

Forgiveness

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I have tried to cover the subjects that will help us prepare for the Passover and bring us up so that when we do partake of the Passover we're going to have a greater Passover than we've ever had before.

There's an aspect of the Passover that is very important for us, which bears upon what we are doing, and bears upon what God is wanting from every one of us in relationship to the times in which we are living, in relationship to the difficulties and problems we have been experiencing, and unfortunately or fortunately, however you want to look at it, is this:

Forgiveness as a Group:

Many people are coming from so many different backgrounds—even different Churches of God—from churches just straight out of the world now. We had two people come from the Baptist Church to the Mormon Church to the Methodist Church gradually step-by step-by-step. How did they come in contact with us? One of the brethren was asked 'What do you believe?' They said, 'Here's a beliefs booklet.' That's exactly what they needed! Exactly what they wanted!

Not only do you find the problem of difficulties within the Churches of God, but you find the same identical problems within the churches of the world. There are a lot of people sitting there in those churches that God can also call. One of the things that was really moving was that you can tell when God opens their mind. There's a certain point when God opens the mind of an individual, and they know it, and you know it. That is a miracle that God does.

One of the things that we need to realize is that we are dealing with all of the problems of all the Churches of God being thrown in with what we have to do to help them. That compounds it and makes it even more difficult. But one of the things that has been problematic in the past is that everything has been shoved to the ministry to solve. When that comes about, and they bring up things to me or to others, we say, 'Okay, here are the Scriptural tools, you have to solve your problems by going to Christ.' That's what's so important. ***You have to go to Jesus Christ and let Him work your problems out!***

If you need some help and counsel, we'd be glad to do that, but the Christian Biblical Church of God is not a hierarchical church. It is not a mother/father church to solve all your problems. It's

not a babysitter church. We'll do handholding when handholding needs to be done. We will pray for each other, we will encourage each other; we will help and strengthen each other. But God expects us all, in the maturity of growing up in to Christ, to use the spiritual tools that we need to come to that maturity.

Luke 4:16: "And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and according to His custom, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day and stood up to read. And there was given Him *the* book of the prophet Isaiah; and when He had unrolled the scroll, He found the place where it was written, '*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; for this reason, He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal those who are brokenhearted...*'" (vs 16-18).

One of the hardest hearts to heal are those that have been broken two or three times. There is a great resistance and a great mistrust of anything and anyone, and this becomes a greater problem. That's why it's so very important, brethren, that in whatever help you can give to anyone, you help them stand on their own two feet. You help them look to the Scriptures to understand what they need to do out of it. ***You point them toward God the Father and Jesus Christ!***

- no organization can save
- no church can save
- no minister can save
- ***only Christ can save***

We all need to keep that in perspective. "...to proclaim pardon to *the* captives..." (v 18). ***There are those who are:***

- captivated by churches
- captivated by ideas
- captivated by demons and Satan the devil

They need to be brought out from underneath this when God calls them, and at that point of their mind being opened, and there's something there to help them with.

"...and recovery of sight to *the* blind..." (v 18). ***I would have to say that is the greatest thing that we're able to do here in being able to point out the Scriptures!***

Christ is 'the Way, the Truth, and the Life,' and ***only He*** can open the mind, which then is recovering the sight of the blind. Too many people have come to the point that they have put down the spiritual shutters. I know one man who was an

evangelist was asked, 'How can you put up with all this political nonsense and corruption that's going on?' He said, 'Very simple, I just have steel blinders and I pull them right down over my eyes. I see nothing and hear nothing.' Obviously then, he ended up *doing nothing*. Well, Christ is removing that.

"...to send forth in deliverance those who have been crushed, to proclaim *the* acceptable year of the Lord" (vs 18-19).

If we're going to do any of the ministry of Christ, that is all part of it. Where does it begin?

- it begins by knowledge and understanding of what is right and wrong
- it begins by learning from the experiences that we have gone through, to help them understand what they are going through
- it begins with one of the most important things we need to realize, which is this:

It's like a man I was talking to said, 'If I leave this church, will I lose my salvation?' And I asked him:

- Can the church save you? *No!*
- Did the church call you? *No!*
- Did the church give you the Holy Spirit? *No!*
- Who did? *Jesus Christ!*
- If you leave a physical organization, have you left Christ? *No!*

What I want you to do, I want you to take your time and *prove everything*. I don't want you to just up and leave, and then find out that you weren't prepared. So, you prove everything. You need to understand that *God alone* can help, and *God alone* can heal. You need to realize that God is not going to take salvation from you.

Salvation in these things begins with the **knowledge of forgiveness**; and forgiveness is so important. How many people are going around with a guilty conscience, worried about this, worried about that, worried about the other thing? Guilty conscience!

- Why do you have a guilty conscience?
- Are you afraid God won't forgive?

God doesn't want you to have a guilty conscience. That's important to really understand and realize.

- What has a guilty conscience ever solved?
- Have you ever changed anything because you felt guilty for however long you felt guilty?
- Did that change anything?
- Did it make it right?

- Did it correct it?
- *No!*

You have to do exactly as Jesus did. Luke 23 is very profound because:

- it has to do with the Passover
- It has to do with the attitude of Christ
- it has to do with the attitude of those who were doing things that they knew better, that they should not do them, but did them
- it also has to do with one of the most important things:

Remember that Jesus said He was preaching 'the acceptable year of the Lord,' which He is telling you, '***you are accepted of Me.***' What is the greatest acceptance that a person can receive when they know they have done wrong? ***Forgiveness!***

I don't know whether these people repented, but right after they had crucified Jesus and stuck up the stake, there He was hanging on it; and Jesus could look down on them parting His garment and so forth.

