

Paid For or Forgiven 08-22-10

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I want to greet you in Jesus' name this morning, thankful for His grace and for His mercy. I want to talk about forgiveness this morning and want to show a little bit of the character of God and how it has been perverted in the modern Gospel. We sang this morning, "Wake a dead Christendom from false security's sure tomb," Amen; and that tomb is surrounded - false Christianity has entombed or enclosed Christianity to where it gives a false security and a false hope and a lot of that rests in simply having the Bible turned completely upside down. Men's thoughts are so easily manipulated. Just a little interjection here of a thought or an idea, sends us off in a far direction. Sometimes when we're speaking you can see it happen, and a lot of times we know it's happening, that if I just say a certain thing or I refrain from saying one certain thing, that person will think something entirely different and they'll go away with a completely different thought than what is actually the truth. That's the way it is with Christianity.

One of the people who were writing this week wrote in defense of women. She wrote that women ought to disobey their husbands, and quoted a bible verse that said, 'if a man will not forsake all that he hath, yea father, mother, husband, wife, children, lands and all that he hath and himself also he can not be my disciple.' Did you catch the one word in there that does not belong? The bible doesn't say anything about a husband or that a woman should ever forsake her husband. Yet she interjected this and quoted the verse four times and spelled it out four times in her letter. Four times and interjected 'husband' in it every time. How could a man forsake his husband? He's talking specifically to a man. It doesn't even make sense but anyone who would read that would just take the idea and say, 'Well if a woman won't forsake her husband and obey the Lord then she's in rebellion and disobedience,' when what the Bible clearly says women are to submit themselves to their husband as unto the Lord. But by that one little word, that one little idea, just turned the thought completely around.

Today the commonly taught idea concerning forgiveness is that until Jesus died on the cross, God could not forgive. We have all heard the idea and the story of the judge that was upholding the law and his own son came in and was guilty of breaking a law but had no money and was going to have to spend a long time in jail. The judge was perplexed about what to do, so he declared the man guilty then he took off his robe, reached into his pocket and paid the boy's fine so that he could be forgiven. That's the idea that the modern gospel has placed upon forgiveness. They take forgiveness out of the whole thing; it's all got to be paid for before it can be forgiven. If something has to be paid for, it is not forgiven, it's paid for. So in reality they put God in the place where He is unable to forgive sins because He requires payment in full for them. [so basically] We are not pardoned; our sins have been paid for. A pardon is when you forgive, not when the sin is paid for. So by that very thought of building a foundation of a doctrine that sins are paid for, there is no need for anyone to change the way they live. "All my sins are paid for; there's no need for me to change the way I live; it's paid for! Why would I need to change anything?" vs. being forgiven. When we have been forgiven, someone has extended mercy to us and we have been pardoned from our sins. When Christ came, He did not come to buy God's forgiveness or to buy our forgiveness. He came to set us free from the bondage of sin. When He shed His blood or when He gave His life, He gave His life because we had become rebellious against God; dirtied ourselves with sin and became in bondage to sin and death.

Matthew 18:23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. 24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

The judge came and said, 'I'm gonna sell you, I'm gonna sell your wife and your children and every thing you have so you can pay this debt. I'm selling you into slavery.' The servant said, 'Lord, have mercy and I'll pay you,' and the judge forgave him his debt. It was not paid for, it was forgiven; pardoned.

Matthew 18:28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. 29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

He would not forgive. He would not forget about the debt. He would not just let it go. It's like he was saying, "I want revenge. I want what is mine. I want payment. You owe me." Whenever we see a man like that, what kind of image does it conjure up? "I'm gonna get every thing that is mine, you owe me. I'm gonna put you in jail till you pay everything." What kind of image does that conjure up? Where does that lead your thoughts to go when you hear of someone like that?

