and now he prays for God's mercies. Remember: ***whenever there is repentance and confession of sins there is mercy!*** *God does forgive, even long-standing sins.*

Verse 17: "And now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and cause Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary that is desolate for the LORD'S sake. O my God, incline Your ear and hear. Open Your eyes and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name. For we do not present our supplications before You on account of our righteousnesses, but because of Your great mercies" (vs 17-18). God wants:

- love
- mercy
- forgiveness
- ***mercy, not sacrifice***

Verse 19: “O LORD, hear; O LORD, forgive; O LORD, hearken and do. Do not delay, for Your own sake, O my God; for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”

Then right while he was finishing that prayer the angel Gabriel came and gave him the 70-weeks prophecy of Jesus’ coming. *Amazing how God answers!*

Verse 20: “And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the Holy mountain of God; Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, came to me, about the time of the evening sacrifice” (vs 20-21).

That’s quite a thing! This is the prayer we need to pray for God’s people today, brethren. We’re heading into some really, really difficult times. How they are going to fall, the way they’re going to come, we don’t know. That’s why we have to go to God in this attitude and this way. Psalms 130 is a prayer when you’re overwhelmed with sin and troubles and problems, just like Daniel was.

Psalms 130:1: “Out of the depths I have cried unto You, O LORD.” Overwhelmed with sin, problems, troubles, difficulties, nothing going right, everything going wrong.

Verse 2: “LORD, hearken unto my voice, and let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O LORD, who shall stand?” (vs 2-3). That’s why we need to forgive one another. If we backbite each other all the time, what’s going to happen? Who is going to stand?

Verse 4, remember this: **“But there is forgiveness with You... [God is ready to forgive!] ...that You may be feared. I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope”** (vs 4-5). That’s why we study the Word of God so we know it and we go through the things that we do. Some of them are very difficult indeed, but please, let’s understand something. We have not resisted against sin into losing blood, yet—have we? *Not yet!*

Verse 5: “I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope. My soul waits for the LORD more than those who watch for the morning; I say, more than those who watch for the morning. Let Israel hope in the LORD... [unless there is *love and mercy and forgiveness* there is no hope] ...for with the LORD there is mercy, and with Him is plentiful redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities” (vs 5-8).

- God will *forgive*
- God will *help*
- God will *lift us up*

When you go through these things and when you have things you need to repent of and so forth, remember:

- He is your Father
- He loves you
- He has called you
- He wants you

He wants all of us in His Kingdom; *every one of us!*

- He called us because we’re not the great of the world
- He called us because we are the forgotten of the world
- He called us because we are the weak of the world

But if there is strength in God then we’re stronger than the mighty in the world.

2-Corinthians 1:1: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by *the* will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, to the Church of God that is in Corinth, with all the saints who are in the entire region of Achaia: Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ” (vs 1-2).

Grace is our *standing with God*. Peace, *we’re not warring with God any longer*. Notice what he says here. After all the trials that he went through and it says that he went in here, some of them he just despaired of life.

Verse 3: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ **the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort**.” That’s pretty powerful! When you’re in trouble and when you have sin and when you’re fighting and overcoming sin, you need to be comforted.

Verse 4: “Who comforts us in all our tribulation... [Look back at all the things you have gone through. What’s the purpose of that?] ...**in order that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trial**, through the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” What is the saying? *It’s always darkest before the dawn!*

Verse 5: “For to the degree *that* the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. And if we are in distress, *it is* for your comfort and salvation, which is being worked out by *your* enduring the same sufferings that we also suffer; *and* if we are comforted, *it is* for your comfort and salvation (and our hope *is* steadfast for you)... [that’s what we want] ...knowing that as you are partners in the sufferings, *you are* also partners in the comfort. For we do not want you to be

ignorant of our tribulations, brethren, *even the trials* that befell us in Asia; we were exceedingly burdened beyond *our own* strength, so much so that we even despaired of living” (vs 5-8). But they were delivered from it.

Let’s see the great thing that God has done for us and is doing for us. Let me recommend this: If you have difficulties and problems and are down in the dumps, don’t know what to do, you need some encouragement, you *get on your knees and you open the Bible* to the book of Ephesians. You get your mind on the great plan that God has for us *individually*.

- He is *our* Father
- we are *His* children
- He has *called* us

Ephesians 1:1: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by *the* will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and to *the* faithful in Christ Jesus... [this is written for all time] ...Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *things* with Christ” (vs 1-3).

One of the most important things that we have today, brethren, is the whole Word of God, which until you go back about not quite 500 years ago, the average common person could not have the Bible. For the English people William Tyndale was the one who translated the New Testament and later the Old Testament so that the ‘plowboy’ could have the Word of God and that the ‘plowboy’ could know more than all of the ‘religious’ elite. It opened up a whole new tremendous way of getting the Word of God out in two forms:

1. One *as a witness* to the whole world, witness to the children of Israel
2. Now the Word of God could be solidified so that *the Church could operate in freedom* in America

I’ve got a booklet at home about the Sabbath written in 1729. I remember one phrase there about the ‘religious’ leaders. It’s very digging, because it’s obvious, the same thing that we know is the argument concerning Sabbath and Sunday, and he says, ‘The wittingly leaders do not acknowledge the Truth, but believe a lie.’ I thought that that was really something!

Here I have in my hands a booklet written by a man in 1729, and through the power of the printing press and the preservation of things in paper, I could have it in my hand. Think about the whole Word of God. We’ve got the whole Word of God! That’s a tremendous thing to realize and understand. That’s

why we need to be inspired and uplifted by this. That’s why we need the *love of God, the mercy of God, the forgiveness of God*, and among ourselves as well.

Verse 4: “According as **He has personally chosen us...**” I want you to let those words sink into your heart and mind. ‘The Father draws them’ (John 6:44).

- Is it to you personally?
- Is it to me personally?
- Is it to everyone that God is dealing with personally?
- *Yes, it is!*

“...for Himself before *the* foundation of the world... [His plan was set before the foundation of the world that He would choose] ...in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love... [For what purpose?]: Having predestinated us for sonship...” (vs 4-5). The *King James* says ‘adoption.’ Sonship—you have the Spirit of God from the Father Himself. You are His children. He’s not adopting you, you are going to be His spirit-born children at the resurrection.

“...to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will” (v 5). Isn’t that magnificent? That’s almost more than we can handle, really, when you understand the greatness of what God is doing.

Verse 6: “To *the* praise of *the* glory of His grace, wherein He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved *Son*; In Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace.... [you must have love, mercy and forgiveness] ...Which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence” (vs 6-8).

After viewing the cartoons that Randy got from *The Simpsons*, there’s one that struck me. Homer has been confronted by God, and Homer asked God, ‘What is Your purpose?’ God supposedly answered him, ‘I don’t know.’ Pretty much; paraphrased. The sum at the end was, ‘I’ll worship God anyway I want to and He will accept me.’ **NO!** *God has something special for what He wants for you. That’s why you have to do what He has said, because it’s special.*

Verse 9: “Having made known to us the mystery of His own will... [the Family of God] ...according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself.” There is nothing higher or greater or better than what Paul is telling us here for the purpose of our life. That’s why we don’t have a *religion*. ‘Religions’ are substitutes for God’s way. We belong to God. That’s what it’s all about, that we



love God, that we serve Him, that we love one another. That He grants us these great and magnificent things. He has given us the understanding of His will. That is awesome indeed!

Verse 10: “That in *the Divine* plan for the fulfilling of *the* times, He might bring all things together in Christ, both the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; *yes*, in Him, in Whom we also have obtained an inheritance, having been predestinated according to His purpose, Who is working out all things according to the counsel of **His own will**” (vs 10-11). That is something! God is involved in our lives that way directly.

Verse 12: “That we might be to *the* praise of His glory, who first trusted in the Christ; In Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the Truth, the gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (vs 12-13).

What I want you to understand concerning the *forgiveness* of God. A lot of people have heard a lot about the *unpardonable sin*. There will be some who will do that. But here in Luke 23, the first saying—there were *seven sayings* of Jesus while He was on the cross... As we’re coming up to the Passover we need to understand about the sacrifice of Christ,

- what God did because He loved us
- what God did because He has forgiven us

First thing He said was this, Luke 23:34: “Then Jesus said, ‘**Father, forgive them...**’ Who is that?

- Pilate
- the high priest
- the people
- those who were shouting to crucify Him,
- those who were standing down below the cross saying, ‘If You’re the Son of God, cast Yourself down from here.’

He said: “...**for they do not know what they are doing**” (v 34). Isn’t that something?

Let’s see if we likewise can carry that into our lives and into the things that we perceive with God and study and prayer. ***Let there be with us***

- *love*
- *mercy*
- *forgiveness*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Luke 18:9-13
- 2) Job 29:1-14
- 3) Matthew 9:10-13

- 4) Luke 11:37-48
- 5) Matthew 12:7
- 6) Psalm 86:1-7
- 7) Psalm 103:1-18
- 8) Mark 11:21-25
- 9) John 20:17
- 10) Luke 11:2-4
- 11) Daniel 9:2-21
- 12) Psalm 130:1-8
- 13) 2-Corinthians 1:1-8
- 14) Ephesians 1:1-13
- 15) Luke 23:34

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- James 2
- John 6:44

Also referenced: Sermon Series:  
*How Jesus Reveals the Father*

FRC:lp  
Transcribed: 2-5-13  
Formatted: bo—2-6-13  
Corrected: 6-4-14

# Forgiveness: A Key to Answered Prayer I

Fred R. Coulter

Forgiveness entails an awful lot! It sounds very simple, so we will try and see what God teaches us about it:

- Why we need forgiveness
- Why we need to forgive
- When we are to forgive
- When we are to be ready to forgive
- When there can be no forgiveness

All of those things are involved in it. Let's come to Matthew 6:11 and again, look at the model prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors" (vs 11-12). When I first read that, I thought: 'Hooray! Boy I won't owe any money.' Well, it doesn't mean that. It means this: **When you sin you have a debt!** You've incurred a debt. You owe something to someone. "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors."