Luke 23:34: "Then Jesus said, 'Father, **forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.**'...." *That, brethren, is one of the most profound statements of Jesus Christ in the entirety of the New Testament!*

We need to view this from many different points of view. This tells us that regardless of the physical things that happens to us or what people do to us, *we should be ready to forgive them!* That needs to be upon repentance; this is not forgiveness in advance. In other words, *standing in the grace of God is not forgiveness in advance!* But ***it is forgiveness when you come to repentance!*** That's important to understand.

But here there was no repentance at all. There was not even any knowledge that they were doing wrong. As a matter of fact, they probably thought they were doing the right thing at that particular point. They were so wrapped up in what they were doing in looking at the loot of the man they had crucified, that they parted His garment and were casting lots upon it. Yet, Jesus said, "...Father, ***forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.***'...."

I think this is also important for us to understand in our relationship with each other, because we have this unique phenomena, too: People knowing each other in one church together at one time, then split off and separate, and one group goes to one church, and another group goes to another church. Then out of that, they split out of that, and maybe go to another one, then another one. Finally,

they get in contact with us. That has happened when I was down in Opp, AL, people met each other for the first time in thirty years and didn't know where the other one was. It's very important at that juncture:

- not to remember the things that are in the past
- not to hold the same feelings and grudges and things that were held in the past
- not to use the same judgment that was in the past

These are the things which divided and separated brethren and turned them one against the other. That's why it's so important to ***all be turned to Christ!*** We still see this as a difficulty with some people coming to fellowship with the Christian Biblical Church of God. ***God has called us to leave all the baggage of the past behind,*** regardless of what the past is, and regardless of what the baggage is.

We're also going to see, as we get into this, that there are certain things that only God can forgive. There are certain things that we must forgive. But the things that only God can forgive, ***He alone can forgive.*** Let's see what Jesus did in His ministry. Let's see how He handled it; one of the very reasons that He came.

Mark 2:1: "And after *some* days, He again entered into Capernaum, and it was reported that He was in *the* house. And immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer any room, not even at the door..." (vs 1-2).

So, we have a near riot going on here. Sometimes people just get carried away and just crush each other. That's about what it was like here. There was no room to receive them.

"...and He preached the Word to them. Then they came to Him, bringing a paraplegic borne by four *men*. And since they were not able to come near to Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was..." (vs 2-4).

In other words, they just had roof tile laid up there, so they came in and they were uncovering the roof. That would be interesting to see; you talk about zeal!

"...and after breaking *it* open they let down the stretcher on which the paraplegic was lying" (v 4). ***Here you are, right in the middle, and here he's coming right down,*** four men each having a rope, letting it down right in front of Jesus.

Verse 5: "Now, when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paraplegic, 'Child, **your sins have**

been forgiven you.'"

It was probably the man sick of palsy saying, 'I've got to be healed by Him.' *We can't get in there.* 'I don't care how you get there, you get there!' *Well the only way we can get there is get up on the roof.* 'Take me up! Get some rope! Let me down!' ***It was his faith!***

Verse 6: "But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts." Here's where the lack of forgiveness and lack of understanding comes in, which still brings friction to the people of God today.

All of those who fellowship with us, I'm asking: please, leave all the points of friction behind. Repent of them! Make up with your brother! Don't have the attitude of the scribes and Pharisees, because it's going to cause you problems sooner or later down the road. Besides, why would you really want this kind of attitude?

Verse 7: "Why does this *man* speak such blasphemies? Who has the power to forgive sins, except one, *and that is God?*"

It was a true statement! Part of the thing where the trouble lies is that *you think* you're right, and you generally have something to look to, to prove you're right. But does that mean you're spiritually right? That's a whole different question!

Verse 8: "And Jesus immediately knew in His spirit what they were reasoning within themselves, *and* said to them, 'Why are you reasoning these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paraplegic, "*Your sins have been forgiven you*"? or to say, "Arise, and take up your stretcher and walk"? But in order that you may understand that the Son of man has authority on the earth to forgive sins,' He said to the paraplegic, 'I say to you, arise and pick up your stretcher, and go to your house.' And immediately he arose and, after picking up his stretcher, went out in the presence of them all..." (vs 8-12). I wonder how he felt? ***That must have been something!***

I think the day is going to come when those things will happen again; they've got to. I think they will when we all come to the point of really yielding to God and having the love of God that God wants us to have, and also when God decides to give out miracles. That's God's prerogative to do. We can't earn it in any way:

- by doing or keeping any *works of Law*
- by keeping the Sabbath better
- by keeping the Holy Days better
- by tithing better
- by praying longer

We're not going to force God to do something. But if we love God and serve God and desire *His way*, then when it's God's time for miracles to pour forth, they will.

- Can you imagine the notoriety today that would happen in those events?
- Could you imagine what would happen with this?
- Immediately you would have how many television crews right at your door?
- Going where? *All around the world instantly, just like that!*
- Could we handle that? *I don't know! I don't think so!*

I think God is merciful in keeping it the way that He has!

“...so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, ‘We have never seen the like!’” (vs 12). *Then He went forth on the other side, and so forth.*

Verse 15: “And it came to pass that, when He sat down to eat in his house, many tax collectors and sinners sat down with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him. But when the scribes and the Pharisees saw Him eating with tax collectors and sinners, *they* said to His disciples, “Why *is it* that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?” (vs 15-16).

