

Hymns: 53 Nothing But the Blood of Jesus 55 Redeemed, How I Love to Proclaim It
Scripture: Psalm 32:1-5; Psalm 51: 1-17

Big Idea: Jesus Christ, our righteousness

You may recall last time we addressed Jesus' suggestion to cut off body parts **if** they cause you to sin. We learned that that would be futile since **sin happens in the heart**, not the eye, hand, or foot. The passage served to illustrate Jesus'

spiritual rather than **physical** point of view and how He **parsed words**.

In that example, it was the particular word **if**.
In addition, last time we also saw His resolute

singleness of purpose as well as His leadership by example

as He forsook family matters, including the likely funeral of His stepfather Joseph, to give priority to His ministry.

In all, we saw eight reasons why Jesus' teaching is **so hard** to understand. I told you we would look at more of those reasons in detail in future messages. So if you liked last time, you should find this week's message interesting also.

Today, we want to consider what the Bible says about *forgiveness* with a special emphasis on what Jesus Himself said.

We're studying the dispensation of law.

Was the law about forgiveness through sacrifices and rituals?

Let's take a look.

Leviticus 5

[5] And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things,

hearing or saying something unclean or touching something unclean

that he shall

confess that he hath sinned in that thing:

[6] And he shall

bring his trespass offering unto the LORD for his sin which he hath sinned, ... for a sin offering;

and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin.

And even the high priest Aaron was charged to make an offering for his own **sins**.

Leviticus 16

[3] Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place:

behind the veil where the mercy seat is on the ark of the covenant.

*with a young bullock for a **sin** offering, and a ram for a burnt offering.*

*[6] And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the **sin** offering,
which is for **himself**,
and make an atonement for **himself**,
and for his house[hold].*

We must keep in mind that the Jews were steeped into the law of forgiveness through presenting sacrifices to God.

It was their culture,

The law is filled with these statements.

Despite those laws, look what else scripture says about them.

I Samuel 15:22

*[22] And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, ...?
Behold,
to obey is better than sacrifice,
and **to [listen]** than the fat of rams.*

Proverbs 21:3

[3] To do [what is right and just] is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

Hebrews 10:4, 6

*[4] For **it is not possible** that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*

*[6] In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had **no** pleasure.*

So to summarize. The law commanded offerings be made to atone for sins. If done with a pure heart toward God they were fine, but if they were just an empty ritual, God despised them.

With that background concerning Jewish practice, let's move on to two difficult concepts.

The first is what I will call

conditional forgiveness,

and second is the very familiar

unpardonable sin.

As we experienced last time, both of these drag us down to the depths -- but don't despair. There's hope. Just hang on. Here we go.

Conditional Forgiveness

Conditional forgiveness means that God forgives us in the same measure that we forgive others. Do you remember the Lord's Prayer (called by some the Disciple's Prayer)?

Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6

[12] *And **forgive us our debts,***

[...to what extent, upon what condition?]

as we forgive our debtors.

[13] *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*

Jesus continues by clarifying:

[14] *For **if ye forgive men their trespasses,** your heavenly Father will also **forgive** you:*

[15] *But **if ye forgive not men their trespasses,** neither will your Father forgive your **trespasses.***

That's the conditional forgiveness that is part of the Dispensation of Law.

In Psalm 18, David refers to God's conditional dealings with him:

Psalm 18

[24] *Therefore hath the LORD **recompensed me according to my righteousness,** according to the cleanness of my hands in his []sight.*

In Mark 11, Jesus said:

Mark 11

[25] *And when ye stand praying, **forgive,** if ye have ought against any:*

[why?]

*that your Father also which is in heaven **may forgive you your trespasses.***

[26] *But **if ye do not forgive,** neither will your Father which is in heaven **forgive your trespasses.***

Oh-oh! I told you we would be heading down to the depths. That sounds frightening. Sometimes our hearts are not particularly forgiving. Did he really mean that?

In Matthew 18, Jesus told a parable of a servant who owed his master a **huge** debt. The servant begged forgiveness. His master **forgave** him the debt. Then the servant went to fellow servants who owed him much smaller amounts and **demande**d they pay up or go to prison. When his master heard of it, he called this servant.