Now we're going to see that there are two sides to the coin *to forgiveness*. Let's see the parallel account, and it talks, in this case, about sins, rather than just debts. God wanted us to understand: Debts would be more in the way of faults, difficulties, quirks and problems.

Luke 11:4—concerning sin. "And forgive us our sins, as we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us... [who has sinned against us—and then the same thing with Matt. 6]: ...and lead us not into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one." Because we will see there is a connection here in forgiveness or lack of forgiveness.

Let's see that all forgiveness comes from God—see sermon series: *Judge Righteous Judgment*—God is going to judge everyone of us according to our works. In Psa. 130 we have something that helps us understand about forgiveness, and understanding about the forgiveness that comes from God. That ties in with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and His shed blood and His broken body and everything like that.

Psalms 130:1: "Out of the depths have I cried unto You, O LORD..." We'll get into that a little bit later: how to pray when you're in deep trouble.

Here is deep trouble, v 2: "LORD, hearken unto my voice, and let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O LORD, who shall stand?" (vs 2-3). Because all have 'sinned and come short of the glory of God.' And this is why God gives the command that we are to forgive because we want

forgiveness.

Verse 4: "But *there* is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.... [You can put there that you may be loved, everything like that goes with it.] I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, and in His Word do I hope.... [forgiveness brings hope, because it cleans the slate; forgiveness brings hope] ...My soul waits for the LORD more than those who watch for the morning; I say, more than those who watch for the morning. Let Israel hope in the LORD; for with the LORD there is mercy, and with Him is plentiful redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities" (vs 4-8). That also shows God's overall plan that He's going to accomplish.

Now let's come to the New Testament, Acts, the third <sup>[corrected]</sup> chapter, and let's see something else concerning forgiveness. This is where the apostles were hauled before the Sanhedrin for healing the man who had been there begging at the Gate Beautiful; and they couldn't gainsay what was done. They brought him in there and when he was healed everyone came running to see it—they were greatly amazed (v 11).

Acts 3:12: "And when Peter saw *it*, he answered to the people. 'Men, Israelites, why are you wondering at this? And why are you looking upon us so intently as if by *our* own power or godliness *we* have made him to walk? The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Son Jesus, Whom you delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, after he had judged to release *Him*. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and requested that a man *who was* a murderer be granted to you; and you killed the Author of life Whom God has raised from *the* dead, whereof we are witnesses. And through faith in His name, this *man* whom you see and know was made strong in His name; and the faith that *is* through Him gave this complete soundness [whole] to him in the presence of you all'" (vs 12-16).

This was quite a remarkable thing. So, they brought them before the Sanhedrin. And they couldn't deny it, Acts 4:8: "Then Peter, filled with *the* Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers of the people and elders of Israel, If we are examined this day as to a good work *done to the* infirm man, by what *power* he has been cured, be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean, Whom you crucified, *but* Whom God has raised from *the* dead, by Him this *man* stands before you whole'" (vs 8-10). Look at

the witness that they gave. There's going to come a time when we'll have to give witnesses just like this.

Verse 11: "'This is the Stone that was set at naught by you, the builders, which has become the Head of *the* corner. And there is no salvation in any other, for neither is there another name under heaven which has been given among men, by which we must be saved'" (vs 11-12). No other way! People today, they don't like it. So they were amazed, they didn't know what to do, they couldn't denounce it. So they went ahead and they commanded them to not preach in this name any longer, and after beating them a little they let them go.

Acts 5—this is after Peter was put in prison. They were going to bring him in, in the morning. So the angel came and let him loose, and the message was, Acts 5:20: "'Go and stand in the temple, *and* speak to the people all the words of this life.' And after hearing *that*, they entered into the temple at dawn and taught...." (vs 20-21). All the other apostles came with him, too, after Peter came and showed he was released.

"...Now, when the high priest and those with him came, they called together the Sanhedrin and all the elderhood of the sons of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison; and when they returned, they reported, saying, 'We indeed found the prison locked with all security, and the keepers standing outside in front of the doors; but after opening *them*, we did not find anyone inside.'.... [they took Peter and John, locked them up and so forth] ...And when they heard these words..." (vs 21-24).

Now think about the impression coming upon the high priest, the Sanhedrin, and go carry that clear back to the whole ministry of Christ and bring it forward.

- bring it forward to the crucifixion
- bring it forward to the resurrection
- bring it forward to the receiving the Holy Spirit in the temple on Pentecost
- bring it forward to this time

and think in your mind: I wonder what these priests and these elders were thinking when the guards came in and said, 'They aren't there, but it was locked? We don't know what happened to them.'

"...And when they heard these words, both the *high* priest and the captain of the temple, and the chief priests also, were utterly perplexed as to what this could lead to.... [God has a way of timing it] ...But a certain one came *and* reported to them, saying, 'Behold, the men whom you put in the prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.' Then the captain went with the officers *and*

brought them without violence, so that they might not be stoned; for they feared the people" (vs 24-26). So, God turned it around the other way.

Verse 27: "And they brought them in *and* set *them* before the Sanhedrin. And the high priest asked them, saying, 'Did we not order you by a *direct* command not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, with *the* purpose of bringing this man's blood upon us'" (vs 27-28). So they understood what they had done.

Now, the reason I'm going through this is because Peter gives them an opportunity to repent. The key thing concerning forgiveness is that ***there must be first repentance***. God was doing this to bring a witness to them.

Verse 29: "But Peter and the apostles answered *and* said, 'We are obligated to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus....'" (vs 29-30). He wanted them to know that it was the God they claim to worship Who had done this. Not by their own power or anything that they had done.

"...Whom you killed *by* hanging *Him* on a tree. Him has God exalted by His right hand *to be* a Prince and Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins... [or forgiveness of sins] ...to Israel'" (vs 30-31). That ties right in with Psalms 130:4.

***Forgiveness and remission of sins comes through Jesus Christ!*** That's why He was raised from the dead. That's why it's important for us to understand. ***All forgiveness must come through Christ***, because He bore the sins of the world.

Now let's see what happened here, v 32: "'And we are His witnesses of these things, as *is* also the Holy Spirit, which God has given to those who obey Him.'" That's also important concerning forgiveness. Because if you ask for forgiveness, as we'll see a little later on, and you don't obey Him, your forgiveness that you ask is null and void. Forgiveness must be followed with the appropriate works.

Now instead of repenting, v 33: "Now, when they heard *this*, they were cut *to the heart* and took counsel to put them to death." Why? *Because they were afraid of losing their power!*

Let's come back to the time of John the Baptist, and let's see what John told them. This isn't the first time; they had many, many witnesses to call them to repentance.

Matthew 3:1: "Now, in those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea." Let's just rehearse a little bit here concerning John the Baptist: He was the son of a priest, but he never performed a single priestly duty. As a matter of fact, he stayed in the wilderness until the time of 'His

appearing'—correct? And he had a Nazarite vow, which means he didn't cut his hair, didn't trim his beard.

So, you can figure by the time he came on the scene—which was probably when he was 30-years-old, because that's when a priest is to start his priestly functions—the Levites can start at 20, but the priests start at 30. Where did he begin his work? *Not at the temple; down at the River Jordan!* This was the first sign that God gave to them, that God was going to **reject** the temple system. And He did it with one who was of the line of Aaron, a priest. I mention that in some of the commentary; it's very important to understand. They were cleansed from their sins—not by sacrifices at the temple and bathing in the pools that they had around the temple—but by coming to the Jordan.

Verse 2: "And saying, 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' For this is he who was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying, '*The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths.*' Now John himself wore a garment of camel's hair, and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey" (vs 2-4).

Instead of coming to a priest all decked out in the garments of a priest, all bathed and cleaned and perfumed and incensed, you come to a man standing by the Jordan. I've often pictured him as having red hair. Here he is, this great mane of red hair and red beard and he's standing there preaching repentance and he's dressed in this uncouth garments compared to what a priest should wear—you know, white linen and the urim and thummim and the hat and everything like this.

So, he's down there and, v 5: "Then went out to him *those from Jerusalem*, and all Judea, and all the country around the Jordan." They understood this was the one who was born of Elizabeth and Zacharias—remember? *Yes!*

Verse 6: "And were being baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins." Not coming to the priest to offer an offering, and to make a payment to them so they can get forgiveness of sin. They had to send a committee down there. You can read that in John 1—an official committee.

Verse 7: "But after seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, '**You brood of vipers...**'" It's important to understand they didn't repent. ***If there's no repentance, there is no forgiveness!*** We need to understand that.

"...who has forewarned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, **produce fruits worthy of repentance...** [Then there can be

forgiveness. Always remember, there must be repentance first.] ...And do not think to say within yourselves, "We have Abraham *for our father*"; for I tell you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham" (vs 7-9). Then he gave them another lesson that they were in danger of committing the unpardonable sin.

When people hear that they are sinners, lots of times their first reaction is, 'Well, I'm not a sinner, I haven't committed murder; I haven't committed adultery; I'm not a liar—most of the time.' They don't realize that by our very nature we are sinners in everything that we do. And even the good that we do is tainted with our nature. So that's why there has to be repentance; then there is forgiveness.

Colossians 1:14: "In Whom we have redemption... [forgiveness] ...through His own blood, *even* the remission of sins." Now that's important for us to understand—"even remission of sins."

Let's see what happens when we have our sins forgiven. How are we to behave? Very important to understand. How are we to behave? How are we to treat other people? Sometimes we are so loaded down with problems that it takes a long time to overcome. Even though people are trying and they keep making mistakes, that's the whole purpose with *Judge Righteous Judgment* and go to your brother and so forth.