Again, judging people by their outward circumstances, judging them from your ‘religious’ behavior to their lack of behavior, whatever it may be, notice what this does. That’s why there has been so very little forgiveness within the Churches of God, because of this attitude prevailing and still prevailing among us. We’ll talk about those who have greater sins and so forth; that some sins, even though God may forgive, disqualifies people from doing certain things. That is also part of the forgiveness, that they no longer continue in certain activities.

Verse 17: “And after hearing *this*, Jesus said to them, ‘Those who are strong do not need a physician...’”

In other words, if you think you’re perfectly spiritually fit and healthy and whole, you don’t need anyone to help you. That’s what He’s saying.

“...but those who are sick. I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners **to repentance**” (vs 17). *There is the whole key!*

There is no forgiveness without repentance! There must be repentance! That’s

what He was doing there with the publicans and sinners. He—by His example, love, understanding and healing—was calling them to repentance.

Let’s see that there are *some sins that only God can forgive*. We can pray that God would forgive them, but God is the only One Who can. Let’s understand that you can go through the book of Jeremiah, and you can see that the sins of the people at that time were so grave that God instructed Jeremiah, ‘Don’t pray for this people. Don’t lift up your voice for them. Don’t ask Me to do anything for them. I will not forgive them.’ So, there are certain things that ***only God has the prerogative to forgive!***

Exodus 32:30: “And it came to pass on the next day, Moses said to the people, ‘You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the LORD. Perhaps I shall make an atonement for your sin.’”

What atonement could Moses make for their sin? *He couldn’t!* But he’s saying, ‘Maybe I can do something.’ This is a desperate situation.

Verse 31: “And Moses returned to the LORD, and said, ‘Oh, these people have sinned a great sin, and have made themselves gods of gold! And now if You would only forgive their sin!....’” (vs 31-32).

It doesn’t complete the sentence there. We don’t know what else is said, and Moses deliberately left it out when he wrote it.

“...And if not, I pray You, blot me out of Your book [of Life] which You have written.” (v 32).

Moses could not even be a substitute sacrifice for all of those people’s sins. He couldn’t say, ‘Lord, blot me out.’ *No!* Notice what the Lord answered him:

Verse 33: “And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.’” ***In other words, there are certain prerogatives that are for God alone to do!***

Now, we may be ready in our own mind to forgive people of sin, who have sinned against us, but on the other hand, *it’s only God’s prerogative to forgive certain sins.*

Example: Remember Billy Graham? He said, ‘My friend Bill Clinton, I forgive for whatever he’s done.’

- Did Bill Clinton sin against Billy Graham?
No!
- How could he forgive him for anything?

- Is Billy Graham God?
- What did Clinton do?
- *I don't know, but I forgive him!*
- Can you have that kind of blanket forgiveness?
 - ✓ That's ludicrous!
 - ✓ That's completely against the operation of the will of God!
 - ✓ *No!* Never happen!

God says, 'Certain things are Mine, and Mine alone.' We have certain things with each other that we need to take care of, which is ours alone. We'll see that a little bit later.

Verse 34: "And now go, lead the people to the place of which I have spoken to you. Behold, My angel shall go before you. And in the day of My visitation I will visit their sin upon them.' And the LORD plagued the people because they made the calf, which Aaron made" (vs 34-35). *There are certain things that **God alone** can do!*

Let's see that when there is repentance, when there is *forgiveness* requested, then there're things that need to be done. *Forgiveness* implies not just absolution of something that has been done, which is true, but it means that there must be some action that must be taken by the one to whom the forgiveness has been granted. Remember what Jesus told the man who was healed when he came and he worshiped Him and found it was Jesus who healed him. He said, '**Go and sin no more, lest a worst thing come upon you**' (John 5). So we have that, too. This fits right in with the days of Unleavened Bread.

Isa. 1:1-15 is the whole corrupted nation, the whole corrupted religious system.

Isaiah 1:16 "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean..." *You have to take some action!* There has to be some purifying. Purifying comes how?

Ephesians 5:26: "So that He might sanctify it, having cleansed *it with the washing of the water by the Word.*" *Also, washing has to do with repentance and baptism!*

Isaiah 1:16: "...put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes..." *So, not only in the repentance is there forgiveness given, but in the repentance there must be a putting away of the evil!*

Whatever difficulties there may be, they have to be put away. Don't necessarily wait for the other person to put theirs away first, because they may be waiting for you to put yours away first. You're in a game of 'spiritual chicken.' Who's

going to be first? Let your heart be tender so that when you find out whatever it is, that you repent, and you're not in a game counting thing with who's first?

"...put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do good..." (vs 16-17). *There's a whole re-education process that must take place!*

- Isn't that what we've been going through?
- Isn't that what we've been doing in learning the Word of God?

A whole re-education process!

"...seek judgment, reprove the oppressor. Judge the orphan; plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together'... [you can reason with God in a right way] ...says the LORD. 'Though your sins are as scarlet...'" (vs 17-18). *Don't carry that guilt complex! Put it all under the blood of Christ.*

Yet, "...they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land" (vs 18-19).

Let's understand that even though this was extended to the people back there in the time of the Old Covenant *that their sins were only forgiven to the temple!* We're going to see that *our sins and our forgiveness is much greater!* Whatever forgiveness there is, *we also have to forgive from the heart!* It has to be genuine. When there is repentance, for those repenting that also has to be genuine. *You can't fool God!* We may be able to fool each other, *but we can't fool God!*

Hebrews 9:13: "For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are defiled, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh."

