

Are You Forgiven?

R. F. Becker

“Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.” (Romans 4:7)

Friend, I am writing to you today because time is short. The day of grace is fast slipping away. The great day of judgment is drawing nearer every hour. The thread of life is slowly but surely winding up. The sands of time for each of us will soon run down to rise no more. You and I are traveling far faster than we think through time towards eternity. Only a few more fleeting days and every soul of us will have gone forever to his own place of heaven or hell. Therefore I meet you in faithfulness and solemnness today and ask you only one question: Are you a forgiven soul?

The words of Scripture at the top of this page set forth the greatest blessing that can ever come to man. It is the knowledge of the forgiveness of all sin. To have the conscious occurrence of this forgiveness is the only foundation for true happiness. But to be outwardly happy without this forgiveness as many people are, is to be like the condemned man singing carelessly in his prison cell, totally unconscious that the day of his execution is now dawning.

The forgiveness spoken of in this verse of Scripture you can never buy at any price. It is something that the fondest relative can never will to you. It is a blessing which can never be earned by good works though your sins be few and your deeds of merit be without number. No man or priest can ever bring you the forgiveness of sins. Yet in value this forgiveness is without price in earthly money. In the joy of possessing this heavenly treasure, earthly joys are altogether worthless. For this forgiveness of sins is the GIFT OF GOD. Friend, do you have this forgiveness?

Perhaps by now you are thinking: “What do I need of such a forgiveness as you speak of? Whom have I injured, or whom have I cheated and wronged or defrauded so seriously as to need to be forgiven?” Right here is where so many go wrong. So, friend, beware! It is not man’s forgiveness I am writing of. But are you forgiven in the sight of God? “For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (I Sam 16:7).

I write plainly because I feel deeply. To be without forgiveness is a dreadful thing. Forgiveness will not be granted to any after we leave the land of the living. There is no change that comes over the soul after death. No conversion ever comes beyond the grave. No new heart is ever given after our last breath. As we depart in the lonely and solemn hour of death so we abide, when time for us is to be no more. As we die, so are we forever. As the tree falls so shall it lie. Each of us is either a forgiven or a lost soul now. Each one of us is either a forgiven or a lost soul forever. For Christ hath power only on earth to forgive sins (Mark 2:10).

Friend, if you are not now forgiven, you are in nature’s sleep of guilt, and only Christ can awaken you (Eph 5:14). You are blinded by Satan as to your great need and hopeless condition by nature (II Cor 4:4). You are yet on that beautiful and broad, yet fatal way that leads to destruction (Matt 7:13). Perhaps your friends and companions think you are all right, but death eternal lies at the end of your road (Pro 16:25). If you have never had repentance towards God and never have had a personal faith in Jesus Christ, you are a lost and unforgiven soul (Acts 20:21).

This is the most solemn truth you will ever consider. No more important thought can ever occupy your mind. No greater issue will you ever have to decide. So let me lay before you three facts, which reveal with startling clearness why you need repentance and forgiveness above anything you can ever hope to have. May God’s Spirit guide us as I seek to unfold these reasons. May He open your heart to realize the eternal worth of being a soul whom God for Christ’s sake has forgiven.

1. GOD IS HOLY

We need forgiveness because God whom we must all meet, is HOLY. Isaiah heard the Seraphim around the throne of God cry, “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Hosts,” as though in His majestic presence they were unable to express the intensity of His holiness (Isa 6:3). Job said, “Behold He putteth no trust in His saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in His sight. How much less one that is abominable and corrupt; man that drinketh iniquity like water.” “His

angels He charged with folly" (Job 15:15; 4:18). God is all-wise, all-mighty. He knows no variableness, no shadow of turning (James 1:17). With Him there is no change (Heb 13:8). He alone is immortal. He dwells in dazzling light no man can even approach unto; no man hath seen Him or can see Him (I Tim 6:16). This same God with whom we all have to do has said, "I am the Lord your God...be holy; for I am holy" (Lev 11:44). The Spirit says, "He which hath called you is holy" (I Peter 1:15).

To such a holy God we shall all give an account of ourselves and our lives. It is appointed unto man once to die and after this, the judgment (Heb 9:27; Rom 14:12). He knows our every secret sin and requires that which is past (Eccl 3:15). To Him shall we answer in the last day as to how we have treated His Son, Jesus Christ, and His message of forgiveness. To Him we must confess in that awful day, the true condition of our depraved and unbelieving hearts if we reject His claims upon us all our lives. This omnipotent and Holy One will one day judge every sinner in absolute righteousness according to his earthly attitude towards His Son. Every last soul must repent towards God and exercise faith in Jesus Christ, in this land of time, or perish forever. This is the decree of the second Person of the Holy Trinity. "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish," is His solemn word in Luke 13:3. Oh, may the Lord give you wisdom, friend, to see how fearfully important it will be at that last tribunal to be a forgiven soul.