Matthew 18

[32] Then his lord, ... , said unto him,
O thou wicked servant,
I **forgave** thee all that debt, [at your request]:
[33] Should [you] not also have had compassion on [your] fellowservant,
even as I had pity on [you]?
[34] And his lord was wroth, and
delivered him to the tormentors,
till he should **pay all** that was due unto him.

[now here comes the punch line]

[35] So likewise shall my heavenly Father **do also unto you,**
if y[ou] from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their **trespasses.**

Down we descend further into this abyss of despair. But that's not all! Here's what Jesus told his disciples regarding the **extent** to which they should forgive.

Luke 17

[3] If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him;
and if he repent, forgive him.
[4] And if he trespass against thee seven times in **a day**, and seven times in **a day** turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

And if you think you can do that, how about this?

Matthew 18

[21] Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?
[22] Jesus saith unto him, I say **not** unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until **seventy times seven.**

In other words, your well of forgiveness must be very deep and never should run dry. Now that we're fully condemned by our inadequate forgiveness, let's move on to the so-called Unpardonable Sin.

Unpardonable Sin

Matthew 12

[15] ...**great multitudes followed him** [speaking here of Jesus], and **he healed them all;**

By the way, how big is a multitude? Jesus fed a multitude.

Matthew 14

[21] And they [previously called a *multitude*] that had eaten were **about five thousand men, beside[s] women and children.**

Here in Matthew 12 it speaks of a **great multitude**.

[22] *Then was brought unto him one
possessed with a devil,
blind, and
dumb:*

Notice this guy was challenged **both** physically and spiritually.

and he healed him,

[23] *And **all the people** were **amazed**, and said, Is not this the son of David?*

[24] *But when the Pharisees heard it, they said,*

*This fellow doth not cast out devils,
but **by Beelzebub the prince of the devils**.*

[25] *And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them,
Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation;
and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:
[26] And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself;
how then [shall] his kingdom stand?*

[31] *Wherefore I say unto you, All manner
of sin
and **blasphemy**
shall be forgiven unto men:
but the **blasphemy** against the Holy Ghost shall **not** be forgiven unto men.*

[32] *And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but
whosoever **speaketh against the Holy Ghost**, it shall **not** be forgiven him,
neither in this **world** [that is age],
neither in the [one] to come.*

Another gospel writer gives a slightly different point of view.

Mark 3

[28] *Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies
wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:*

[29] *But he that shall **blaspheme against the Holy Ghost** hath **never** forgiveness, but is in
danger of **eternal damnation**:*

Why?

[30] *Because they said, **He hath an unclean spirit**.*

So let's dissect this unpardonable sin::

1. What is it?

We have a clear definition here. It is attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to the devil. If you say that someone who operates in the power of the Holy Ghost has an unclean spirit, you are blaspheming against the Holy Ghost.

2. Can this sin be committed today?

Commentators generally say “no” but then they hedge by saying, if you personally reject the Holy Spirit, you have no means left to receive God’s grace and will die in your sins.

I would ask the question, is the Holy Spirit doing anything today? Of course. Therefore, this sin **can** be committed today.

3. How can one commit this sin?

An example might be that you see a Christian perform a miracle and then say that he did the miracle by the power of Satan.

Another way might be to condemn a minister of the gospel saying he is satanic.

Finally, you could say that a Christian is not a Christian. Of course, if the person is **not** a Christian he is of his father the devil. Unfortunately, you really do not know his heart. This is not a wise thing to do.

4. What are the consequences of committing this sin?

That sin will never be forgiven you according to Jesus own words. Luke 12:10 puts it this way:

Luke 12

*[10] And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that **blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost** it shall **not** be forgiven.*

So there you have it. Jesus says,

if you hold unforgiveness in your heart against anyone, God will not forgive you, and if you have **ever** blasphemed against the Holy Spirit you will **never** be forgiven that sin.

How can we dig out of that deep hole? Are you ready for some good news? Here we go!