That's all it did. It forgave them in the flesh, in the letter, because they didn't have the Spirit of God, it was a conscience cleansing thing, temporarily at that point.

Verse 14: "To a far greater degree, the blood of Christ..."

- 'This is My body which is broken for you'
- 'This is the blood of the New Covenant which is shed for the remission of many'

Now the blood of Jesus Christ, "...Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, shall purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (v 14).

So, we have this greater sacrifice, which comes from Christ. Let's see what happens. Let's

see how God deals with our sins and our iniquities. This is important for us to understand. One of the most self-condemning, guilt perpetuating type of attitudes is this: *'Oh, I don't think God can forgive me!'* We have many examples in the Old Testament, which we've covered many times, like Manasseh and Ahab who sinned great sins; yet, they repented and God forgave them.

- Have any of you sinned as any of those kings have done? *No!*
- Then what makes you think that God can't forgive your sins?

That's very important for a hierarchical 'religious' controlling church to do; to control by fear; to not allow you to believe that God will completely forgive your sins, because that keeps the reins of control and intimidation and fear perpetually in their hands. That's why the Catholics have purgatory, where you go to the priest and confess your sins. You have to do the 'hail Marys' and 'our fathers,' and all of this sort of thing. Then you have to go to so many Masses; then you have to have prayers for the dead: 'You need to be careful that you don't go into hell. Maybe you'll go into purgatory. Maybe God will forgive you this a little bit.'

Well, God doesn't forgive a little bit. *He forgives it all or none!* This is something for us to realize. We live in a society that is riddled with this kind of fear. With that, do you have freedom in Christ? *No! You're still enslaved to the idea of guilt and fear!*

Hebrews 10:12: "But He, after offering one sacrifice for sins forever..."—which was the body of Christ (v 10).

Once for all He "...sat down at *the* right hand of God. Since that time, He is waiting until His enemies are placed *as* a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has obtained eternal perfection *for* those who are sanctified" (vs 12-14).

When you're sanctified you are under grace. That means that being under grace, *upon repentance, you will receive forgiveness!* But if you are under grace and you are sinning, and you do not repent, then God is going to let the difficulties continue till you do.

Verse 14: "For by one offering He has obtained eternal perfection *for* those who are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after He had previously said, 'This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them **after those days**'..." (vs 14-16)—*the resurrection of Christ!*

This is the covenant that He is going to

make, "...says *the* Lord..." (v 16).

- If the Lord says it, **will it happen?**
- If the Lord says it, **is it true?**
- If the Lord says it, **do we also have our part to do it?**
- *Yes!*

We just read that, '...I will put My laws into their hearts...' (Isa. 1). *That's why you have the burning desire to know the Word of God, because God wants to put it in you!*

"...and I will inscribe them in their minds" (v 16). *Just literally inscribe it!* This is the *learning to do well* part. You've already had your sins forgiven. You cease the evil. Now you're learning to do the 'well' part.

Verse 17: "And their sins and lawlessness I will not remember ever again." *This is not to give us a cavalier attitude toward repentance:*

Oh well, God will forgive this, and I'm under grace, and He'll forget it. So therefore, God is already under obligation; He's committed Himself to do this, therefore, I'll just do whatever I want, and when I'm ready I'll repent.'

What's going to happen with that kind of attitude? *Never, never happen!* The repentance has got to be from the heart. If it's from the heart "...Their sins and lawlessness I will not remember ever again."

Let's also understand this, and this is true: When you have a guilt complex, and you're guilty of things that you have done in the past, and you've repented over and over, and you've cried, and you've boo-hoed, and you've worn out boxes of Kleenex, just throw them out, and the garbage man has a hard time picking them all up, or handkerchiefs, or whatever. You go along, and you get up off your knees, and you're, 'Oh, I wonder if God forgave me?' *You just perpetuate this guilt!*

Then what you're doing, *you're not believing what God says* here. What you need to do, if you have that kind of guilt complex, ask God to help you to really believe what He says, and to lift this guilt complex that you have, because *He will!* God can do that! God *will* do that! That's the true freedom, which comes in Christ.

Verse 18: "Now, where remission of these *is, it is* no longer *necessary to offer* sacrifices for sin."

You can't have a greater offering for sin than this kind of offering. I mean, this is some covenant! You think on that! That is some covenant, *that God will forgive and forget, remember no*

more! You have to ask God to give you the forgetfulness of it, too.

Verse 19: “Therefore, brethren, having confidence to enter into the *true* Holiest by the blood of Jesus...” *Giving us direct access into God the Father and Jesus Christ!*

Verse 20: By a new and living way, which He consecrated for us through the veil (that is, His flesh), and *having* a great High Priest over the house of God, let us approach *God* with a true heart” (vs 20-22). Notice the qualifications. **A true heart!**

- not a double-minded heart
- not a half-heart
- not a lying heart
- not a cheating heart
- **but a true heart**

“...with full conviction of faith...” (v 22).

- no wavering
- no questioning
- no doubting
- no guilt

“...our hearts having been purified from a wicked conscience, and our bodies having been washed with pure water.... [the water of baptism] ...Let us hold fast without wavering *to* the hope *that* we profess, for He Who promised *is* faithful” (vs 22-23).

This kind of thing should encourage us to do something to each other, and for each other.

Verse 24: “And let us be concerned about one another, and *be* stirring up *one another*... [or to encourage, to exhort] ...unto love and good works.”

What does this do? *This helps you want to fellowship with the brethren!* This helps you want to pray, to study, to do all the things, because now you are inspired from an inner motivation, by the Spirit of God from within. That’s how all these things are accomplished.

