

## “Foundations” – Lesson #5

### **EXPERIENCING FORGIVENESS**

The great preacher of many years ago Henry Ward Beecher had a clock at his church that didn't keep good time. It was always too fast or too slow. Month after month he fiddled with it, trying to rectify the problem. Soon it became a standard topic of conversation in the church, until finally in desperation, he put a sign over the clock that said, “Don't blame the hands, the trouble lies deeper.” That's how it is in life isn't it? Don't blame the hands, the trouble lies deeper. And until you deal with the deeper trouble of the spiritual realm, there will be no way to set the hands aright permanently.



Romans 3:23-24 “...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”

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## I. RECEIVING GOD’S FORGIVENESS

### A. At Salvation

Ephesians 1:7 “In Him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace”

- In Christ we have redemption = Greek: “to buy back”, we are purchased (our sin debt was paid in full)
- Because of God’s grace (unmerited favor) and through Christ’s blood, we are forgiven of our sins

Ephesians 2:1-9 “<sup>1</sup> As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup> All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh<sup>[a]</sup> and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. <sup>4</sup> But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. <sup>6</sup> And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— <sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast.”

Transgression = Greek: “A deliberate breaking or violation of the law”

Sin = Greek: “Deliberate disobedience to God’s known will, rebellion”

- Vs. 1: We were dead in our transgressions and sins.
- Vs. 5: We are alive in Christ by grace
- Vs. 8: We are saved by God’s grace through faith which was a gift from God.
- Vs. 9: It is not by any work of ourselves that we are saved.

Colossians 1:13-14 “<sup>13</sup> For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

- Vs. 14: In Jesus we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 2:13-14 “<sup>13</sup> When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, <sup>14</sup> having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.”

- Vs. 13: God made us alive with Jesus Christ.
- Vs. 13: God forgave us from all of our sins.
- Vs. 14: God canceled our debts, nailed them to the cross.

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### 1. Thinking of the verses we just read:

Wrong view: We do something to earn forgiveness.

Right view: Forgiveness is a free gift from God received through Jesus Christ!

### 2. Read the parable in Matthew 20:1-16.

<sup>1</sup> “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. <sup>2</sup> He agreed to pay them a denarius (Roman coin worth a day’s wage for the average worker) for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

<sup>3</sup> “About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. <sup>4</sup> He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ <sup>5</sup> So they went.

“He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. <sup>6</sup> About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’

<sup>7</sup> “‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered.

“He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’

<sup>8</sup> “When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’

<sup>9</sup> “The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. <sup>10</sup> So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. <sup>11</sup> When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. <sup>12</sup> ‘These who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’

<sup>13</sup> “But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius? <sup>14</sup> Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. <sup>15</sup> Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’

<sup>16</sup> “So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

Why are the first workers hired upset with their wages? What is the point of Jesus’ parable?

Just like the Landowner paid the worker’s wages in the parable, the same price (Jesus Christ) is paid by God for sin regardless of who you are (Billy Graham, Mother Teresa, The Pope, the average American or even Hitler) and when you came (whether you’re a long time Christian or just became one)!

### 3. If God completely forgives us through Christ, what motivates us to continue to follow Him?

Love and gratitude; We, also, need God’s help and guidance to live like Christ and to live above sin.

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Suggested Prayer: “Father, thank you for forgiving me through Christ. I let go of all past sin and will no longer condemn myself. In Christ, I am now free to live a new life with You. Fill me with your gratitude and love. Teach me how to continue to receive and experience your forgiveness and grace.”

4. Once we have received God’s forgiveness through Christ, How does God now view us?
- Psalm 103:12 our sin is totally out of His sight
  - 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 new life, new identity, Child of God, new purpose--ambassador for Jesus Christ
  - Romans 8:1 no condemnation, because of Jesus Christ’s sacrifice we are now in right standing with God

Difference between CONVICTION and GUILT:

CONVICTION	GUILT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Attacks the specific problem</li><li>- God working with us through the Holy Spirit</li><li>- Concern about how it effects us and others</li><li>- Need for repentance</li><li>- Restoration, sense of comfort</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Attacks the person</li><li>- Satan accuses us</li><li>- Fear of getting caught and punished</li><li>- Farther away from God (alienated)</li><li>- Depression</li></ul>

Note: Do not let past sin beat you up. Jesus saves!

### B. After Salvation

1 John 1:6-10 <sup>6</sup> “If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. <sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. <sup>8</sup> If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup> If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.”

According to vs. 7, what is the forgiven Christian suppose to and able to do? walk in the light and have fellowship with Christ and others

Why is vs. 9 so important? forgiven Christians can step out of the light, sin

What does vs. 9 tell us to do when we sin? confess it to Christ

What does vs. 9 tell us Jesus will do? forgive and purify us

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1. What does it mean to “confess” sin? How should we confess?
  - a. Call out to God through prayer.
  - b. Agree with God that you have sinned. (It helps to name the sin specifically.)
  - c. Thank God that He has already forgiven you. (Tell Him, “I receive Your forgiveness.”)
  - d. Ask God if there is someone you need to talk to for help, advice, etc. Is there someone you need to ask forgiveness? (Repentance—Proverbs 28:13)
2. What are some ways that we deceive ourselves concerning sin?  
Rationalize, compare with others, ignore (denial), God doesn’t see

### II. FORGIVING OTHERS—Read Matthew 18:21-35

Forgiving means that we actively CHOOSE to give up our grudge despite the severity of the injustice done to us. (Ephesians 4:32)

Healing process in forgiving others: (Note: Be real with God)

1. Admit hurt, anger, and any other emotion to God.
2. Ask for God’s perspective on yourself, the other person(s), and situation.  
Psalm 139:23-24 <sup>23</sup> Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. <sup>24</sup> See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.
3. Confess to God any sin of resentment, bitterness, self-pity, etc.
4. Forgive the person. “Because of God’s forgiveness, I forgive you, \_\_\_\_\_ (name the person).”
5. Ask for God to heal you emotionally.
6. Pray for the person regularly.  
Matthew 5:43-44 <sup>43</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ <sup>44</sup> But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,
7. Ask God if you need to go and share with the person involved.

REMEMBER: FORGIVENESS IS GIVEN—TRUST IS EARNED