Matthew 18:31 So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: [because you asked me to; because you wanted me to] 33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? 34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. 35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Because this man wouldn't forgive the man who owed him a little, he was brought back before the king, and all that debt he thought had been taken completely away was recharged back onto his account because he didn't do the same that was done unto him. God will put all due sins right back on you if you do not forgive others, because your sins are not paid for, they are forgiven. If they were paid for this man could have brought out his bill of sale and said, "Look here, these are paid for and you have no case against me. I can go out and grab a hold of my fellow servant and take him by the neck and throw him in jail until he pays me every thing because you have no hold on me." That is a picture of modern christianity. It's like they say/think, "God has paid for my sins; I can go out and basically do whatever I want to. Oh I may show Him a little bit of respect and not do a lot of bad things, but basically I can go do whatever I like because my sins are paid."

Jesus paid to *set us free from sins*; without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sins, not forgiveness - remission, remission means released from. When a cancer goes into remission it has no power anymore; it isn't going anywhere anymore. The blood cleanses us. For example, let's say you get your child dressed for church and he goes out while you're getting ready and gets all dirty and you're just about ready to walk out the door and here this child comes in dirty because he's been playing out in the mud. You can forgive him, but do you know what you still have to do? You gotta go and give him a bath and cleanse him from all that dirt. God can forgive us. He will forgive us. But we are still dirty as pigs until we turn from our sin and the blood cleanses us from that sin and washes it away. We're unfit to be in public or in God's presence, but the blood cleanses us so that we can be what we need to be and it gives us the opportunity and frees us from the bondages of death and hell; frees us from being a servant of Satan. When we yield ourselves to sin, we become the servants of sin and Satan is our master. Jesus said he's your father, and when Jesus spilled His blood it was to get rid of that power Satan has over us so we that we could be set free from this evil task-master and be returned to the good master; to our God.

One of the basic teachings of Christianity is in Matthew 6, the prayer Jesus prayed, "forgive us our debts *as we forgive our debtors.*" How do you forgive your debtors? How do you forgive your debtors? This is the danger of being a Pharisee. "I'm not going to have a thing to do with them because they aren't doing what I'm doing." Don't you remember where you were a few years ago? Peter said, "Lord how many times do we have to forgive these people? Seven times? is that enough?" Jesus said, "No; 70x7." If someone comes to you in a day and says, "I'm sorry have mercy on me;" do it, forgive him. You will be forgiven from God according to your forgiveness of your brother and those who treat you wrong. There might be some cleansing still needed, but if you're not going to forgive them, if you aren't going to release them, neither will your sins be released. No matter how 'at peace' you feel. No matter how 'clean' you may feel in your own heart. There's going to be a multitude of people who will stand before almighty God and they are going to say, "I have peace with you Lord, I have forgiveness." And He is going to roll back the pages and He's going to look and say, "Wait a minute; I want you to see something." You may be able to say you have peace and say Lord, Lord but He will remind you about the list of people you would not forgive. Things out of your own mouth will judge you and He will say, "How you forgave - that is how I will forgive you." So where you thought you had this great peace and thought you had deliverance from your sin, it isn't going to happen because He will forgive you like you forgive others. *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.* Look at the different concepts of God; look at how God is blamed. God is willing to forgive. He is ready to forgive those who will turn from sin. But you know what? Those who will not turn, there is no place for them but to be banished into hell. No place for them but hell. God in His mercy and His forgiveness that He is extending to all, and people will not turn. The key to forgiveness is turning from the sin. If a man will not turn from sin there is no place left for him but hell.

Ezekiel 18:20 The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. 21 But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. 22 All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. 23 Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

This modern thought of 'imputed righteousness,' that God just pretends we are righteous because He saw Christ die, this verse makes that completely invalid. The bible is full of verses that invalidate whatever one or two verses that may lead us to think the way we think. If you are a sinner and living in sin, you're going to die and go to hell. If you are righteous and pleasing God, you will be pardoned.

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What does God require? A big judicial process that He demands payment for? No. No. No! "Return and I will forgive you. Quit doing what you are doing wrong. Quit seeking your own way and your own will and return to My way and you will live."