This is given on the heels of how to handle problems between one another and so forth, this is always the question Matthew 18:21: "Then Peter came to Him *and* said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?'" I imagine Peter thought he was being pretty generous—you know, seven times!

Verse 22: "Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you until seven times, but until seventy times seven.'" So, he comes and he asks forgiveness. How often should I do it? Well, if his repentance toward you is sincere, or the mistake was something that was inadvertent and he asks for forgiveness, you forgive him how ever many times necessary until he's able to change and overcome. That's what it's talking about here. Then Jesus gives a very important parable. Before we go there:

Matthew 6:14: "For **if...** ***The condition is upon us.*** It is a choice, it is an attitude, and sometimes it's hard, sometimes it is difficult, especially in a repetitive situation, over and over again.

"...**if** you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.... [we're going to see that's an important key thing.] ...But **if**

you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (vs 14-15). ***There needs to be repentance!***

Now let’s come back to Matthew 18, and we have the whole thing here. Remember, Jesus made payment for all of our sins. When we sin we’re indebted to God because we’ve transgressed His laws, His commandments, and so forth.

Matthew 18:23: “Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man, a *certain* king, who would take account with his servants. And after he began to reckon, there was brought to him one debtor who owed *him* ten thousand talents” (vs 23-24). Today that would be in millions of dollars.

Verse 25: “But since he did not have *anything* to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. Because of this, the servant fell down *and* worshiped him, saying, ‘Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you all’” (vs 25-26). He wasn’t trying to ensconce and get away with it. Here’s forgiveness above and beyond. And after all, when that’s compared to when we understand that our sins crucified Christ, remember what Peter told the Israelites? He said, ‘YOU have crucified the Holy One.’ So, this brings that factor into it there.

Verse 27: “And being moved with compassion... [mercy, compassion, forgiveness] ...the lord of that servant released him, ***and forgave him the debt.***” This has to do with our attitude when God forgives us. And we all want to be forgiven—don’t we? Because that’s in the prayer everyday: ‘forgive me, O Lord.’

Verse 28: “Then that servant went out *and* found one of his fellow servants, who owed him a hundred silver coins...” A pitiful, little amount compared to what he owed. Instead of taking him and saying, ‘Look, I just had wonderful thing happen to me. I owed 10,000 talents and it was *all* forgiven. Now you only owe me a 100 silver coins. I forgive you.’ No, he didn’t do that!

“...and after seizing him, he choked *him*, saying ‘Pay me what you owe.’ As a result, his fellow servant fell down at his feet and pleaded with him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything’” (vs 28-29).

I remember a man telling me a story that he loaned this man a good sum of money—several thousand dollars. The man was in the attitude of this servant here who wouldn’t listen, v 30: “But he would not *listen*; instead he went and cast him into prison, until he should pay the amount that he owed.”

This man was telling me he would come into the congregation every Sabbath and there was this

man who owed him thousands of dollars; and he would talk to him about it. He said, ‘I’ll make payment.’ But he really never did. So, one day, because his attitude was fomenting: *why doesn’t this guy do it. I gave him the money and you know how it is. I gave it to him with good intent. He hasn’t paid it back. He said he would but he hasn’t.* And it was really getting his attitude down.

After praying about it, he came in one Sabbath and he saw the man and he said. ‘You don’t owe me anything. If there’s anytime in the future you can do anything, I’ll consider it, but you don’t owe me a thing.’ And he said that cleansed his attitude more than anything else. That’s important to understand. ***Lack of forgiveness puts you in a wrong, spiritual condition and can lead to bitterness, and can lead to vindictiveness, and lead to hatefulness***—just like this here.

“...he went and cast him into prison, until he should pay the amount that he owed. Now when his fellow servants saw the things *that* had taken place, they were greatly distressed... [Hypocrisy at its best—right?] ...and they went to their lord *and* related all that had taken place. Then his lord called him *and* said to him, ‘You wicked servant, ***I forgave you all that debt***, because you implored me. **Were you not also obligated to have compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had compassion on you?**” (vs 30-33).

Sometimes forgiving someone really is hard because you’ve been affronted. You have been hurt. You’ve been taken advantage of. Especially in a marital situation when husbands and wives get real picky. Maybe you find something that is a real sin.

- What happens if you come in the house and you inadvertently find that your wife is hooked on online porn, or online gambling, or your husband?
- What do you do?

*Well, immediately you divorce him and kick him out because there’s no forgiveness!*

- Whatever the sin is, is it a sin unto death?
- or
- Is a forgivable sin?
  - How much better to work with your husband or your wife
    - ✓to repair the situation
    - ✓to help them
    - ✓to give forgiveness
    - ✓to forsake the sin

This is exactly what it’s talking about. That’s why God wants us to ***forgive and go forward!*** What did Jesus say? *Seventy times seven!* Otherwise, who would stand? And you’re almost guaranteed this: ***If you don’t forgive, you’re going***

*to end up with a horrible, terrible and self-righteous attitude that is going to sour your brain!*. Literally pickle your brain in hatred; in self-righteousness; self-centeredness; not considering that you yourself are a sinner.

Now let's see the lesson involved here, v 34: "And in anger, his lord delivered him up to the tormentors, until he should pay all that he owed to him. **Likewise shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother's offenses from the heart**" (vs 34-35). That's important to understand. That's profound to realize! And how we need to always exercise that.

Let's go another step further. Do not be so easily offended that you cannot help a brother or sister overcome a sin. Even though they may be overbearing or obnoxious or whatever the problem may be—quick of temper, thoughtless—be ***forbearing***. We have to be forbearing one another, forgiving one another. God has called us because we're sinners. He hasn't called us because we're righteous. That's important to understand.

Now let's go one step further. Let's see non-repentance, pleading of forgiveness. An apology is a good start. But do apologies necessarily equate repentance? And since just recently we had this latest flap with John Kerry, where he stood up and said, 'I absolutely refuse to repent of any criticism concerning President Bush.' Well, after what he did, insulting the troops and accusing them of being dumb and unintelligent and everything like that, and you probably saw it all on television, various ones politically got after him and said, 'Don't come and speak for me. Don't come and help me with my campaign.' However, none of them returned any of the money he gave them. There's hypocrisy on both sides. I use this because it's a public thing. After three days he finally issues an apology over a website, which was really not repentance. There's a difference between an apology and repentance. Just like there's a difference in asking forgiveness of sin and having sins forgiven.

(go to the next track)

Exodus 10:16—this is after the second plague. There were all the other signs coming up to it, but the second plague of locust. Pharaoh had been beaten down; he was beginning to feel it; this is very instructive:

Exodus 10:16: "Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste..." That's why I brought up about John Kerry; because you know this is only a political expediency and it will last as long as people's remembrance.

"...and he said, 'I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. Now therefore, I

beg you, forgive my sin only this once..." (vs 16-17). Just this once! Not all of his sins. Not all of the oppression. Here is what amounts to an apology without repentance! ***Seeking forgiveness without repentance!***

"...and pray to the LORD your God that He may take away from me this death only.' And he went out from Pharaoh, and prayed to the LORD. And the LORD turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts and threw them into the Red Sea. There did not remain one locust in all the boundaries of Egypt. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart..." (vs 17-20).

Why did He harden Pharaoh's heart? *Because Pharaoh didn't repent!* That's a key; that's what to learn here. ***If you don't truly repent, seeking forgiveness is going to lead you to have a hard heart.*** You don't want that! What's a hard heart going to do but make matters worse—right? *Always does!*

"...and he did not let the children of Israel go" (v 20).

Let's look at another false repentance, Acts, the eighth chapter. Here again you have a situation where there is no repentance. Let's look at the attitude that takes place here in the case of Simon Magus; you know what he was. Let's see who he was and what he was, and then let's see his attitude when it was fully exposed to him what he should do.

Acts 8:9 "But *there was* a certain man named Simon, who had from earlier times been practicing sorcery in the city... [That is serving Satan, using witchcraft, sorcery and all the things that are with it.] ...and astounding the nation of Samaria, proclaiming himself to be some great one."

That's what Satan always does. He let's the men proclaim themselves how great they are—and he is the power behind them.

Verse 10: "To him they had all given heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, 'This man is the great power of God.' Now they were giving heed to him because *he* had for a long time bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip, who was preaching the Gospel—the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ—they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself also believed... [No repentance?] ...and after being baptized, he steadfastly continued with Philip, and as he beheld *the* signs and great works of power *that were* being done, he was amazed. Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them; who, after

coming down to *Samaria*, prayed for them, that they might receive *the Holy Spirit*” (vs 10-15).

Verse 18: “Now when Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given by the laying on the hands of the apostles, he offered them money... [everyone who commercializes any work or Church of God, pay attention carefully] ...saying, ‘give this authority to me also... [He wanted power; he wanted authority.] ...so that on whomever I lay hands, he may receive *the Holy Spirit*’” (vs 18-19). Peter rebuked him tremendously.]

Verse 20: “But Peter said to him, ‘May your money be destroyed with you because you thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money. You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God’” (vs 20-21). Just like Pharaoh’s. That’s why God hardened Pharaoh’s heart, because his heart was not right.

Verse 22: “Repent, therefore, of this your wickedness, and beseech God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you; for I perceive *that* you are in *the* gall of bitterness and *the* bondage of unrighteousness.” (vs 22-23). Notice how similar that Simon’s reaction was to Pharaoh’s reaction. He could have repented. Forsaken all! Given up everything! But he didn’t.

Verse 24: “But Simon answered *and* said, ‘You beseech the Lord on my behalf...’” *No!* No one can repent for anybody else! That’s the key. To this very day, the priests that came from this false Christianity, started by Simon Magus, do the same thing. They have them go to a confessional booth and confess their sins to the priest and then the priest is supposed to pray for them, instead of them repenting to God directly.