Verse 25: “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, even as some *are* accustomed to do...”

(go to the next track)

Forgiveness for the Individual:

Acts 3:19: “Therefore, **repent and be converted...**” *Part of the converting is getting rid of the guilt complex!* Not only having the laws and commandments of God written in your heart and mind, but having the carnality and the human ways put out.

God’s way is much like the human body. The body that you have today is not the one you had a year ago. I believe it is every seven years every cell in your whole body has been changed, and you’re not the same person.

How did that happen? *By growth!* You have to eat, you have to sleep, all the processes that go on. Also, there is, *through the process of conversion*, this change. That’s why we have the Sabbath every week. Just like we need to eat food regularly, we need *spiritual food* regularly so that we can be changed. ***Our spiritual cells are renewed day-by-day!*** Then as we go down in time we are not the same person that we were last year or the year before, or 10 years ago, 15 years ago, 20 years ago, *spiritually speaking*; that is not just referring just to the physical change that takes place. ***We must be renewed!***

“...in order that your sins may be blotted out...” (v 19). *That’s what God wants, the sins blotted out! He came to forgive sins!*

Let’s see how this whole process now works together. That’s another reason why we have the Passover every year, so that we can:

- be renewed in the baptism through foot-washing.
- we can be renewed in our commitment to Christ through the broken body.
- we can be renewed in our understanding of the forgiveness of the sins through the shed blood of Jesus Christ

so that we attain this state right here:

Psalm 32:1: “Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.... [yours have been] ...Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity...” (vs 1-2).

What does God impute to us because we believe? *He imputes righteousness!*

“...and in whose spirit there is no guile” (v 2)—*meaning the removal of all the subterfuge of human nature, plus the removal of a guilty conscience!*

When you have this guilt feeling, and you just can’t seem to get rid of it, though you repent of it, ***God has already forgiven it!*** God has already removed it, as far as He’s concerned. ***You need to let it go!*** You need to take it to God and say, ‘God, here, take it. It’s more than I can bear.’ ***Christ already bore it for you!***

Verse 3: “When I kept silent, my bones wore away through my groaning all the day long.”

Sometimes through sickness and sometimes through problems we are drawn close to God because we begin to see how weak we are.

Verse 4: “For by day and by night Your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden....” (vs 4-5). *That’s what we need to do!*

I know whenever there’s a time of sickness and difficulty, that’s the time when you confess to God. That’s the time when you ask God for help and strength. That is a great benefit that comes when there is sickness and difficulty and pain.

“...I said, ‘I will confess my transgression to the LORD,’ and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah” (v 5).

We have *Selah* just one verse after the other, meaning: *stop, think and meditate* on what was just said, because what was just said was profound.

Notice this promise, v 6: “For this *reason* let every Godly one pray to You in a time when You may be found... [now it is a time when God may be found] ...surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come near him. You are my hiding place...” (vs 6-7). *Notice the complete change of attitude once everything is shifted to God:*

Verse 7: “You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall encircle me with songs of deliverance. Selah.” *Again: Stop! Think! Meditate on this!* This is profound.

Then God speaks back, v 8: “*You said*, ‘I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you, My eye shall be upon you.’” And that’s how we want God to be with us and deal with us.

Verse 9: “‘Be not like the horse, or like the mule, which have no understanding—which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you.’ The wicked has many sorrows, but His steadfast love surrounds him who trusts in the LORD” (vs 9-10). How? ***When he repents!***

Verse 11: “Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.” *This is what that kind of repentance is to do for us!*

Sometimes you get laid really, really low. Psa. 51 is the repentance of David after his long sordid encounter with Bathsheba. In this kind of deep repentance you understand where sin comes from, *from deep within you!* As we drew the analogy that every cell of the physical body changed, so then *everything spiritually must change, grow, be*

rejuvenated and be reinvigorated! In doing this you discover things that you never discovered before.

Why is that? *Because you did not have the spiritual strength to begin to grasp it until a particular point!* God will lay upon us no more than we’re able to bear. Just think of what it would be if, when God first called us, He laid out the whole sum total of the whole character of carnality that each one of us had. It would be overwhelming! God reveals it bit-by-bit-by-bit. That’s all a part of the growing and overcoming that God gives to us.

Psalm 51:1. “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness...” *There’s no going to God and dickering with Him* as to ‘How good I am; therefore, God, You do this for me.’ *None at all!*

“...according to the greatness of Your compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash me **thoroughly** from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin” (vs 1-2).

Why? *Because no human can cleanse himself from his own sins!* It has to be from God. Here’s the cleansing part that we can do. We have to acknowledge them:

Verse 3: “For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me”—***because he didn’t repent!*** His sin was right there.

You go back and read that whole account. That was really quite premeditated in what he did. He just thought for a while, ‘Well, I’ll just put God on hold and I’ll work this out my way.’ What happens when you do that? ***It never works out!*** So, that whole sin was “...ever before me.”

He’s also talking about the punishment that he received, though his sins were forgiven. What was that punishment that David received the rest of his life? *God said, ‘Because you have done this before the world, you have done this before the enemies, My enemies, and cause them to blaspheme, therefore, I am doing this before the world, and your household will be divided from this day hence. And the child that is born will die.’* That He could never remove.

Verse 4: “Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight, that You might be justified when You speak and be in the right when You judge. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me” (vs 4-5).

He wasn’t born of an adulterous affair by any means. But this just merely means that *the law of sin and death* is given by inheritance to every human being.

