

The Blessedness of Forgiveness



Forgiveness (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you Keys to Successful Living which God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry.

The title of my theme for this week is one of the most beautiful words in any language: Forgiveness.

But first, let me say thank you to those of you who've been writing to me. Before I finish this talk, we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you. So please take time to write—even if it's only a brief note.

Now, back to my theme: Forgiveness. What makes this such a special and beautiful word? Well, consider some of the consequences that flow from forgiveness: reconciliation, peace, harmony, understanding, fellowship. How badly our world today stands in need of these things!

Or again consider some of the consequences that flow from our failure to forgive and to be forgiven: bitterness, strife, disharmony, hatred, war. At times it seems as though our whole human race is in danger of being overwhelmed by these evil, negative forces. If we are ever to escape such as terrible fate, it will only be as we learn and apply the principles of forgiveness.

Today I want to begin to speak to you about the blessedness of forgiveness. First, I need to find out that there are two directions of forgiveness represented in the Bible. These two directions are well portrayed by that great symbol of our Christian faith, the cross. We all know that the cross has two beams—one vertical and one horizontal. And these two beams represent the two directions of forgiveness. The vertical beam represents the forgiveness that we all need to receive from God and can only receive through the cross of Jesus Christ. The horizontal beam represents our relationships with our fellow men and it speaks of the forgiveness which in this case is two way—the forgiveness we need to receive from others and the forgiveness we need to give to others. And once again, the only place where we can receive the grace for that kind of forgiveness is the

cross.

Today I'm going to focus on the first aspect of forgiveness—the vertical aspect. The kind of forgiveness that we need and can receive, thank God, from God Himself. I've already said I want to dwell on the blessedness of being forgiven by God. I think this is set forth perhaps most beautifully in Psalm 32 verses 1 through 5, where David, who is the writer of the Psalm, says this:

> "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. [I wish I could represent the original Hebrew to you. It begins in Hebrew with a plural word—blessednesses. 'Oh, the blessednesses of the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.' The implication is that there are innumerable blessings attached to having our sins forgiven by God. But let me go back to the English version.] Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit."

It's important to see that the Bible does not talk about a man who does not need forgiveness. The Bible clearly indicates that all of us need forgiveness from God. There are no exceptions. In another Psalm, the Psalmist says there is no man that does not sin. We have all sinned. Therefore we all need forgivenesses. It's not a question of whether we need forgiveness, but whether we receive forgiveness.

So David says, "Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him. [He has sinned, but his sin is no longer counted against him.] And in whose spirit there is no deceit." One absolute condition for receiving forgiveness is being absolutely honest with God—not trying to cover anything up, not trying to excuse anything, not holding anything back, but coming to God without any kind of deceitfulness. And then David goes on out of his own personal experience, and doubtless he had in mind that terrible situation when he had been guilty of committing adultery and then committing murder to cover up his adultery, in the matter of Bathsheba the wife of Huriah the Hittite. So David says this, Ps. 32:4–5:

> "When I kept silent my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to You, and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord'—and You forgave the guilt of my sin."

David obviously had been like many people. He had for a long while refused to face the fact of his sin. He tried to ignore it. He tried to pretend that it didn't happen. He tried to cover it up. But all that time he was like a man with a burning fever. He said, "My strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. My bones wasted away."

Do you realize that the results of unforgiven sin can be very physical? I think of a story related to me by a man who's a psychiatrist and an elder in the Presbyterian church. And he had just recently come into a real personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. And there was a lady in one of the hospitals that he attended who was in a hopeless condition. Her kidneys had ceased to function, her skin had turned a kind of yellow-orange color, she was in a coma, and she was simply waiting to die. And as he walked past her bed one day he was prompted by the Holy Spirit. And he spoke, not to her conscious mind but to her unconscious because her conscious mind was not able to receive anything from him, and he said, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I remit your sins." And he wondered afterwards if he'd done something foolish or whether the Holy Spirit had really prompted him. But to his amazement about a week later, he met the lady walking down the street in the city perfectly healed. See, the one cause of her physical condition was her unforgiven sins. When her sin was forgiven through this man's intercession on her behalf, when her spirit was clear with God, the way was open for her to be healed.