So, he says: “...‘You beseech the Lord on my behalf so that none of these things which you have spoken may come upon me’” (v 24).

When he said ‘Your heart is not right,’ v 23: “...for I perceive *that* you are in *the* gall of bitterness and *the* bondage of unrighteousness.” That’s just a summary of what was told him; he probably gave him a whole lot more words than that.

Simon didn’t repent. What happens when you’re confronted with a situation where someone comes to you with a plea for forgiveness and it’s really not sincere. What you do is this, you say: ‘I’m glad you came to me, but you better go repent to God’ if you can tell it’s not really repentance to God. The individual has to come and repent to God then come to you, not come to you and then repent to God. It’s important to understand that those things happen that way.

How should your attitude be so that you yourself don’t get caught up in self-righteousness, bitterness, vindictiveness, and in judgmental condemnation of someone? Especially their heart, mind and attitude when you cannot know their heart, mind and attitude?—only God can! So, we have to take the same attitude that God has here. And this will always have you in a situation where you can forgive when there is real repentance, and that you will not be taken down by harsh and self-righteous thoughts if their repentance is shallow or if there is not repentance. That’s important to understand.

Psalm 86:1: “Bow down Your ear, O LORD, answer me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul, for I am Holy; O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You. Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I cry unto You all day long” (vs 1-3).

Notice the attitude here. This is real repentance toward God—is it not? *Yes!*

Verse 4: “Rejoice the soul of Your servant, for to You, O LORD, do I lift up my soul, for **You, LORD, are good and ready to forgive ...**” (vs 4-5). That’s the key I want you to understand.

When there is no repentance or there is shallow repentance or there is a miserable, first-step apology, ***you be ready to forgive, but you wait until there is the repentance necessary.*** Because, as Jesus said: ‘If your brother comes to you and repents you forgive him seventy times seventy.’ But if they come to you and there is not the repentance that you know needs to be, or is very insincere, or is very shallow or it’s just kind of ‘to make things good for me because I know I’m in trouble’ kind of attitude. You’re ready to forgive, you give them benefit of doubt, but you also know that it has to go to the next step. You do that so you do not hold in your heart anger and hatred and bitterness toward someone for their faults—even as bad as they may be. Be ready to forgive. The Lord is always ready to forgive and we’ll see how He does that even in severe cases here in just a little bit.

“...are good and ready to forgive, and rich in mercy to all those who call upon You” (v 5). That’s what we need to do.

We’re going to look at three severe cases of sin. We’re going to see what genuine repentance will do. We also have to understand this. ***If there is no repentance there is no forgiveness, and if they don’t repent to God completely—and to you sufficiently—then there is no forgiveness extended by God; you are not required to give forgiveness, BUT you have to be ready forgive*** because maybe somewhere down the road—the sixth, eighth, tenth, twelfth, fourteenth, twentieth time there will be real repentance.

What happens when people get into a situation where they really fall into something terrible, like David did—like the situation with David and Bathsheba and killing her husband Uriah the Hittite. Apparently Bathsheba was a Jewish woman married to Uriah the Hittite, one of the chief captains with David, so this really got into a terrible convoluted mess. David was not the only one at fault, because just picture this: here's the king's palace, and right over the edge was Uriah the Hittite's house, and guess where Bathsheba was bathing! *On the rooftop!* And she knew the king would be there. Why was she not modest? Why did she not put up some sort of screen? *She wanted to be seen!* She wanted to get next to the power of the king. She had many choices involved herself, didn't she? She could've never exposed herself publicly that way. When the king sent the messenger saying, 'Don't you want to come and visit the king and have a little wine and dinner with him?' She could have said, 'No!' But she didn't.

David being the king and initiating this, his sin was the greater because he was a man after God's heart, *and knew better!* Now let's examine this thing step-by-step, which will also help us in understanding our sins. This is why we need to pray daily and study daily. Think of all the Psalms and the wonderful praises that God inspired David to bring to Him. Now, do you suppose that during this whole incident that David was praying and studying? *No!* He pushed it out of his mind, which really in essence was a tremendous sin against God in itself. When you push God out of your mind and you push against the Holy Spirit, and you continue in your sin, God is going to let you take it to the degree that He desires and He's going drop it upon you. Bathsheba came, she got pregnant, found out she was pregnant—so David schemed. Do you think he was praying, 'Oh God, help me to make this right so I can bring in Uriah the Hittite, so I can kill him'? *Of course not!* So, he schemed. What happens when you're sinning and you don't want to repent?

- You avoid God!
- You get busy!
- You don't pray!
- You don't study!

What happens?

- your mind gets heavy and depressed
- you get hostile
- you get angry

Yes, all those things happen.

So finally, God stepped in. This is why we're told, 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.' How? *Daily!* Because if you don't *daily*—what happens? *You start leaving God*

*and you start entertaining sin;* look where it can lead to.

This was a tremendous sin against God. Remember, David was so pleasing to God with his attitude, because remember, the Ark of the Covenant was taken to David's house, and in David's house he had a special little tabernacle tent made for the Ark of the Covenant. He had the priests—Nathan and so forth there, Asaph and Nathan who were there—to administer the things with the Ark. He would come and he would sing praises, he would sing songs and here he even came and he said: 'Lord, I want to build a house for you.' And God said, 'All right, David, I'll let a house be built. Not by you—you're a bloody man—but I'm going one step further and I am going to build a house for you to the end of time.'

David pushed God away, now he needs to come back to God. This is important for us to understand in dealing with people, especially in a husband and wife situation. If there is a situation where there is a great problem and it's a push-away kind of thing, you really need to pray and ask God to intervene and deal with the situation. There needs to be forgiveness so there is recovery, and that forgiveness may not come until there is a great explosion and great fight! Where carnal people will say, 'Well, I'm divorcing you, get out of the house.' And yet, you're bound in covenant before God; and it was not a total sin unto death. We need to keep that in mind, that's very, very important!

Now let's see what happened here to David. Nathan came in and he told them about the two men—the rich one/the poor one. The rich man came and he went ahead and instead of taking from his own flock he took from the poor man next to him.

2-Samuel 12:5: "And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man... [a little self-righteous indignation to cover for sin] ...And he said to Nathan, 'As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die. And he shall restore the lamb fourfold because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.'" (vs 5-6). Right at that point is exactly where God wanted David to be.

Notice when Nathan brought the rest of the words, v 7: "And Nathan said to David, '**You are the man.**' Thus says the LORD God of Israel, "I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if that *was too little*, I would have given to you such and such *things* besides. Why have **you despised the commandment of the LORD...**" (vs 7-8).



Think about this: Not only despising the commandment of the Lord to sin, but also think about this in relationship to forgiveness with someone. If you don't forgive, are you despising the commandment of Christ? *Yes, indeed!* That's why in every situation you need to be ready to forgive. And if the person is not really repentant, give the benefit of doubt. Give them some encouragement. Because what'll happen is, if God is dealing with them then God can lead them to understand their sin just like God led David to understand his sin here. Then the repair can begin.

So, He explained it to him, v 9: “‘Why have **you despised the Word of the LORD** to do evil in his sight? You have stricken Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife *to be* your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house...’” (vs 9-10).

There are going to be times when there will always be ‘a thorn in the flesh’ to keep you from repeating the same thing. So, here there was with David.

Verse 10: “‘Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ Thus says the LORD, ‘Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house...’” (vs 10-11). You read from here on through to the death of David, and that's exactly what happened.

“‘...and I will take your wives before your eyes and give *them* to your neighbor. And he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun, for you did *it* secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun’” (v 12).

Now then, David repented, v 13: “And David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the LORD.’ And Nathan said to David, ‘The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. Only, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, this child born to you shall surely die’” (vs 13-14).

We can look at what has happened within the Church we know when there were great evangelists who went out and were profligates and committed adultery and all kind of sexual sins and monetary sins and so forth. Many people knew about those things and many people got bitter and turned off from God and left God and left the Church. Why? *Because they didn't trust God the way that they should have!* If you understand something that is sin, and you have to leave because of sin, then do so. But don't let it become a bitterness and a stumbling block to you, because you may lose

salvation because of what someone else did and your reaction to it. See!

Now, subsequently, the Church that this man was running was destroyed. That's punishment—right? The other church he started was split in two, and finally the third church that he started was left with a pitiful few and he died. What good does it do to be bitter and angry and hateful because someone has done something of a great magnitude like this? *NONE!*

- We can learn the lesson: *don't do it.*
- We can learn the lesson: *anything that is done in secret is going to be uncovered.*

Just like this past week, Ted Haggard, who's supposed to be this great evangelical Christian preacher, got caught soliciting a male prostitute and buying methamphetamine. How he got caught was the man he was soliciting for these things saw him on television and reported it, and said, ‘This is the man!’ So, even if these things are done secretly, they're going to come out. Rather than be mad and angry and bitter, you know what the sin is. You can identify what the sin is. If the person doesn't repent, or takes a long time repenting, you still *give the benefit of doubt and be ready to forgive, but you don't have to be associated with it!* That's what's important to understand.

So, you know what happened, the child died, and David bitterly, *bitterly*, *bitterly* repented—Psalm 51.

- Is David going to be in the Kingdom of God? *Yes!*
- Did God forgive him for this? *Yes!*
- Did he have penalties upon him, which remained because of the hard-heartedness and the conniving that David had done to perpetrate this? *Yes!*

That's why we have to leave these things in God's hands.

Let's look at another case, 1-Kings 21—here's another wicked man. But what we are looking at here is what happens when there is real repentance. This has to do with Ahab and Jezebel. Ahab took the property of Naboth; had him murdered, took his property. That's the king's imamate domain, without a court ruling. Well, in addition to all the other things that he did, which was evil, God sent His judgment.