Verse 6: “Behold, You desire Truth in the inward parts...” *That’s the whole goal of all of it*, the whole goal of the Passover; the whole goal of Unleavened Bread. How are we to keep Unleavened Bread? *In sincerity and Truth!* Where? *In the hidden parts! The inward parts!*

“...and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop... [a strong cleansing agent] ...and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness that the bones which You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities” (vs 6-9).

If we want forgiveness from God, this is how we need to come to God. When that is done, notice again, the same process: cease to do evil, learn to do well. Here we have the process here:

Verse 10: “Create in me a clean heart, O God...” *That’s learning to do well!* ‘I will put My laws into their hearts and in their minds I will write them.’ Same thing right here!

Verse 10: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” *It is true, when you go along and have sins hanging, or problems hanging:*

- What happens?
 - How’s your attitude? *Yuck!*
- You’ve experienced that I’ve experienced it!*
- How do you feel? *Miserable!*

God has got to renew it. God has got to straighten it out! He will!

Verse 11: “Cast me not away from Your presence...” How far away was David from God in this instance? *A long way away!*

“...and take not Your Holy Spirit from me” (v 11)—*which meant that he was really concerned that he was ready to lose salvation because of it!*

- How great a sin was that? *A great sin!*
- Did God forgive it? *Yes, He did!*
- Why? *Because God led David to repentance, and David received and accepted that repentance, and repented with his whole heart!*

Verse 12: “Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and let Your free spirit uphold me.” *Then all the things will be right, is the sum of the rest of Psa. 51!*

In Dan. 9 we find a different kind of prayer. In Psa. 51 we have a personal, individual prayer for one’s own faults and mistakes. But in Dan. 9 we have a representative prayer, similar to the one that

Moses gave, but in this case the one that Daniel gave. He prays not for himself, but he prays for all of God’s people. The prayer is really quite long and quite moving. He confesses and admits all the sins.

One thing that is interesting, which I wrote in *The Christian Passover* book, and I put in this whole prayer of Daniel, because it’s so powerful and so moving, that this prayer was given in the first year of the reign of Darius. That very year the first group of Jews going back to Jerusalem took place. Six years later the temple was finished. So, this was a very moving and profound prayer.

We get the sum and the feeling of it. This kind of repentance and prayer is when one is praying for all of the sinful ones that have sinned. Brethren, this ought to be our prayer for all the Church of God. God is not done with it, yet, and God is going to bring back those that He wants. So, let’s see if we can apply this:

Daniel 9:16: “O LORD, I pray You, according to all Your righteousness...” *Notice how this is just like the Psalms!* Not according to his, or how great he was.

“...let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your Holy mountain. Because of our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people have become a reproach to all those who are around us. And now, therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and cause Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary that is desolate for the LORD’S sake. O my God, incline Your ear and hear. Open Your eyes and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name. For we do not present our supplications before You on account of our righteousnesses, but because of Your great mercies” (vs 16-18).

That’s how we need to approach God in repenting—individually and collectively—then there will be *forgiveness*. Then there will be, as Jesus said, ‘Lord, *forgive them*, for they know not what they do.’

Verse 19: “O LORD, hear; O LORD, forgive; O LORD, hearken and do. Do not delay, for Your own sake, O my God; for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”

Let’s see how that applies in the New Testament. We can take all of these and we apply them collectively and individually.

The Epistle of 1-John is very important in relationship to the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread. The Passover represents *the forgiveness*. Unleavened Bread represents *the*

learning to do well, ceasing to do evil. That's why you have the Passover first and then you have the Days of Unleavened Bread. Isn't it interesting, you don't have the Days of Unleavened Bread and then the Passover? What would happen if you had that sequence? You would work out your salvation so that you would be good enough to take the Passover!

It's the other way around. The way that you are worthy of the Passover is *you acknowledge you are a sinner*, and you need God, and you need God's Spirit; that's where you begin. Then you learn to do well and cease to do evil, because then it's **God in you** motivating the works, and not your own.

This is something we really need to learn, understand and realize. This is how you get rid of that guilt complex, that you don't carry it around as a burden; that you don't carry it around one for the other.

1-John 1:7: "However, if we walk in the Light... [the Truth of God; Christ is the Light Who gives us the way to go] ...as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin" (v 7).

How many times does it tell us He forgives our sins, *all of them*? We'll see how far, how thorough, how complete.

Verse 8: "If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins..." (vs 8-9).

Who do we confess our *sins* to? **To God!** We're going to see a little bit later on, that we confess our *faults* one to another so that we may be healed. **You confess your sins to God!** There is a difference.

Verse 9: "If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us... ['give us a clean heart, O God'] ...from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us" (vs. 9-10).

1-John 2:1: "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And *yet*, if anyone does sin..."—*which you're going to, because you have the law of sin and death within you.*

"...we have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ *the Righteous.*" (v 1)—*advocating for you!* Who is the accuser? *Satan!* He's the one who's trying to put you down. **Christ is advocating for you!**

Verse 2: "And He is the propitiation for our sins..." Propitiation means *the continual source of mercy through grace*. It is there all the time; never runs out. This is part of the fullness of Christ.

"...and not for our sins only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*" (v 2). *We know through the plan of the Holy Days, in God's time it's going to apply to everyone!*

Then, it talks right after that about keeping the commandments, and so forth; that's true. Whenever there is repentance then there is learning to do well.

Now let's see how far God removes these from us. We will see how all of this ties together. If you ever get really discouraged and really down, and you have doubts, you have guilt and you have fear. What you do is get out Psa. 103 and see how you can overcome all of this.