So, David's picture of his condition is very real. It's very true. It's very up todate. Now in Psalm 32 (verses 6–7) David goes on and gives a personal application to this:

> "Therefore let everyone who is godly, pray to You [that's God] while you may be found. Surely when the mighty waters rise they will not reach you. You are my hiding place. You will protect me from trouble, and surround me with songs of deliverance."

David says, don't delay, while you have time remember and turn to God, and ask for His forgiveness, then when the trouble comes, when the waters rise, when calamities sweep over your life, you'll have a hiding place. You'll be kept safe in the hiding place of God.

The prophet Isaiah also has something urgent to tell us about our need to seek forgiveness from God. In Isaiah 55 verses 6 and 7:

> "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts."

You see, there's only just a certain period when you can count on turning to the Lord. After that, it may be the that the Holy Spirit will not prompt you again. It may be that you'll never be moved again. But there's a moment when God may be found. There's a moment when God is near. It says at that moment let the wicked forsake his way, and the evil man his thoughts. Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call on Him while He is near. Friends this is an urgent matter. It seems to me that the Spirit of God is prompting me just now to warn you that if you have unforgiven sin in your life, now is the time to turn to God. The New Testament says, "Now is the accepted time." Now is the time when God will hear you. Don't delay, don't brush aside the gentle prompting of the Holy Spirit. Don't fight off that conviction which He brings upon you. Yield to His prompting. Call on the Lord while He is near. And remember the blessednesses of the man whose sins are forgiven.

Why do we need to be forgiven? We all need to be forgiven. There's a simple verse in Romans that tells us why we must all seek forgiveness from God. Romans chapter 3 verse 23:

> "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

See, there are no exceptions there. All of us have sinned. There's not one righteous. There's not one that does good the scripture says.

You may argue and say, "Well, I've never committed this or that particular crime or sin. I've never murdered a man or stolen or committed adultery or even got drunk or maybe you can say I've never told a lie. But you see there is one thing we all have in common. We've all sinned and thereby fall short of the glory of God. See, the essence of sin is not doing some particular wrong thing. The essence of sin is robbing God of the glory which is due to Him from our lives. And we've all led lives that robbed God of His glory. We've all led lives which were far below the level that God requires. We've fallen short of the glory of God. And there are no exceptions in this matter. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Again, I feel I'm speaking to someone who needs to turn just at this moment. Wherever you may be remember the scripture says seek the Lord while He may be found. Call on Him while He is near. Don't let this day pass until you've sought God for forgiveness. Remember the blessednesses of the man whose sin is forgiven. To whom the Lord does not reckon his sin.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be speaking about the Basis for Forgiveness.

Radio Program

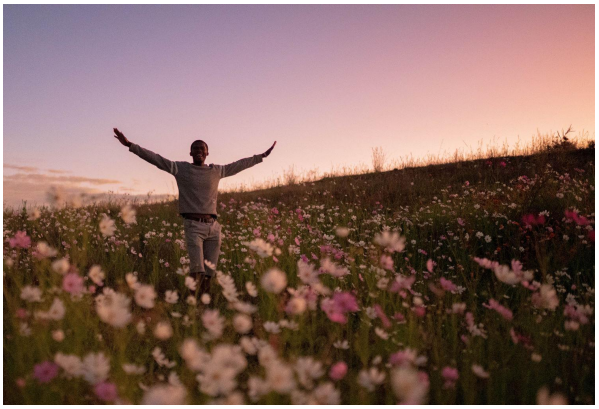
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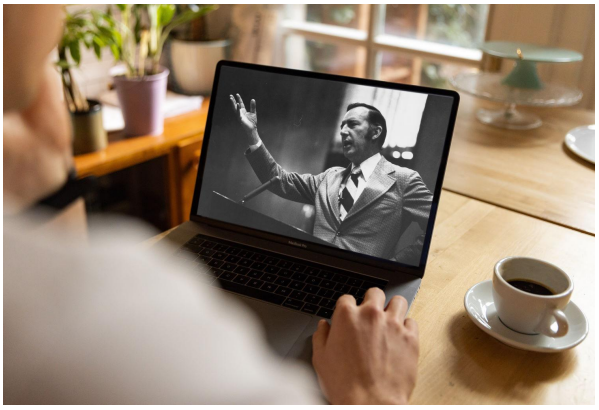
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