1-Kings 21:17: “And the Word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, ‘Arise, go down to meet Ahab the king of Israel in Samaria. Behold, *he is* in the vineyard of Naboth where he has gone to possess it. And you shall speak to him, saying, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Have you killed and also

taken possession?” And you shall speak to him saying, “Thus says the LORD, ‘In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours’” (vs 17-19).

When Elijah came down, v 20: And Ahab said to Elijah, ‘Have you found me, O my enemy?’....” If sometimes someone brings out a sin to you, you count him as an enemy when you really know they’re telling the truth. But what it is, you’re not willing to repent, yet, and you want to go against them.

“...And he [Elijah] answered, ‘I have found *you* because **you have sold yourself to work evil** in the sight of the LORD.... [this is why repentance is important] ...Behold, I will bring evil upon you and will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab him who pisses against the wall, both bond and free in Israel. And I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation with which you have provoked *Me* to anger, and made Israel to sin.’ And the LORD also spoke of Jezebel saying, ‘The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. He who dies of Ahab in the city, the dogs shall eat. And he who dies in the field, the birds of the air shall eat.’ But there was none like Ahab, who sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites did, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel” (vs 20-26). So, Elijah left! Knowing full well that these were

- the words of God
- the conviction of God
- the judgment of God

Here’s where free-choice comes in: You never know what the person is really going to do in the final analysis. Notice what Ahab did. The last one you would ever expect to repent. Especially when Elijah came and Ahab said, ‘Oh, my enemy!’

Notice what Ahab did, v 27: “Then it came to pass when Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth and walked softly.” I don’t know how far that Elijah went, before God recognized that. But here’s the key: ***As long as there is life there is hope! And as long as there is repentance, there is hope.*** That’s why God is patient and long-suffering. That’s why Jesus said, ‘Forgive seventy times seven.’ We need to be patient and long-suffering, too. So here, after this condemnation, what do you think that he did? ***He repented!*** In repentance can you change God’s judgment and God’s attitude? *Yes!*

Notice what God told Elijah to do, v 28: “And the Word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, ‘Do you see how Ahab humbles himself before Me? Because he humbles himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days. *But* in his son’s days I will bring the evil upon his house’” (vs 28-29).

Now that’s why when we read: ‘The wages of sin is death’—we all have the death penalty on us because of sin. When we repent, God reverses it totally. Another lesson to learn here, which is this: If you think that God won’t forgive you because it’s a sin that, a plague of a sin that keeps repeating itself over and over again because of weakness of flesh or anger or whatever it may be, ***God hasn’t given up on you yet!*** So we should not give up on others yet. That’s why we are to be ready to forgive. And look what happened.

***Forgive that you may be forgiven,*** which is a tremendous key in our relationship with God and each other.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 6:11-12
- 2) Luke 11:4
- 3) Psalm 130:1-8
- 4) Acts 3:12-16
- 5) Acts 4:8-12
- 6) Acts 5:20-33
- 7) Matthew 3:1-9
- 8) Colossians 1:14
- 9) Matthew 18:21-22
- 10) Matthew 6:14-15
- 11) Matthew 18:23-34
- 12) Exodus 10:16-20
- 13) Acts 8:9-15, 18-24, 23
- 14) Psalm 86:1-5
- 15) 2-Samuel 12:5-14
- 16) 1-Kings 21:17-29

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 3:11
- John 1
- Psalm 51

Also referenced: Sermon/Booklet:  
*Judge Righteous Judgment*

FRC:bo  
Transcribed: 12-7-07  
Reformatted: 12-01-09  
Corrected: 5/13

## Forgiveness: A Key to Answered Prayer II

Fred R. Coulter

The whole of the Gospel is based upon forgiveness. There are two ways that God will take care of His enemies:

1. if they don't repent *they'll be destroyed*
2. if they do repent, *to make him His friend*

Now think about that!

How did God do that with the Apostle Paul? *He took the number one dedicated enemy against the Church of God and brethren and converted him!* And then went one step further and made him the one to preach to the Gentiles.

Let's come to 1-Tim. 1 because this has an awful lot to do with forgiveness; and this will also tell us why we need to pray for our enemies and those who persecute us—use us despitefully and persecute us. We will see that there's a reason why God wants us to do this—it's for our benefit and our relationship with God; and it's for the individual's benefit and God's dealing with them, because who knows when a person may repent? Who knows when a person may turn around? That's why God called the Apostle Paul in the way that He did. Let's understand something concerning forgiveness: ***It is the whole beginning point of the Gospel!***

After talking about the Gospel, 1-Timothy 1:12: "And I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, Who has empowered me... [obviously by His Holy Spirit] ...that He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry." Here's another very important thing to understand concerning your past life: ***Always remember the lessons on how you conducted your past life before you were called!*** Don't dwell on it to the point of discouragement or depression or anxiety or helplessness, because of the weakness of human nature.

Verse 13: "Who was previously a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent person... [the Greek there means *wontedly violent*—that is, by deliberation and mind-set] ...but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. But the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with *the* faith and love that *is* in Christ Jesus" (vs 13-14). This is how we overcome sin. This is how everyone overcomes sin:

- through Christ
- through faith
- through love
- through repentance
- through forgiveness

Verse 15: "*This is* a faithful saying and worthy of full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into

the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." We know God has a timetable and plan for saving sinners. Now is *not* the time to save all sinners. You understand that by keeping the Holy Days.

Verse 16: "But for this reason I was shown mercy in order that in the first Jesus Christ might demonstrate all longsuffering, for an example to those who would afterwards believe on Him unto eternal life." That's quite a statement! Think of what Paul was forgiven:

- all the persecution
- all the hatred
- all the self-righteousness of Judaism
- all the destroying of the faithful

I wonder if what Stephen said, when he was being stoned to death as Paul stood by holding his garment, I wonder if this had an impression upon Paul and how many times he may have recalled this. Because many times I go back when God was first dealing with me. And as we're going to see, forgiveness is based upon repentance; and repentance comes in layers. First there's an initial repentance, then there are stages of deeper repentance. And just like with the Apostle Paul, he started out and he said he was 'least of all the apostles' (1 Cor. 15) and 'I am the least of all the saints' (Eph. 3).

What happens is this—and I'm sure you've experienced it—you go back and you re-examine your life as you go along: you have God's Spirit, you're growing, you're studying, you're overcoming and all these things. You have your trials, you have your ups, you have your downs, you have your difficult times; you have your times of blessing and all of this. You think about how great God's calling is in calling you, and there's a key point that God used to call you. I don't know what it is in your life or what it may have been, but you can look back and see there was that key moment, that key point—which you might say was the tipping point in your life—to cause you to go to Jesus Christ and leave your sinful life.

I wonder if this may have been with Paul? It doesn't say that Paul was there in the Sanhedrin. I wonder, since he belonged to it, if he may have been there. I don't know, maybe not; it doesn't say that he was.

After he gave a witness to those in the Sanhedrin, Acts 7:54: "And when they heard these things, they were cut to their hearts... [in other words, they didn't repent.] ...and they gnashed their

teeth at him.” Just sat there and ground their teeth, showing anger. You’ve probably seen that when people are angry; they just sit there and grind their jaw and the muscles stand out on their face and so forth. They couldn’t stand what he told them, that they were the ones who killed the Righteous One, the Christ.

Verse 55: “But he, being filled with *the* Holy Spirit, looked intently into heaven *and* saw *the* glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.” What a powerful encouragement that God gave him just before he was stoned to death. And always remember this: ***We have the help of the Holy Spirit in every situation we go through.*** Never forget that. God will help you with it.

Verse 56: “And he said, ‘Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right *hand* of God.’” That was more than they could take. That just blew them away. Because when you understand that they understood the Scriptures in Dan. 7—‘One like the Son of man came to the Ancient of Days’—you know, this really was a witness to them.

Verse 57: “And they cried out with a loud voice...” I don’t know if you’ve seen television footage of the Knesset when it’s in session and all the Jews are arguing back and forth and against one another. Just picture this: A great riotous thing.

“...*and* stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord. And cast *him* out of the city *and* stoned *him*.... [apparently Paul wasn’t there, he was outside] ...and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man called Saul. And they stoned Stephen, who called upon *God*, saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ And he fell to his knees *and* cried with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not lay this sin to their charge.’....” (vs 57-60). Notice, he didn’t say forgive them.

He said, “...‘Lord, Do not lay this sin to their charge.’.... [probably the reason he didn’t say, ‘forgive them,’ is because there was no repentance] ...And after he had said this, he died!” (v 60).

Acts 8:1: “Now Saul had consented to killing him....” I wonder how many times he remembered this and realized what a great sinner he was?

Part of conversion involves this: ***The longer you have God’s Spirit to convict you of the sin within, the more you realize what a sinner you really are!*** That’s just the way it is with me, with you, with everyone that God is dealing with. And the reason for that is that through our calling and growing and overcoming, *God is perfecting us.* Because the ultimate goal is:

Matthew 5:48: “Therefore, You shall be perfect, even as your Father Who is in heaven is perfect.” I often wondered how many times Paul thought of that, and prayed to God for that.

Now let’s understand something about the nature of God. The nature of God is *love*—‘God is love.’ And the nature of God is also *forgiveness* in dealing with human beings. Even in dealing with the stiff-necked, carnal, rebellious Israelites, and you read in one account where God said that they were so pagan in Egypt that He even thought of coming there and destroying them in Egypt—but He remembered *His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.*

After they had sinned; after Moses went up and pleaded for their lives; and God said, ‘All right, I will spare them, except the ones directly involved,’ let’s see what happened when He revealed Himself in His glory to Moses.

Exodus 34:4: “And he [Moses] cut out two tablets of stone like the first *ones*. And Moses rose up early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tablets of stone.” Isn’t that interesting? The first tables of stone God cut Himself and wrote on it. The second tables of stone, one step removed, Moses had to make the tables and take them up to God to be written upon.