Ezekiel 33:14 Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; 15 If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.

What a different concept we get when we look at what the bible actually says instead of just taking in what is commonly taught. How it changes the picture of God. That is the devil's best tool, just to twist things a little bit so that men begin looking in a certain direction, and then every thing they think looks towards that direction. For example, last night on the streets [street preaching] there was a man who came up who had been watching us from across the street for a long time. We watched him for over an hour just leaning against a lamp pole, watching, then he turned and walked away. About an hour later, he came back and stood right beside us and said, "I'm a new believer and I don't quite understand. It seems like you are just trying to antagonize people here. You are showing them what they are doing wrong; can't you just put, "God loves you" on your sign instead?" So I went through the whole thing again with him about it not being God's love on trial here, but man's. He said he had been delivered from all of these things and I tried to show him that deliverance is being saved from not being saved to, so don't trust that as a way of salvation. You now need to follow Jesus; learn to obey and be a part of His kingdom. He said, "Oh, that's hard!" And I told him about the cross and he said, "Oh that's really difficult, how do you know what to do?" And I said it's surrendering your will and I told him about giving all 99% of your heart to God and God wanting that 1%, and that will determine who is the Lord of your life. He said, "That's hard, but I see that." Then this other man came up who comes up often whenever we are talking to someone. He's an agnostic, a blasphemer, and every time we're in a serious conversation he just seems to appear. He began asking his questions like he normally does, trying to confuse this man. He began making accusations against us; "You are just out here antagonizing people." It's just like they had programmed that whole idea. "You are antagonizing," and of course this began to ring true with the other man, so he began to get confused. He was to the point where he knew his heart wasn't right because he still hadn't surrendered it all, and now here he was siding with this other man who was injecting this idea about me only there to antagonize people. The man went away; Joe caught him and talked with him just a little more, but he went away. Then the agnostic went away.

This morning I thought about that; "Am I an antagonist; is that all I am doing – antagonizing people?" See where my thoughts went just from that thought being injected? The idea; and then I thought just this morning while I was sitting here before I got up to preach: these wicked men are an affront to God - antagonizing God, mocking God with their sin, mocking His forgiveness, blaspheming Him with their lives, antagonizing God. All I'm doing is trying to show and to teach where they are antagonizing God, and who gets called the antagonist? See how things get turned completely upside down? See how just an injection of a thought can make us look at things completely different. And see who gets the blame? *God is blamed* for being an antagonist. God is blamed because He is the one who won't forgive us. God is blamed because bad things happen to us. God is blamed because someone gets sick and dies; when it is sin that causes all of those things. Man choosing his own way, and God gets the blame for it. There won't be one person in hell because God did something wrong. They will go to hell because they chose their own way and would rather have that than God's way. God is willing to forgive, He is full of mercy and goodness. But if you stay outside of His grasp, there is nothing He can do.

The story of the prodigal son. The father gave his son's all the inheritance that was due to him, and then he went out and wasted it. The father waited and waited for the young man to return. Would the father forgive him in a moment? Absolutely. Would the father help him? Absolutely. Did the father love him? Absolutely. You see, the father's forgiveness, mercy and love was not the one on trial. It was that man sitting in the hog pen of the world who would not return to his father. The father could not help him until he returned back to his father, and when he did that the father was just like he always was - standing there ready to receive him again. It was the wicked boy who went away. It is this wicked world that's gone away and taken the inheritance that God gave them and wasted it. He was an embarrassment to his father; an affront to his father's name. Yet the father being ready to forgive is being blamed for why the world is in the shape it is in today.

May the Lord add His blessings to His words. May we think and look at this false god who is presented through modern christianity; that Jesus did all the dying. He gave His blood to set us free, not to pay God off. Not to satisfy some thing that God had; He set us free from the bondage of sin. God is willing to forgive if we will turn from our way back to His. The only place there is any hope is to know that way back to God. The only way.