Psalm 103:1: "Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me... [His whole being] ...bless His Holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; Who forgives all your iniquities... [just like in 1-John 1] ...**Who heals all your diseases**" (vs 1-3). *It's important to understand!*

- How is God going to heal every single disease? *The resurrection!*
- Won't that be the greatest healing possible? *That's better than just a temporary physical thing in this life!*
- Isn't it better to be raised to be a spirit being, totally healed of everything physical? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 4: "Who redeems your life from destruction... [He called you to eternal life] ...Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies" *God has done that tremendously, in giving the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, did He not do that!*

Verse 8. "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in mercy. He will not always chasten, nor will He keep His anger forever. He [the Lord] has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (vs 8-10). *That's a tremendous promise!* That's a wonderful, wonderful thing to contemplate.

Verse 11: "For as the heavens are high above the earth, so is His mercy toward those who fear Him.... [we know that means the total love to God] ...**As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us**" (vs 11-12).

- if He forgives all your iniquities
- if He forgives all your sins
- if He removes them from you as far as the east is from the west

When have you ever read in a history book that east met west? Other than just a play on words of culture? *Never has!* They're in two opposite directions, never to meet.

Notice that He goes beyond that, v 13: "As a father has compassion upon his children, so the LORD has compassion upon those who fear Him, for He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust" (vs 13-14). *God isn't going to lay upon you any more than you are able to bear!*

Verse 15: "As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes, for the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and its place shall know it no more. But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear Him, and His righteousness is unto children's children, to those who keep His covenant... [that's why we're going to keep the Passover, because that is keeping His covenant] ...and to those who remember His precepts to do them" (vs 15-18).

As I mentioned, being in the grace of God is *not forgiveness in advance*. But what it is, it means that forgiveness is there upon repentance. Here's a good example of it:

Psalms 86:1: "Bow down Your ear, O LORD, answer me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul, for I am Holy; O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You. Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I cry unto You all day long. Rejoice the soul of Your servant, for to You, O LORD, do I lift up my soul, for **You, LORD, are good and ready to forgive**... [upon repentance] ...and rich in mercy to all those who call upon You" (vs 1-5).

We've covered forgiveness for a group, we've covered forgiveness for an individual. Now let's talk about forgiveness *one to another*.

Forgiveness One to Another:

Matthew 5:23: "For this reason, if you bring your gift to the altar..." *Or you come to God in prayer!* Since there's no altar, we're coming to God and the gifts that we give are the sacrifices of praise, repentance, encouragement for others, and so forth.

"...and there remember that your brother has something against you" (v 23).

I would like to hope that through the Feast of Unleavened Bread that, especially in many of the

fellowship groups that we have now, where there are brethren coming together that have been over in one place but now have been reunited through different courses together, and different problems, that you, if you have anything against one another, that you make a concerted, loving effort to get together and bury the hatchet by love and understanding. That's most important. So important that God says, if you remember that you have anything,

Verse 24: "Leave your gift there before the altar, and go *your way*..." *God is saying, 'Look, I don't even want to hear your prayer until you get this resolved.'* Is that important or what? Have to say so, *yes indeed!*

"...first be reconciled with your brother..." (v 24). Don't we want to be reconciled to God? *Yes!* Then God says be reconciled to your brother. And you have to come to a meeting of minds. Sometimes it may not be possible. But you have to put forth the effort. Maybe putting forth the effort will inspire the other person.

"...and then come and offer your gift" (v 24). So, you do what you can to work it out.

Let's see how this is even on a daily basis. Here's a promise, Matthew 6:14: "For if you forgive men their trespasses..."—*as far as the east is from the west*, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. That's against you. There can be many forms of this. It can be serious. Sometimes it can be where only God can really do the forgiving.

[transcriber's note: the following is about a school shooting in 1998]

I don't know what they're going to do back there in Jonesboro, Arkansas, with all that's going on there. But I tell you what, it's going to be a grave and difficult situation indeed. **God alone can forgive!** The most that any of them can do is be understanding and accepting. If there's any forgiveness for those two lads, **God alone can do it!** No man can forgive what they did, *only God can!* But in order to get along with each other, or if they desire to do so, then there's going to have to be acceptance and understanding, realizing that only God can forgive them. The only thing you can do is pity those poor boys, that they're pawns in such a wicked society, that this type of thing would happen.

Verse 14: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (vs 14-15). That's very important to understand. You need to realize that.

If you're willing to forgive, but they are not willing to reciprocate, you have done your part.

Then you can pray that God will put it in their minds to do their part. And that's what's important. Let's see how this works.

Matt. 18 is where God tells each one of us that we are to work out the differences between us on this basis. The responsibility becomes ours to do, if we are to be responsible, spiritual Christians. In a corporate hierarchical church, they cannot do this because it takes away their work. It takes away their control. It takes away their fear and intimidation.

First of all, we're told, Matthew 18:15: "So then, if your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault **between you and him alone....**" *We're talking about faults!* That's important to understand.

We confess our sins, and also our faults, before God; no question about that. But when we have difficulties with each other, most of the time it's because of a fault or a perceived fault.

"...If he is willing to hear you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not listen, take with you **one or two others**, so that in *the* mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he fails to listen to them, **tell it to the Church**. But if he also fails to listen to the Church, let him be to you as the heathen and the tax collector" (vs 15-17).

What follows is very important, v 18: "Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on the earth will have already been bound in heaven..."—*in relationship to resolving these faults!*

- has nothing to do with doctrine
- has nothing to do keeping of days
- has nothing to do with any Scriptures whatsoever
- **has to do with the fault that you have agreed to solve**

"...and whatever you shall loose on the earth will have already been loosed in heaven" (v 18). *You make the decision, wherever it is!* 'Yes, I forgive you.' It's taken care of. It's done in heaven.