Verse 5: “And the LORD came down in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.” For all of those who are stuck on that grace only comes in the New Testament, I want you to read these words and understand that Jesus Christ is the ‘same yesterday, today and forever.’

Verse 6: “And the LORD passed by before him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy to the thousandth *generation*, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...’” (vs 6-7).

That’s the very nature of God. He’s proclaiming the whole meaning of His name. This becomes important in our relationship with each other, because, as you probably know and we’ve all done this ourselves—so I include myself in it—in too many of the Churches of God there’s a lack of love, and there’s a lack of forgiveness; which means there’s a lack of understanding and in kindness. In some cases, it gets so bad, that some people have been so discouraged when people in the world treat them better than people in the Church. Makes it very difficult to say that ‘I belong to Christ.’ *or* ‘I belong to a Church that follows Christ.’ Well, if it is, then there’s got to be love and forgiveness in it. If you’re

going to reflect the character of God then we need this. It's not a blind, dumb forgiveness; please understand that.

Verse 7: "Keeping mercy to the thousandth *generation*, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but Who will by no means clear *the guilty*... [if there is no repentance the rest of the Bible tells us] ...visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, to the third and to the fourth generation" (v 7).

Understand this: *In the physical life in the world, how we are as parents, grandparents and great grandparents affect our descendants to the third and the fourth generation!* And that is absolutely true when it gets down to the sexual conduct of the parents, grandparents and great-grandparents.

Verse 8: "And Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped. And he said, 'If now I have found grace in Your sight, O LORD, I pray You, let my LORD go among us...' (vs 8-9).

God was so angry because of their sin and what they did that He said, 'Moses, stand by and let Me destroy them all, and I'll raise up a great nation through you.' He started with Abraham, He could continue with Moses if necessary. But Moses was an intercessor, and he prayed for them—didn't he? Were these people, at the time of this rebellion, enemies of God? Enemies of Moses? I don't envy what Moses had to live through the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness with all the children of Israel.

"...let my LORD go among us, although it is a stiff-necked people. And pardon our iniquity... [he included himself] ... and our sin, and take us for Your inheritance.' And He said, 'Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation. And all the people in whose midst you *are* shall see the work of the LORD, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you" (vs 9-10). Then He goes through and He re-gives concerning some of His laws and statutes and so forth.

Let's carry this one step further and let's see that ***forgiveness is part of the very nature of God***. If we want to develop the nature of God then we have to develop *forgiveness*. And forgiveness is not an easy thing for human beings to come by. All you have to do is just look at the world today. Everybody is out after everybody. It's so confused and upside down, and we are seeing more and more how prosecutors, policemen, witnesses *lie*—just to put people in jail. How many have been shown to be innocent later on. It's quite a thing! So, if we're

going to develop the character of God, then we need to look at what God is.

This was right after Daniel understood the 70-years; he didn't understand the 70 years until it was just about over. Daniel 9:3 "And I set my face toward the LORD God, to seek by prayer and supplications..." Whenever we are praying:

- we are seeking the Lord
- we're seeking His Spirit
- we're seeking His Word
- we're seeking His will
- we're seeking His forgiveness
- we're seeking His righteousness

"...with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes" (v 3). Notice what his prayer is. He didn't come to God and say, 'God, I thank you that I am the greatest prophet that You've ever raised up outside the land of Israel; that You have put me in charge of Babylon.' No! He said:

Verse 4: "And I prayed to the LORD my God and made my confession, and said, 'O LORD, the great and awesome God **keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love Him**..."

Romans 8:28: "...all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose." Remember that in any of the circumstances that you go through. And especially if they are very difficult, because we'll be faced with very difficult circumstances and trying things that will come upon us. It's going to work for good, and the ultimate is going to be eternal life.

Daniel 9:4: "...and to those who keep His commandments, we have sinned ..." (vs 4-5).

I want you to take this prayer that we're going to go down through and compare that with the model prayer in Matt. 6. And you will see that it fits.

Verse 5: "We have sinned..." What is part of the model prayer? '*Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us!*'

"...and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, and have turned aside from Your commandments and from Your ordinances. Neither have we hearkened unto Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our rulers, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land" (vs 5-6). Read in the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel how the people were toward God and the fall of Jerusalem. It was an ugly, terrible, just horrendous thing. And you read the downfall of the northern ten tribes of Israel, too. It was really a terrible thing. God does not like to have to bring judgment like that. But because He's given us choice—it's *our* choice to choose:

- to choose God
- to choose love
- to choose forgiveness

And always remember this: ***Forgiveness is a choice!*** We just saw how God did that back there in the book of Exo. He *chose* to forgive the children of Israel.

Verse 7: “O LORD, righteousness *belongs* to You, but to us confusion of face, as at this day to the men of Judah and to the people of Jerusalem, and to all Israel who are near and who are afar off, through all the countries where You have driven them because they dealt treacherously with You. O Lord, confusion of face belongs to us, to our kings, to our rulers, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against You” (vs 7-8).

When you confess your sins and look at your own sins and you’re desiring forgiveness and understanding, then this helps you to understand that you want this from God. Don’t you think those that you’re dealing with and those that you have trouble with also want forgiveness?

When you forgive someone their sins, it also inspires them. Are you not inspired when you pray and really repent; and you know spiritually, with conviction of God’s Spirit that you have been forgiven. You get up off your knees, how do you feel? *Grateful, humble, thankful, praising God for His mercy and goodness!*

This is what God wants us to have between ourselves. And everything that we’ve gone through in the Church we can say—in recent history—has been very tumultuous, and very trying of the faith. It’s all been over the love of God, the Truth of God, the right doctrines of God and the understanding of God. We’ve had to fight! We’ve had to be on guard! And all of this is necessary. But I think while that was going on—what happened?

- we forgot about *love*
- we forgot about *forgiveness*
- we forgot about *caring*

You have some of the most hateful behavior in the Churches of God. So bad that some ministers even say that if you belong to this Church you cannot talk to anyone in any other Church of God—not your father, your mother, even your own children. You can’t visit them! You can’t see them! You can’t go into their houses! That is the exact opposite of what God wants us to do. I pray for mercy and forgiveness for those people who have taught that; that they can recover themselves out of it before God’s judgment comes down upon them. *Because that’s the very opposite of what God is!*

Verse 8: “O Lord, confusion of face belongs to us, to our kings, to our rulers, and to our fathers,

because we have sinned against You.” We could put it this way with the Church: *To us, O Lord, belongs confusion of face, to all our ministers, to all the elders and all the brethren, because we have sinned against You.*

Verse 9: “To the LORD our God belong mercies and forgivenesses even though we have rebelled against Him.” The reason that I’m going through this is to understand that the nature of God is important. When we deal with each other we need to deal in an attitude of mercy and kindness and forgiveness; and we also need to deal in an attitude of repentance ourselves so that we can change, with God’s help and Spirit. from our sins. And that, if you have something against someone, and you let them know, ‘I forgive you,’ the slate is clean.

We’ll talk about the responsibilities on both sides of that when that happens. When there is the true forgiveness and God wants the true, deep spiritual forgiveness that comes as motivated with His Spirit.

Psalm 130:1: “Out of the depths I have cried unto You, O LORD. LORD, hearken unto my voice, and let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O LORD, who shall stand?” (vs 1-3). ‘The wages of sin is death’! No one can stand. All have ‘come short of the glory of God.’

Verse 4: “But there *is* forgiveness with you... [because that’s the very nature of God] ...that You may be feared”—*that you may be loved*. You can put in any word there that you want, that You may be worshipped and adored and so forth

Verse 5: “I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope.” ***When there is forgiveness, there is hope!*** What does everybody need who’s in trouble and difficulty?

- they need hope
- hope brings encouragement
- hope brings spiritual strengthening
- hope lifts the pall and depression that sin brings

—that’s why there’s forgiveness

Psalm 85:1: “O LORD, You have shown favor to Your land; You have brought back Jacob from exile. You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people; You have covered all their sins. Selah.” (vs 1-2). Isn’t that something?

Verse 3: “You have taken away all Your wrath; You have turned from the fierceness of Your anger. Restore us, O God of our salvation, and cause Your anger toward us to cease” (vs 3-4). Let’s pray that for the Church of God. Let’s pray that everyday for the people of God. God is still trying and sifting His Church because, unfortunately, too many people have not gotten the point of what God wants them to

learn: to love God, to understand about forgiveness. As the Apostle Paul said, *If you have anything against anyone, forbear and forgive*, "...cause Your anger toward us to cease"

Psalms 103 is something that only God can do. We can't do it in the way that God does. I'm going to bring a whole sermon for the Days of Unleavened Bread, on how we are cleansed and unleavened in Christ. As we read this, ***let's understand that everything we have comes from God: every breath, every particle of food, every bit of knowledge and understanding of God's Word. Everything that we have comes from God, and we live by the grace of God!*** We live under the grace of God, and His blessings come upon us.

Psalms 103:1—this is New Testament doctrine as well as Old: "Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His Holy name." That's why God wants us to be wholehearted; *wholehearted toward God* in everything that we do.

Verse 2: "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." The greatest benefit of all is:

- forgiveness of sin
- the love of God toward us
- the receiving of God's Holy Spirit

—all the physical things are secondary to that. That's why God doesn't want us to get wrapped up in the physical things and chasing after things of this world and so forth. He wants us to remember all His great benefits.

Verse 3: "...Who forgives all Your iniquities..." When you repent, you ask God to forgive your sins, He does! Don't get up off your knees and say, 'I wonder if God forgave me.' He promised that every sin—which is not a sin unto death—He will forgive. You need to understand that.

"...Who heals all your diseases" (v 3). We do need more healings in the churches—don't we? *Yes, we do!* And we do need to have more understanding about the things we need with health at the same time, too. Both go hand-in-hand.

Verse 4—here's one of the benefits: "Who redeems your life from destruction..."—because you look at the way we're going when God called us. We were just going headlong into a pit; when you really understand it.