2. WE ARE GUILTY

We need forgiveness because we are GUILTY OF A LIFETIME OF SIN, in the sight of this Holy God. I do not know whether or not you are clear of guilt against your fellow man. Each soul alone knows the secret sins he has hidden from others. I do not know what your friends, neighbors and relatives think of you. But before a thrice Holy God who inhabits eternity, who sees not as man seeth, who alone is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of your heart and conscience, you are poor and wretched and naked and blind and hopeless in your guilt of unbelief, unless by grace you are a forgiven soul.

This guilt of impenitent unbelief is ours by inheritance, through our forefather, Adam, who believed the devil and disobeyed God. We were born guilty, though man's pride denies it. Our natural hearts are so completely deceived by this guilt of sin we were born in, that our minds refuse to believe the Word of God about our lost condition. Rather we believe our own deluded heart which is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer 17:9). But the unerring Word of the Living God is very plain in His decree: "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not" (Eccl 7:20). All our vaunted self-righteousness is laid forever in the dust by that Word of the Spirit: "There is none righteous, no not one"-again: "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:10,23).

3. WE SHALL SOON DIE

We need forgiveness from God because we are soon, Ah yes, so very soon, going to DIE. We are all travelers here, through a brief time of life to an endless eternity. Daily we are reminded of the brevity of our stay here by the death of those we knew so well. Every soul of us can say with David: "There is but a step between me and death." The longest earthly life is soon over and gone. The strong as well as the weak, we see buried. The young and the old, the rich and the poor, the educated and refined, the famous and mighty, as well as the ignorant and immoral, are solemnly lowered into their graves before our very eyes. The plague of sin and unbelief is in the heart of every man, and when it is finished it bringeth forth death (James 1:15). Yes, my friend, the sentence of death is now in that body of yours whether or not you like to think so (II Cor 1:9). And which of us can tell at whose door the grim destroyer of the bodies of men is now waiting?

In the light of these three facts, the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man and the certainty of death, do you see why I ask you in all sincere affection: "Are you a forgiven soul?"

Are these facts I have written hard to believe, and harder to face? Be sure, it is better to face them now than hereafter when it is too late forever. It is a most solemn thing to be unforgiven, and impenitent now. It will be terrible beyond the thoughts of men to be so in the hour when you shall stand without a Savior before the God against whom you have sinned, in the last judgment. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb 9:27).

Would you like to know you are a forgiven soul? Would you like to be at peace with God and know on the highest Authority your sins were forever removed from your wretched conscience? Would you like to know your guilty soul was safe by the assurance of God's own Word? Then let me point out to you some things about this blessing of forgiveness without which you must surely perish forever (I John 5:12).

The Scripture we have written at the head of this tract show us that there is just one way to become a forgiven soul.

We can only be forgiven by Him against whom we have sinned. We can only become forgiven souls by "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). Paul said, "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sin" (Acts 13:38). "This man" is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. It is against Him we have sinned. To Him alone we must go in order to ever be forgiven. We must come to Him in brokenhearted repentance, confessing our sins here in time, or be unforgiven forever. There is no one else who can save your helpless soul but Him. Peter once said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). Again he said, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Many are they who would send you to good works and deep sincerity in some belief to earn your own salvation. Others would send you to ministers, but they cannot save you either. They can only point you to Him who is the way. But alas, many of these ministers, not being forgiven themselves, are only false teachers, whose advice is a delusion. They, like the blind who lead the blind, will at last go out into a lost eternity, and their deceived church members will follow them. To trust such is to lean upon one whose remedies will utterly fail in the bitter end. Some would send you to the lodges of proud men to obtain a hope of eternal life. But these fraternities, though pretending much, can give the soul no true hope. They too are only founded upon the false imaginations and secret creeds and good works and rituals of men who love not the truth as it is in Christ, and who despise His sin atoning blood, and that one sacrifice He made which saves those who trust Him.