Verse 19: "Again I say to you, that if two of you on earth shall agree concerning any matter that they wish to request..." *In relationship to solving the faults!* That's what it is: **overcoming the problem!**

"...it shall be done for them by My Father, Who *is* in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name... [to solve a problem] ...there, I am in *the* midst of them" (vs 19-20).

We're talking about *the problem-solving* all

along. We can say, 'Well, this does apply if two or three gather together on the Sabbath.' We can take that in principle, that is true. But the main thrust of this all the way through is with the problems.

Notice the response here by Peter, which shows that it's true, v 21: "Then Peter came to Him *and* said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?'" *We're talking about sin or transgression with a fault!*

Verse 22: "Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you until seven times, but until seventy times seven.'"

There're going to be certain faults and problems that you're going to carry all your life. Is that not true? I know I have some that are still a problem today that I've had for a long time. Some of those things become a difficulty in my relationship with people. I try and do the best I can so I don't let them be problems. But because I'm human, they can become problems. That's what it's talking about.

He gives this parable here. He talks about the Kingdom of Heaven is like a certain king took into account of his servants, and so forth. You know the story there. He owed him 10,000 talents. He came to his lord:

Verse 27: "And being moved with compassion, the lord of that servant released him, and forgave him the debt."

Whenever you're dealing with each other, and there's a problem to be handled and forgiven, remember, **God has forgiven you!** So that you're going to be very tender and forgiving that individual, though the problem may occur again down the road a little later on. *It's a fault!* How many times? *Seven times seventy!*

However, notice what happened. When the forgiveness was given, that servant went out, found someone who owed him a hundred pence. He took him and just did the same thing to him, 'Pay me all that you owe.' He said, 'Have mercy and patience and I will pay you.' He wouldn't do it. What he did, he threw him in jail till he would pay his debts. Then what happened? **Be sure, your sins will find you out!** The lord found out. So, he called the first man:

Verse 32: "Then his lord called him *and* said to him, 'You wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt, because you implored me.'" He said, 'I didn't have to do it, but I did it.'

Verse 33: "'Were you not also obligated to have compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had compassion on you?' And in anger, his lord delivered him up to the tormentors, until he should

pay all that he owed to him. **Likewise shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother's offenses from the heart**" (vs. 32-35).

Notice how that flows all the way through the chapter about *faults one with another*. Don't ever again be deceived of what you bind on earth is bound in heaven, having to do with doctrine. If anyone pulls that on you, you know they do not have a single solitary clue as to what's going on.

Let's see how we are to confess our faults. We saw how we're to *confess our sins to God*. Now you confess your *faults one to another*, and in praying one for another. That fits in right there with Matt. 18.

James 5:14 also ties in with healing, which you could also tie it in with overcoming a fault, not that you're anointed for a fault, but the process here.

James 5:14: "Is anyone sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him after anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick one, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess **your faults**... [not your sins] ...to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed...." (vs 14-16).

Not only of your sickness, but also overcome your faults. Wouldn't you assume that that is part of what's being done here? *Yes!*

"...*The supplication of a righteous man prevails much, being effective*" (v 16). *Then he tells the whole story of Elijah!*

Gen. 50—this is kind of prophetic as to why out of Joseph came the New Testament, rather than out of the preaching of the Gospel at the end, then out of Joseph.

Genesis 50:15: "And when Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, 'Joseph will perhaps hate us, and will certainly repay us all the evil which we did to him.' And they sent a message to Joseph, saying, 'Your father commanded before he died, saying, "Thus shall you say to Joseph, 'I beseech you now, forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin, for they did evil to you.'" And please now forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father.' And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. And his brothers also went and fell down before his face. And they said, 'Behold, we *are* your servants'" (vs 15-18).

Now notice, he could have said 'Right! I'll get out my jackboot and my big thumb, and I'm going to make you guys pay for it!' *Nope!*

Verse 19: "And Joseph said to them, 'Do not fear, for *am* I in the place of God? But as for you, you thought evil against me, *but* God meant it for good to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save a great many people alive. And now do not fear. I will nourish you and your little ones.' And he comforted them and spoke to their hearts" (vs 19-21).

That's the kind of attitude we need to have in the church today, brethren, the same thing! Many things were done with the thought of evil toward the people of God. But there comes a time when all of that has to be put aside. There comes a time when the ***forgiveness and the love of God must reign and have the power***, instead of the fear and the intimidation.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Luke 4:16-19
- 2) Luke 23:34
- 3) Mark 2:1-12, 15-17
- 4) Exodus 32:30-35
- 5) Isaiah 1:16
- 6) Ephesians 5:26
- 7) Isaiah 1:16-19
- 8) Hebrews 9:13-14
- 9) Hebrews 10:12-25
- 10) Acts 3:19
- 11) Psalm 32:1-11
- 12) Psalm 51:1-12
- 13) Daniel 9:16-19
- 14) 1 John 1:7-10
- 15) 1 John 2:1-2
- 16) Psalm 103:1-4, 8-18
- 17) Psalm 86:1-5
- 18) Matthew 5:23-24
- 19) Matthew 6:14-15
- 20) Matthew 18:15-22, 27, 32-35
- 21) James 5:14-16
- 22) Genesis 50:15-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 5
- Isaiah 1:1-15
- Hebrew 10:1-10

Also referenced: Book:

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