"...who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies" (v 4). All of this flows from the grace of God. Lot's of times these things come upon us and we don't even know that they've come upon us until we have time to sit back and take notice and think about it.

Verse 5: "Who satisfies your mouth with

good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."

If you want an extra Bible study get out your concordance and look up *merciful, gracious, grace, forgiveness, kindness, loving kindness*. Those are all the characters and qualities of God that He wants us to have. He'll fight our battles for us; He'll take care of our enemies for us; and He will watch over us. Always put in there Psalms 91: Do not worry what's going to happen in this world. Be 'wise as a serpent, harmless as a dove,' follow God, do what He says.

Verse 8: "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger... [Sounds like a repeat of Exo. 34—doesn't it? *Yes!*] ...and abundant in mercy. He will not always chasten..." (vs 8-9). That is to give you hope. Whatever trial you're in will come to an end.

"...nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (vs 9-10). What reward can you give to humanity for killing Christ? Think of that!

Verse 11: "For as the heavens are high above the earth, so is His mercy toward those who fear Him." And you can put in there 'that love Him, that worship Him and so forth.

Notice what God does with our transgressions. This is something that is hard for us, as human beings, to do with our finite minds and the memories that we have, v 12: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us"—through the whole operation of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Verse 13: "As a father has compassion upon his children, so the LORD has compassion upon those who fear Him, For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes, for the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and its place shall know it no more. But the steadfast love of the LORD... [this is how we get forgiveness] ...is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear Him, and His righteousness is unto children's children, to those who keep His covenant, and to those who remember His precepts to do them" (vs 13-18).

(go to the next track)

Let's see how God—in the Psalm that we just read back there, Psalms 103—proposes to do this for the whole world, because the very essence of God is forgiveness.

John 1:29: "On the next day, John sees Jesus coming to him, and he says, 'Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world.' Isn't that interesting that it is called 'the **sin** of the world' and not the **sins** of the world? Why does he say that?

We have the answer; talking about Christ Who is the Lamb to take away the 'sin of the world.'

Note Rev. 13:8—‘the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world.’ Before man was even created, when God was forming the foundation of the world, He had this plan all in mind—didn’t He?

Romans 6:9: “Knowing that Christ, having been raised from *the* dead, dies no more; death no longer has any dominion over Him. For when He died, He died unto sin... [singular] ...**once for all**; but in that He lives, He lives unto God” (vs 9-10).

Romans 5:6: “For even when we were without strength, at the appointed time Christ died for *the* ungodly.... [And we know that was on the Passover Day, 30<sub>A.D.</sub>] ...For rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, although perhaps someone might have the courage even to die for a good man. But God commends His own love... [love and forgiveness go hand-in-hand] ...to us because, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (vs 6-8).

**God prepared the way first**, then we have to repent. Where there is no repentance there is no forgiveness—we need to understand that. We’re not dealing with blanket forgiveness because Christ came.

Verse 9: “Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies... [This is why Christ says ‘pray for your enemies and those who despitely use you.’] ...we were reconciled to God through the death of His own Son... [The reconciliation does not take place without repentance. You have to keep that in mind.] ...much more *then*, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only *this*, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the reconciliation” (vs 9-11).

Verse 12 ties into what we’ve been talking about: sin: “Therefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and by means of sin *came* death, and in this way, death passed into all mankind, *and it is* for this reason that all have sinned” (vs 9-12). So, when He takes away the sin of the world, where did the sin of the world, with mankind, originate? *With Adam!* And we bear ‘*the law of sin and death*’ because of Adam. ‘As in Adam, we all die.’

God made preparations for that. Maybe we can understand this verse in Luke 23 a little more, a little better. Now many times when we read it, we think of the application to those who were involved in the crucifixion of Christ: Pilate, the high priest, the people, the soldiers that did the nailing and so forth.

Luke 23:34: “Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’....” Let’s take a broader view of that in

relationship to the sin of the world. This is not only God letting it be known that forgiveness was available to those, of course, if they repented.

But this is also a prophecy of all mankind—is it not? Forgiveness will not be brought to them until God grants them repentance. But you read about the forgiveness given to Israel when God brings them out of their final captivity. What is He going to do? He’s going to grant them repentance, give them a new heart, give them a new spirit—as we’re going to see in a minute here concerning repentance, they’re going to loathe themselves. This is not only just for the immediacy of the people that gathered there for the crucifixion and all of those who were involved in it. But it’s also for all human beings that have gone the way of Adam; and have lived their lives in societies and everything that there is down through the whole scope of history. Here’s a prophecy that they will be forgiven; obviously, upon repentance.

Now let’s see something else: how this applies and how the apostles understood it. Let’s come to Acts, the fifth chapter. We won’t get involved in all of the things that took place leading up to that—you can read that.

Acts 5:29: “But Peter and the apostles answered... [After they were told to quit teaching these things in Jerusalem] ...*and* said, ‘**We are obligated to obey God rather than men.**’ *Always remember that!*

For those that I mentioned that have been told by their leading minister that they cannot associate even with their own family if they do not belong to that particular church, apply this verse please! You’re obligated to obey God Who says, ‘Honor your father and your mother, love your children.’ That comes before any edict of man to the contrary. **You are obligated to obey God rather than men!**

Verse 30: “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus Whom you killed *by* hanging *Him* on a tree. Him has God exalted by His right hand *to be* a Prince and Savior, **to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel**” (vs 30-31). *Remission of sins is the result of forgiveness!* You are forgiven and then they are ‘wiped away,’ as we said, ‘as far as the east is from the west and has removed them from us.’ That is remission. “...remission of sins to Israel.” Notice: **it has to be given.** It’s God Who leads us to repentance. We’ll talk a little bit more about repentance. But it’s *through Christ!*

Now let’s see how that is given through Christ. You can never earn forgiveness, you can never work for forgiveness; it has to come from God. We know that God is going to grant repentance



and forgiveness during the Millennium. The Great White Throne Judgment period is going to be a fantastic time. Imagine how many billions of people will come into the Kingdom of God. Includes all their sins because of Adam.

Romans 3:9: “What then? Are we of ourselves better? Not at all! For we have already charged both Jews and Gentiles—ALL—with being under sin.” Isn’t it interesting how many times it’s singular.

Verse 10: “Exactly as it is written: ‘For there is not a righteous one—not even one! There is not one who understands; there is not one who seeks after God’” (vs 10-11). What He’s talking about is *on their own*. Why? *Because Satan deceives the whole world, and he’s got control of them through sin!* God has done that to let them be blinded so that He may have mercy on them in the final analysis in His plan; and how marvelous that is! Even Paul said, ‘Oh the debts of the riches of the wisdom of God.’

Verse 12: “They have all gone out of the way... [*the way of God*] ...together they have all become depraved. There is not *even* one who is practicing kindness. No, there is not so much as one! Their throats *are* like an open grave; with their tongues they have used deceit; *the* venom of asps *is* under their lips, whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness” (vs 12-14). Just take these words and apply them anywhere in the world. I suppose one place to start is Washington, D.C., and your local government, your state government, any of the governments of the world.

Verse 15: “Their feet *are* swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery *are* in their ways; and *the* way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes” (vs 15-18).

Isn’t that something! Yet, God is going to forgive, because the very character of God is *forgiveness*. What I want you to do is think about what we have covered there in Luke 23:34: ‘Father, forgiven them for they no not what they are doing.’ If you want to know about *works of law* and so forth, so that “...all the world may become guilty before God” (v 19).

Verse 20: “Therefore, by works of law...” I want you to study that in the appendix that we have at the end of the New Testament. Remember this: ***No law can substitute for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness and remission of sin! Law defines sin***, tells us what sin is. Therefore, by keeping the law you cannot receive justification for past sin by law-keeping alone. So, you read that and study that.

“...there shall no flesh be justified before Him...” (v 20). And ‘justification’ is *forgiveness of*

*sin and the removal of sin through the forbearance of God.*

“...for through *the* law *is the* knowledge of sin. But now, *the* righteousness of God” (v 20). Let’s understand *the righteousness of God*; in this case: ***your state of relationship with God when you have been forgiven and your sins have been removed.***

Verse 21: “But now, the justification of God *that* is separate from law has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets; Even *the* righteousness of God *that is* through *the* faith of Jesus Christ...” (vs 21-22). It all has to come through Christ, there is no other way. Jesus said, ‘I am ***the Way, the Life and the Truth*** and none can come to the Father except through Me.’ Jesus was raised to sit at the right hand of God the Father to bring repentance and forgiveness of sin—right? *Yes!*

“...through *the* faith of Jesus Christ, toward all and upon all those who believe...” (v 22). That gets right back to where we started in *The Keys to Answered Prayer—you must believe God!* You must believe His Word. You must believe that the sacrifice of Christ is sufficient for all forgiveness of all sin, for all time.

“...for there is no difference. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God... [Why? *Because we have the ‘law of sin and death’ within us.*] ...but are being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus” (vs 22-24).

***There must be repentance first!*** That’s why God is dealing with the firstfruits now. That’s why God has not forgiven the sin of the world, yet; that will all be accomplished in God’s plan in the way that He’s going to do it.

“...being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus... [Who said *Father, forgive them for they no not what they do.*] ...Whom God has openly manifested...” (vs 24-25). That’s why it had to be at a time in history that it could not be forgotten in the ages past. And it had to be done publicly, and it had to be done notoriously so that there would be no doubt that even the centurion said, when he saw all things that took place, he said, ‘Surely, this is the Son of God!’

“...to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness [or justification]...” (v 25). *Righteousness* in the sense that God is righteous and merciful and forgiving to do this; *justification* in that you have your sins forgiven.