Some would send you to the Roman Catholic priest to be forgiven. But he, practicing his false Satanic Babylonish Pagan ritual, only loads down the poor sinner with more burdens which are grievous to be borne, and can promise him no eternal life at last. He will send you to masses, to confessions, to penance, and to worshipping Babylon's idols: the crucifix, the rosary and the queen of heaven. He will send you to worshipping saints and relics and adoring Mary and Lady Fatima. He will make you wear scapulars and charms and beads. He will send you on pilgrimages to Rome's shrines and have you repeat numberless prayers and follow after mysterious superstitions and awe-inspiring ceremonies and ordinances. He will keep you in spiritual ignorance and bondage with his pagan mystery ritual, while he cleverly robs you of your money. And you will find in the end, all that the priest of Rome can do for you, is to bring to you an emotional form of heathen worship, which will never bring any lasting peace to your guilty and hopeless soul.

But dear friend, let me bring the comfort of this word to you: "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim 2:5). Though vain are your works, though vain is the help of any creed or man at this moment, there is everlasting forgiveness for you if you come to Christ by faith in contrite repentance with no plea but that His blood was shed for you.

Are you troubled and inwardly saying: "I know I need to be forgiven; I know I have sinned against God; but how can I be sure I am justified in His sight?"

In the Word of God the Spirit makes the way of salvation so plain that even a fool cannot err therein (Isa 35:8). Yet many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able, because they shall seek, alas!-too late (Luke 13:24). And many, many others who have spent their lives saying: "Lord, Lord," shall not enter heaven either (Matt 7:21). Yes, friend, there is a vast and fathomless difference between having a profession of salvation, and being a forgiven soul. Many, oh so many, have the former. They have a name to live and are dead (Rev 3:1). Few comparatively are the latter, for few ever take the place of those who need forgiveness and know and feel they must eternally perish without it. Few ever find this way of God's forgiveness. Few of these walk in it. Fewer yet abide any time in it. And fewest of all prove by obeying God and serving Him unto the end of their days, that they have found God's forgiveness in the atonement of Christ.

In the PERSON OF CHRIST alone you will find forgiveness. He has opened a fountain of living waters to cleanse sinners (John 4:14). He has provided a garment of righteousness to clothe our spiritual nakedness (Luke 15). He is the bread of life that we may eat and live forever (John 6). He is the light which guides the repentant soul to heaven (John 8:12). He is the Passover Lamb whose blood alone can stay the destroyer's hand (Exo 12:13). To Him alone I would point you as the One who made the one and only sacrifice which could take away sin forever. (Heb 9:26,28)

To trust Him completely, to cast your repentant soul unreservedly on Christ by faith in His Word is salvation. The Spirit of God said long ago, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Exo 12:13). When God, who is Holy, against whom you have sinned, whom you must soon meet, sees you trusting the Blood of Jesus alone for safety, He will pass over you. No charge will He ever bring against you, because Christ has died in your stead. Payment God will not twice demand, this at His bleeding Surety's hand and then again at yours. "Whosoever believeth in Him

shall receive remission [forgiveness] of sins." Reader, are you a forgiven soul?

Jesus Christ Himself has purchased forgiveness for us with His own blood. By His death on the tree He paid the debt to God we never could pay. By His resurrection He has proved that God is now satisfied once for all with the payment He once made on the tree, and every repenting soul who trusts Him is free.

To make God's forgiveness yours you must receive Christ by faith in His Word (John 1:12). You cannot see Christ now for He is in heaven. You can never go to Him as you are. But He has left His own promise in His Word: "Look unto Me, and be ye saved" (Isa 45:22). You can trust Him for having done what He says He has done: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). You can thankfully and humbly trust God's Word that His Son Jesus was slain on Calvary's tree in your stead and that His blood has forever atoned for your sins.

To thus trust your soul unreservedly to Christ is salvation. This is being saved by grace. This is being made a new creature in Christ. This is being justified by faith. To thus trust your soul to Christ for all that is past, for all that is now, for all that is before, is to be a forgiven soul. To do this shows you have been born again.

Reader, will you not gladly now leave your case in His loving hands? Will you not just now gladly believe that He died under God's curse in your stead to set you free forever? Will you even now come by faith to Him, rest in Him, confide in Him, cling to Him, and forsake all other hopes? Then you can joyfully say with David of old: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Psa 32:1), and go on your way rejoicing, singing Newton's wonderful song:

**I saw one hanging on a tree
In agony and in blood
Who fixed His languid eyes on me
As near His Cross I stood.**

**Sure never till my latest breath
Can I forget that look.
It seemed to charge me with His death
Though not a word He spoke.**

**My conscience felt and owned my guilt
And plunged me in despair.
I saw my sins His blood had spilt
And helped to nail Him there.**

**A second look He gave which said,
I freely all FORGIVE
My blood is for thy ransom paid;
I die that thou mayest live.**