You recall the portion of the Psalm that was read today? Did you know the Apostle Paul quotes it?

Romans 4

*[3] For what saith the scripture? **Abraham believed God**, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*

Do you remember the dispensation when Abraham lived? We called it *Promise*. It was **before** this dispensation of *Law*. This universal principle **supersedes** the law.

[4] Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

There's that word *debt* again. Isn't that interesting.

[5] *But to him that worketh not, but **believeth on him** that justifieth the ungodly, **his faith** is counted for **righteousness**.*

[6] *Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,*

[7] *Saying,*

Note he's quoting from Psalm 32 which was read earlier.

*Blessed are they whose **iniquities** are **forgiven**, and whose **sins** are covered.*

[8] *Blessed is the man to whom the Lord **will not impute sin**.*

That's very good news, but what about this:

Psalm 32 goes on to say:

[5] *I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and **mine iniquity have I not hid**. I said, **I will confess my transgressions** unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the **iniquity** of my **sin**. ...*

Proverbs 28

[13] *He that covereth his **sins** shall not prosper: but whoso **confesseth** and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

In both of these cases, the **law** says **confess** your **sins** to receive **forgiveness**.

So which is it,

righteousness through faith or
forgiveness through confession of sins?

Other than in this passage in Romans 4 that quotes Psalm 32, the only references that the Apostle Paul makes to *forgiveness of sins* appear in three verses. The first two are very similar.

Application

Ephesians 1

[7] *In whom we have **redemption through his blood**,*

*the **forgiveness of sins**,*

This is more of a parenthetical statement. Redemption is far greater than forgiveness. How do we receive this redemption? Through forgiving others, confessing sins, offering sacrifices, or asking for forgiveness? What does he say?

*according to **the riches of his grace**;*

Jesus **died** for our sins – **all** of them. Here's the next verse:

Colossians 1

*[14] In whom we have **redemption** through his **blood**, even the **forgiveness of sins**:*

In this regard, recall this familiar passage:

Matthew 26

[27] And he [Jesus] took the cup, [saying]

*[28] ... this is my blood of the new testament,
which is shed for many
for the **remission of sins**.*

Here's that third of Paul's references to *forgiveness of sins*:

Colossians 2

[10] And ye are complete in him [that is Jesus Christ],

...

[11] In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, ...

Recall circumcision speaks of a **blood** covenant. It involves **birth** and specifically here the **new birth**. We are **born again**.

[12] Buried with him in baptism,

Baptism speaks of our **union** with Jesus Christ as His bride.

wherein also ye are risen with him ...

*[13] And you, being dead in your **sins**
and the uncircumcision of your flesh,
ha[s] he made alive together with him,
having **forgiven** you **all** trespasses;*

*[14] Blotting out the handwriting of **ordinances** that was against us,
which was contrary to us,*

What are these ordinances? They are the **law**.

The **law condemns** us and makes us guilty of sin.

But we cannot be found guilty of sin.

Why?

and took it out of the way,

***nailing it to his cross**;*

That is **every** sin – even the unpardonable one. Jesus paid the price for our sins. Hallelujah! Jesus said “It is finished.” He had completed His mission of redeeming sinful man.

Jesus **fulfilled** the law. As we have seen, He taught it, and He lived it. Remember what He said even while being crucified? “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” Again, Jesus practiced what He preached.

Does this mean that we should not bother having a forgiving spirit? Of course not. But our motivation is much different.

Ephesians 4

*[32] And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, **forgiving** one another, even as God for Christ's sake **hath forgiven you**.*

Do you see? God’s forgiveness is a done deal. Do you want to come to your Heavenly Father or someone you wronged in confession and repentance? That’s fine, but come to Him or them knowing you are clothed in the righteousness of Christ and walk in the power of the presence of His Holy Spirit within you.

Benediction

*[20] Now the God of peace,
that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,
that great shepherd of the sheep,
through the blood of the everlasting covenant,
[21] Make you perfect in every good work to do his will,
working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight,
through Jesus Christ;
to whom be glory for ever and ever.
Amen. (Hebrews 13:20-21)*