“...in respect to the remission of sins that are past.... [‘remission’ means *the removal*; they are gone] ...Through the forbearance of God... [Sounds

a little bit like Exo. 34—doesn't it? *Yes!*] ...yes, to publicly declare His righteousness... [or justification] ...in the present time, that He might be just, and the one Who justifies the one who *is* of the faith of Jesus. Therefore, where *is* boasting?...." (vs 25-27).

I mean, what could a man do? Compared to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ? Compared to Who He was before He became a human being? Put that all together. That's why it's so fantastic and magnificent in what God has done.

"...It's excluded...." (v 27). Think about it. Just think about some of these athletes today, when they do something that is expected of them to do. They get up and they do all these gyrations and pound their chest like they're gorillas out swinging. I don't mean that in a deprecating way, but just in a comparative way, lest someone think there is racism involved here. People are so sensitive to racism, but they swear and curse at God! But the boasting; just think: 'I made it! I did it! I can live forever!' Study the book of Job; Job couldn't do it.

"...It is excluded. Through what law? *The law* of works? By no means! Rather, *it is* through a **law of faith**" (v 27). What do you mean 'a law of faith'? You take two terms that appear contradictory, but they're not.

Verse 28: "Consequently, we reckon that a man is justified by faith... [forgiven, reconciled, state of justification by faith] ...separate from works of law. *Is He* the God of the Jews only? *Is He* not also *the God* of the Gentiles?...." (vs 28-29). Yes, He made all of mankind. And God has a plan for all mankind.

"...YES! *He is* also God of *the* Gentiles, Since *it is* indeed one God Who will justify *the* circumcision by faith, and *the* uncircumcision through faith. Are we, then, abolishing law through faith?... [all Protestants, listen, pay attention] ...**MAY IT NEVER BE!** Rather, we are establishing law" (vs 29-31).

How is that done? *By writing the laws and commandments of God in our hearts and our minds, so that you keep the commandments of God as part of your very nature!* That establishes law—doesn't it? Isn't that far better than having them on just tables of stone that you can read them, or on a plaque before a courthouse? Now, it's good to have them hanging on the wall, to remind you of it. But the true establishment of the Law is *within*, and that comes *through forgiveness and repentance*.

Romans 4:7: "Blessed are *those* whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed *is the* man to whom *the* Lord will

not impute *any* sin" (vs 7-8). The only way that can be is through the sacrifice of the Lamb of God.

You can't cover the forgiveness of sin unless you go to 1-John 1 and see how the whole operation works. Even John, in talking about how it applies to us today in our relationship with God and why that's tied in with the model prayer in Matt. 6 and Luke 11—'Forgive us our sins as we forgive others.' We have to understand the nature of God and His forgiveness.

1-John 1:6—and again, attention all Protestants, listen up: "If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness..."—in every way contrary to the Word of God; and remember, Jesus said, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God.'

"...God is light, and there is no darkness at all in Him. If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves... [just living in deceitfulness] ...and we are not practicing the Truth" (vs 5-6). What is the Truth? '*Your Word is the Truth, Your commandments are true, Your law is Truth, all Your precepts from the beginning are true.*' And Truth doesn't change from Old Testament to New Testament.

Here's the key: ***Living in a state of grace!*** Being able to repent of our sins daily! We need it daily because of the 'law of sin and death' within us and because of the weakness of our human nature, and the struggle we all have in overcoming sin—I do, you do, every human being does, so let's not get spiritually hoity-toity.

Verse 7: "However, if we walk in the light... [walking in the way of Christ] ...as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another..." That's important to understand because our fellowship with one another also is dependent upon

- forgiveness
- grace
- changing, growing and overcoming

on a continuous basis.

"...and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us ***from all sin...***" (v 7). Whatever you have sinned.

In relationship to other people and brethren, we all begin from the point we want our sins forgiven—correct? *Yes!* But all too often we rise up off our knees—instead of praying for forgiveness for the brethren, for other people, we point the ugly finger and become very self-righteous—don't we? We've all done it. I mean for us to say, 'Oh, I've never done that.' Well, you haven't grown in grace

and knowledge then. You achieved perfection from the first instant of receiving God's Holy Spirit.

"...cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins..." (vs 7-9). That is to God, because that's what it says in the model prayer—right? 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.'

"...He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.... [there is the operation that takes place: forgiveness and then cleansing] ...If we say that we have not sinned..." (vs 9-10). That is, 'Oh, we're good people. Human nature is just good, and all we need is knowledge and we can overcome all of our problems and live happily under the U.N. the rest of our lives.'

Verse 10: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us."

1-John 2:1: "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.... [when you're keeping the commandments you're not sinning] ...And yet, if anyone does sin..." We still have a sinful nature to overcome, we go to God in repentance. Why?

"...we have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ *the* Righteous; And He is *the* **propitiation** for our sins..." (vs 1-2)—*the continual source of forgiveness and atoning through the blood of Jesus Christ!* That's why we have in the model prayer: 'Forgive us our sins.'

"...and not for our sins only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*" (v 2). And that is hard to understand unless you know the plan of God, and when He's going to apply this to those in the world.

Let's come to Ephesians, the first chapter, and this you can put in the category of 'behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world.' This is referring to Jesus Christ:

Ephesians 1:7: "In Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Think about that for a minute. God's grace is going to be so overwhelming and so absolutely fulfilled in great perfection, when all the plan of God is finished and all those who have been raised in the second resurrection and repent and then are brought into the Kingdom of God—**think of that!** Isn't that going to be something? "...through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace."

You can look at it this way—another way to look at it: The sacrifice of Christ applies to all sin of

all mankind, through all ages at the time that God's plan determines that He's going to give it. Think of it this way: The life of Jesus Christ—Who created all human beings, made the heavens and the earth, created you, called you, forgiven you—**His life for your life**. Now that's the 'riches of the grace of God.' Think of that!

- His life for your life!
- His life for my life!
- His life for the life of all human beings in the world!

When God deals with them to bring them to repentance. We know there will be those who won't repent. And we're not talking about those who commit the unpardonable sin.

Verse 8: "Which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence; Having made known to us the mystery of His own will, according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself" (vs 8-9).

Colossian 1:4: "Since hearing of your faith in Christ Jesus, and the love that *you have* toward all the saints; because of the hope that *is* laid up for you in heaven... [going to be brought by Christ] ...which you heard before in the Word of the Truth of the Gospel; which has come to you, even as *it* also *has* in all the world..." (vs 4-6). That's a statement of fact at that time and a prophecy down to our time and the return of Christ.

"...and is bringing forth fruit, just as *it is* among you, from the day that you heard and knew the grace of God in Truth; even as you also learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ for you; who has also informed us of your love in *the* Spirit. For this cause we also, from the day that we heard *of it*, do not cease to pray for you..." (vs 6-9).

I think that's very interesting how almost every prayer, everywhere I go, that the one who opens and closes in prayers, prays for all the brethren wherever they are. And do that! And particularly pray for those that you don't even know who are having trials and troubles and difficulties and problems that they have to go through; that you are praying that God will deal with them. That's all a part of loving the brethren. That's all a part of forgiving them because you want them to have the forgiveness of God and to come out of the difficulties that they are in.

"...do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. That you may walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God; being

strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light” (vs 9-12).

Verse 13 will lead us into another part of the model prayer (Mat. 6): “Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness...” His life for your life. The sacrifice of Christ is applied personally to every individual, and God is great enough to do that. It’s not life for life. It’s *His* life for the life of the world. But as it’s applied personally to us.

**“...has personally rescued us from the power of darkness.... [Satan the devil] ...and has transferred us unto the kingdom of the Son of His love; in Whom we have redemption through His own blood, *even* the remission of sins” (vs 13-14).**

What I want you to do is this:

- I want you to think about how much God has forgiven you.
- I want you think about how much you desire God to forgive you whenever you do sin.
- I want you to think about how much you desire God to blot them out and remove them from you ‘as far as the east is from the west.’
- I want you to begin thinking about your personal relationship: husband/wife and brethren.

- 21) Ephesians 1:7-9
- 22) Colossian 1:4-14

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Corinthians 15
- Ephesians 3
- Daniel 7
- Matthew 6
- Luke 11
- Psalm 91
- Revelation 13:8

FRC:bo  
Transcribed: 12-9-07  
Reformatted: 10/13

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 Timothy 1:12-16
- 2) Acts 7:54-60
- 3) Acts 8:1
- 4) Matthew 5:48
- 5) Exodus 34:4-10
- 6) Daniel 9:3-4
- 7) Romans 8:28
- 8) Daniel 9:5-9
- 9) Psalm 130:1-5
- 10) Psalm 85:1-4
- 11) Psalm 103:1-5, 8-18
- 12) John 1:29
- 13) Romans 6:9-10
- 14) Romans 5:6-12
- 15) Luke 23:34
- 16) Acts 5:29-31
- 17) Romans 3:9-31
- 18) Romans 4:7-8
- 19) 1 John 1:6, 5-10
- 20) 1 John 2:1-2



***Christian Biblical Church of God Offices:***

***United States***

Post Office Box 1442  
Hollister, California 95024-1442

***Canada***

Post Office Box 125  
Brockville, Ontario  
K6V 5V2 Canada

***Australia***

GPO 1574  
Sydney 2001  
Australia

***United Kingdom***

Post Office Box 6144  
Kings Langley WD4 4DY  
United Kingdom

***New Zealand***

Post Office Box 8217  
Cherrywood  
Tauranga 3145  
New Zealand

***Republic of South Africa***

Post Office Box 494  
Frankfort 9830  
Rep. of South Africa

***La Verdad de Dios***

[www.laverdadedios.org](http://www.laverdadedios.org)  
Post Office Box 831241  
San Antonio, Texas 78283

[www.truthofgod.org](http://www.truthofgod.org)  
[www.churchathome.org](http://www.churchathome.org)  
[www.afaithfulversion.org](http://www.afaithfulversion.org)